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*BITO is proud to present Europe's most modern racking plant*

### **Strong growth paves the way for further expansion**

- **25 % increase in turnover**
- **number of employees grows by 10 %**
- **award for occupational qualification system**
- **16 million EUR invested into Europe's most modern plant for heavy duty racking worldwide expansion**

Last year's strong growth of BITO-Lagertechnik Bittmann GmbH in Meisenheim, Germany, reads like this: in 2007, the company turnover increased by 25 % compared to the previous year and reached 125 million EUR. The export share is more than 50 %. In the same period, the number of employees increased by more than 10 %. This specialist supplier of storage and workshop equipment as well as order picking systems provided 60 new jobs during the year and presently employs 700 people in two plants in Germany and in 14 subsidiaries in Western and Eastern Europe.

"Our company stands out due to the vocational skills of our employees", explains managing director Detlef Ganz. And this is no accident; the special training programs adopted by this long-established and renowned company offers many qualification possibilities from vocational training to academic degrees. The family owned company provides professional qualification courses to 6 % of their staff and presently employs 34 apprentices and trainees who are trained in 13 professions. Among the range of training options are three academic degrees which can be obtained in a dual system of practical work at BITO and academic studies within a "co-op program" at Mannheim University. To widen its trainee education, BITO regularly offers exchange stays at their foreign subsidiaries. "In order to ensure that there is no cut-off in the line of new apprentices and trainees, we regularly have open house days in cooperation with schools in our region, we organise visits to trade fairs and also offer taster days or weeks", says Ganz. Last year, BITO received an award for human resources development from the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. Moreover, the company

introduced a profit sharing plan in 1845 which grants their staff a bonus share in the form of a pension fund and a large package of voluntary payments.

### **Heavy duty racking completes product range**

Managing director Ganz sums up other factors contributing to BITO's success: "The BITO competence is most obviously expressed by our product quality. BITO's strong points in this field are innovative strength and in-depth technological and manufacturing experience. We are the single source supplier with the largest product range in the storage sector. Another advantage is our direct marketing activity. This allows us to have a personal approach to our customers and to advise them on how to handle their specific demands which, in return, inspires us to develop new ideas", explains Ganz.

At their Meisenheim headquarters, which also house BITO's shelving and racking production, 16 million EUR has been invested into Europe's most modern racking plant, which covers an area of 10 000 sqm. The very high degree of flexibility in the production of heavy duty racking options has optimised the already broad product range which includes shelving in various heights, depths and shelf dimensions, pallet racking, cantilever racking, carton live storage, automated bin storage and mobile shelving and racking. In addition, BITO offers plastic bins and containers as well as workshop equipment. For storage and order picking, the company provides multi-tier shelving and racking as well as multi-system installations to meet the current trend in project business. Detlef Ganz points out an essential competitive advantage: "We specialise in providing a single source range of products and services: in the standard business sector, we offer products which have been developed and produced by BITO and for the project business sector, we develop project specific solutions." For BITO, target and user oriented order processing has priority.

### **Trends in project business**

Michael Fritz, product manager for automated bin and tray storage and manager of the project planning department, observes several trends in the intralogistics sector. One of these is that automated systems are on the rise. "We provide the entire "hardware" for these systems such as shelving and racking, mezzanines, plastic bins and containers as well as plastic and steel trays." In the pharmaceutical industry, as demonstrated by pharmaceutical

wholesaler von der Linde, automated small parts storage with integrated flow levels has proved its worth for product storage and sorter in-feeding.

Another trend with tried and tested results is direct order picking from small parts storage installations in order to increase picking performance. For this purpose, flow levels are integrated into a small parts storage block at operator reach height and equipped with a pick-to-light system, which is connected to the warehouse management system. BITO also sees a growing demand for random storage of cardboard boxes of all sizes as well as for multi-position storage on panel decked levels. A BITO solution featuring easy-fit panels, which can be mounted without tools, is applied by Papstar, a supplier of disposable tableware and packaging materials. Installation servicing with several service vehicles per lane, one placed above the other to service a pre-determined number of levels, is also on the rise.

### **Project highlights at the garment wholesaler C&A and the drugstore chain dm**

“The mezzanine project for C&A in the Czech Republic and equipment for a new distribution centre of drugstore chain dm in Weilerswist are just two of our showcase projects,” explains Fritz. For C&A, BITO set up a three-tier mezzanine installation with a surface of 56 000 sqm and a garment hanging system with clothes rails stretching over a length of 35 000 metres. The order value amounted to 4.7 million EUR. The dm order, a 5.1 million EUR project, consisted of racking with pallet live storage lanes. “We consider these projects to be a great success. They confirm that we are going into the right direction,” Fritz says.

### **Export trends**

The export business has grown considerably in the past years. Since 2000, the export share of the BITO group increased by some 20 %. Recent projects which have contributed to this success are, for example, the automated small parts storage installation at Doha Airport in Qatar/UAE and the order for pallet racking/live storage of pallets and bins from Office Depot, one of the world leaders in the office supply sector, with a distribution centre at Großostheim in Germany. In order to further support this trend, other markets are to be opened up. BITO's target regions are the USA, the Gulf States and Asia.

### **Commitment outside Europe**

BITO has already made one important step towards globalisation. The company has established a sales joint venture with Nilkamal Plastics Ltd, India's leading manufacturer of plastic products with headquarters in Mumbai. The jointly owned subsidiary's name is Nilkamal BITO Storage Systems and is managed from Mumbai. The production plant is located at Jammu in Northern India where BITO has manufactured several types of shelving and racking since March 2007. The products are sold in South East Asian markets, which could not be supplied profitably from Germany. "This gives us a good starting position. We are pleased to see that with our first production site outside Europe, we have reached an important target mark," says Ganz.

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### **Picture underlines:**



BITO general manager Detlef Ganz: „ Our company stands out due to the vocational skills of our employees.“



With their shelving and racking plant in Jammu, Northern India, BITO intends to expand to new markets.



First major order in India: the BITO joint venture Nilkamal BITO supplied and assembled several automated pallet racking stores for Asian Paints, one of the biggest producers and distributors of paints and varnishes in Asia.

**Photos: BITO-Lagertechnik**

### EDITORS NOTES:

#### **BITO-Lagertechnik Bittmann GmbH**

Bito-Lagertechnik, headquartered at Meisenheim/Germany, specialises in storage and workshop equipment as well as order picking systems. The range of products includes shelving and racking, bins and containers as well as workshop equipment and accessories for use in any industry. BITO customers benefit from buying single source standard products as well as project specific solutions, all developed and produced by BITO. The medium-sized enterprise owns production plants in Germany and in India, 14 subsidiaries in West and East European countries and sales offices in Austria, Russia and Dubai. With a staff of 700, a turnover of 125 million EUR was achieved in 2007.

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