



## The medication logistics providers

(Mynewsdesk) In Saxony-Anhalt, the Salutas Pharma GmbH Company operates one of the largest pharmaceutical centres in Europe. Sometimes it is a question of minutes. Even if the day a new generic medicine is to be delivered for the first time is a public holiday, already from midnight the Salutas Pharma plant situated in Barleben near Magdeburg is a hive of activity with pallets and medicine boxes being packed and loaded onto the waiting trucks. The ordered medicines are on the road the same night ? on their way to wholesalers, chemists and hospitals. "A decisive factor for gaining a subsequent market share includes the fact of who is first commercially available", states Norman Scheider, an engineer by profession who is responsible for logistics at Salutas Pharma. Salutas has established itself as a key production and logistics location within the Sandoz Group of Companies near the state capital of Saxony-Anhalt. Sandoz is the second biggest generic pharmaceutical companies in the world, while Salutas is one of the largest manufacturers for solid forms, i.e. finished medicinal products in tablet form. In Barleben, pharmaceuticals are developed, manufactured, stored and despatched in of the most modern and largest production and pharmaceutical centres in the world. In fact, some 180 of the around 1,600 employees at Salutas are engaged with logistics. All the material flow processes for the production plant and the national and international distribution are controlled and carried out here. The figures are abstract: "Last year, Salutas Pharma commissioned a total of 481 million medicinal packages. Of these, 205 million packages were delivered to the German market and some 253 for global export to a total of 75 countries ? all from the logistics centre", states logistics specialist Norman Scheider. 78,000 pallets were commissioned and delivered for export alone. This is only possible thanks to an efficient logistics concept. A high-bay warehouse, some 30 metres in height and containing 50,000 Euro-pallets, operates on a fully automated basis. The subsequent tote warehousing provides space for 143,000 returnable containers that is also system controlled for commissioning access. A storage maintenance system ensures the continual status control of all logistics processes. Specifically, this means that some 1,100 trucks a month drive in to the incoming and outgoing goods areas in Barleben. "We have to provide a rapid order processing together with short delivery periods. What is ready for despatching by 8 pm will be with the customer the next day within Germany." Logistics is a key cog in the system and has to function smoothly. "Logistics as well as warehouse capacity must not be a limiting factor for the production", Scheider knows well. "The principle is to be as flexible as possible. This includes adapting storage capacities. For example, last year the anaesthetics warehouse was expanded so as to be able to react to the ever more quickly changing market." It is necessary to optimise the processes on a constant basis. By, for example, investing in sorting technology, it proved possible to significantly reduce structural freight costs. Optimisation is essential in order to master the constantly growing challenges faced by pharmaceutical logistics specialists. Thus the struggle for customers increases. And the pressure to perform in the pharmaceutical industry also has an impact on logistics. This is because the high quality and hygiene standards continue to rise ? despite the pressure of costs and increasing product range complexity. In this process, logistics specialists have to ensure the safe transport of temperature-sensitive products as well as the recycling and disposal. Let alone, of course, the documentation. Salutas bears the responsibility until the medicines have reached the customer ? in most cases the wholesaler. The pharmaceutical company in Saxony-Anhalt has meanwhile continued its successful progress for many years. Operations were started in 1995, and since then have been continually expanded to reach a current total area of 337,000 square metres. Over 450 million Euros have been invested into this Sandoz Group of Companies enterprise, resulting in one of the most efficient pharmaceutical production and logistics centres in Europe. In addition to production, Salutas also possesses state-of-the-art plants for analytics, quality control and microbiology. The complete service provided by Salutas is rounded off by purchasing, packaging and commissioning, which are also handled internally. Author: Michael Falgowski

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## Pressekontakt

IMG - Investitions- und Marketinggesellschaft Sachsen-Anhalt mbH

Luisa Kittner  
Am Alten Theater 6  
39104 Magdeburg

[luisa.kittner@img-sachsen-anhalt.de](mailto:luisa.kittner@img-sachsen-anhalt.de)

## Firmenkontakt

IMG - Investitions- und Marketinggesellschaft Sachsen-Anhalt mbH

Luisa Kittner  
Am Alten Theater 6  
39104 Magdeburg

[shortpr.com/0cczkd](http://shortpr.com/0cczkd)  
[luisa.kittner@img-sachsen-anhalt.de](mailto:luisa.kittner@img-sachsen-anhalt.de)

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