

AN INTERVIEW WITH SVEN MARKUS

RHENUS SPORTS TECH – FIT IN LOGISTICS

The temporary closure of gyms during the COVID-19 pandemic has provided an enormous boost to the trend where people use online training sessions: more and more people are training at home and using digital technologies to stream group and individual training programmes or those involving a teacher. In addition to the digital transformation of the sector, personal and professional training support, qualified specialists and proximity to customers at classic fitness studios are playing a more important role than ever before.

Technically sophisticated and high-quality fitness machines form the basis for these trends. The degree of individuality in developing these machines and fine-tuning them to meet personal training goals is matched by the unique logistics operations upstream, which not only involve transportation, but, increasingly often, other services too. The standards required for these value-added logistics services are high, but Rhenus Sports Tech, the logistics partner for fitness, wellness and health, meets them perfectly.



Sven Markus, the Managing Director of Rhenus Sports Tech, uses this interview to talk about the challenges that need to be met in fitness logistics at this time – and in future too.

WHAT ARE THE TASKS FACED BY LOGISTICS SPECIALISTS IN THE FITNESS SECTOR?

The central challenges involve a high degree of flexibility, on the one hand, coupled with the wish for a scalable solution, on the other hand. Our clients approach us with orders that encompass different amounts of work, whether it means inserting new equipment at gyms, expanding medical practices, modernising fitness rooms at public authorities, in hotels or on board cruise liners. This may involve, for example, individual machines for private customers, groups of devices, a circuit or the complete equipment. The logistics goal is then to transport them to their place of use, bring in the machines, set them up, assemble them and hand them over so that they're ready for use.

WHAT PARTICULAR CHALLENGES NEED TO BE OVERCOME?

Our planning work has to take into consideration tight schedules as well as complicated conditions for bringing in the units, which are caused by delays in the progress made in building work for new facilities or spatial restrictions in existing buildings. Typical examples of this are transporting various machines up or down narrow staircases on several floors or supplying several gymnasiums in a fitness chain that has ordered some new equipment, almost at the same time.

WHAT SOLUTIONS DOES RHENUS SPORTS TECH OFFER WHEN ITS CLIENTS PLACE ORDERS?

It's first of all important to understand that we have already started to gradually and effectively build up the knowledge and expertise in our installation teams several years ago. We view our ordering clients as partners and we jointly develop training programmes with them, for example. Alongside this, we've been working to identify the correct transport resources. We've therefore managed to make both our knowledge and our transport resources scalable. Our approach to projects forms the third building block. It's our philosophy at Rhenus Sports Tech to classify each order, which requires a value-added solution – that is to say, more than just the transportation – as a project. We don't operate in line with set schemes, but can act in a solution-oriented way at all times.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE?

We use the first stage to examine the relevant underlying conditions related to the logistical requirements. If necessary, we also inspect the site personally. We don't just advise our clients, but provide specific suggestions for solutions. We can reliably reach any installation point through our European network for technical distribution logistics or using direct deliveries. During the next stage, our specially trained personnel complete the installation of the units at their final place of use for the customer. We supplement our services by completely moving gyms, offering maintenance and repair services, managing spare parts as well as handling break bulk cargo and sea freight consignments.

TO WHAT DEGREE DO THE MANUFACTURERS OF THE EXERCISE MACHINES BENEFIT FROM THESE SERVICES?

Thanks to our specialisation, coupled with many years of expertise in fitness logistics, we offer particular benefits and they enable us to stand out from our rivals. Our employees are instructed at our company's own training academy or directly by the manufacturer itself, if the machines are particularly complex. Reliability, keeping our eyes on the long term and a solution-oriented approach are other important factors. As part of the Rhenus Group, we are dedicated to following the guiding principles that link the companies within the Rhenus Group. We operate in a sustainable manner with our eye on the long term. Compliance and health & safety at work form central pillars in terms of our entrepreneurial spirit.



WHAT DEVELOPMENTS WILL TAKE PLACE IN FITNESS LOGISTICS IN FUTURE?

At Rhenus Sports Tech, we're expecting further consolidation in the gymnasium sector. The premium segments will continue to become more important, as they are in many other fields. This will involve even more individual support for members and making every effort to give as many members as possible the opportunity to train on the latest and most modern equipment. However, we can also see that the home fitness will become increasingly significant so that people can use machines within their own four walls. We also believe that there'll be room for hybrid models in the medium term. They'll enable people to train both at home and at a classic gym.

WHAT EFFECTS ARE THESE TRENDS HAVING ON YOUR SERVICES?

Rhenus Sports Tech offers logistics solutions for its clients in both fields. We only provided B2B logistics in the early days, but we've now complemented them with our B2C modular solution. This means that we offer our services to clients with premium standards. We implement these standards in our logistics services and thereby guarantee a delivery and service experience that matches the philosophy of our clients.

HOW WILL RHENUS SPORTS TECH FACE UP TO THE NEW CHALLENGES?

We believe that we're ideally equipped for future tasks. We involve customers in our planning processes using our customer journey. Fitness studios or private recipients already receive automated status updates by e-mail from the time that the order is placed and as soon as the goods are ready for dispatch. Our installation teams are almost all equipped with tablets. It's therefore possible to obtain feedback almost in real time. If any abnormalities occur, it's then possible to directly request technical resources from our ordering client or even spare parts. Warehouse logistics is another major focal point. We're already operating both central warehouses for new and returned machines and for spare and service parts and we use them to serve our target markets in several countries.

DO YOU ALSO OFFER CONCEPTS THAT GO BEYOND THE LAST MILE?

Even if we at Rhenus Sports Tech are focussing on the last mile and will continue to do so, we're increasingly drawing up solutions for the entire procurement logistics for our clients. We're able to make use of the Rhenus Group's global network here. Our customers have the advantage of having one central contact partner for all the different stages if they use our services.

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Please contact us for more information!

rhenus.group/sports-and-fitness-equipment