psb Best Practice

**Next Distribution**

Highly efficient e-commerce solution
Next Distribution

Automated returned item storage and picking system »RSPS«

The Next retail chain trades from more than 500 stores in the UK plus Eire and over 200 stores in more than 40 countries overseas. In 1999 online shopping was introduced. Next still continues to improve customer service, introducing new initiatives such as same day delivery as standard to orders placed before 12 a.m. At the Next warehousing location, South Elmsall, returned mail-order items are buffered and directly picked for new orders.

Design criteria
Among the larger pick quantities for the retail stores, the e-commerce operation requires a fast growing number of small orders delivered to private households. This order structure, with extremely short processing times, plus the growing number of returns, involves all warehouse processes, and demands a highly efficient returns management.

The solution
The new solution allows for a well-coordinated integrated intralogistics system, by combining warehousing and order picking operations. Special focus is put on a very high degree of flexibility, redundancy and system availability.

In the system installation, more than 100 psb variopartner shuttles are operated; they are connected, via a dynamic conveyor system, with 16 psb rotapick high performance order picking modules and 12 tote replenishment (top-up) stations. The entire system solution is designed with respect to sustainability, utilizing, among others, ultra-modern modules for energy recovery.

Warehouse management and organization are controlled by the psb selektron WMS control system. It comprises all aspects of stock handling, e.g., the administration of the order picking batches, the permanent supply of the rotapick stations, replenishment of the storage totes, plus displaying and communicating key performance indicators. The installation is monitored by the psb selektron SCADA visualization system.