

## Logistics a key factor for success

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### **The Logistics Colloquium organised by Dr Peter Acél in Zurich showed how medium-sized enterprises can distil practical formulas for success from intelligent logistics concepts.**

It was an illustrious venue where the 37th Zurich Logistics Colloquium took place again, after a forced break caused by measures to combat the outbreak of Covid-19. Around 70 visitors found their way to the lecturers' foyer of Switzerland's Federal Institute of Technology (Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule ETH). The event was organised by the management consultancy Dr Acél & Partner. Engineering professor Frank Brinken gave an introduction to the world of mechanical engineering and the concomitant logistics. Europe's 35% market share of "the mothers of all machines" – that is the global machine tools sector – brings a lot of logistics potential with it too, EUR 28 billion in turnover every year, to be precise.

It has also to be borne in mind that the dilemma of the small number of units produced has to be solved. There can be as many as 12,000 individual parts in a machine, some of which have to be procured overseas. Another issue concerns transporting modules "that don't fit into a container." Brinken's credo is to "design to shipment". If a product's development is optimised, then transport costs and time can be saved. In view of the number of current crises, special logistics foresight is needed, especially in this segment.

### **Logistics as a factor for small and medium-sized firms**

Gesine Moritz, who is in charge of supply chain management at the company Swiss Woodpecker, presented a case study of how a joint solution can emerge from a number of disparate inputs. Local dealers of this timber trading company with partly redundant logistics structures were integrated into a process-oriented sales organisation in which logistics became a success factor – thanks to the optimised daytime networking of warehouses. The employees, not the least important part of the concept, went along with it, because they were included in the measures, thanks to open communication.

What would modern logistics be without the third dimension? Daniel Gilgen, deputy CEO and the manager of the systems business unit at Gilgen Logistics, made it clear how digitalisation and automation can work together. From a logistics building on a (digital) drawing board, Denner's first fully digital facility was developed into reality with the help of the latest technologies, such as augmented reality, digital twins, cloud servers and the like, in autumn 2021.

Not every one of these lighthouse projects shines with the same intensity, but the broad spectrum of practical examples presented commanded overall respect.