

BA Systèmes automates the internal logistics of Sappi's Maastricht paper mill in the Netherlands with an AGV system

Press Release – Rennes (FR), November 14, 2017 – BA Systèmes, the French leader in AGV-based intralogistics systems has successfully completed the partial automation of Sappi's Maastricht paper mill in the Netherlands. The fleet of 7 counterbalanced AGVs constitutes a highly efficient automated solution for integrated production and storage flows.

A leading manufacturer in the paper industry seeking AGV efficiency

Sappi is a South African global player in the paper industry headquartered in Johannesburg, with nearly 12,000 employees in over 20 countries on three continents. Headquartered in Brussels, Sappi Europe is the leading European producer of coated fine paper used in premium magazines, books and high-end print advertising.

Located on a 14-ha site, Sappi's paper mill in Maastricht employs 480 people and produces 290,000 tons of coated wood-free paper per year. Thanks to its central location in Europe, the Sappi paper mill can deliver its products quickly and efficiently throughout Western Europe.

In order to increase the efficiency of the internal logistics in the cutting and packaging areas of the plant, Sappi decided to optimize the internal transport by means of a fully automated AGV system.

BA Systèmes demonstrates once again its capacity to handle any type of loads

Sappi has trusted BA Systèmes and its long experience in AGV automation as well as on its knowledge of the paper industry to provide its Maastricht paper mill with a safe, reliable and efficient AGV system that combines excellent functionality with a significant increase in productivity.

Completely integrated into the production process, and operating 24 /7, the AGV solution offers:

- The transport of paper from the 3 cutting machines to the buffer storage,
- The logistic management and handling in the buffer storage,
- The transport of paper from the buffer storage to the ream wrappers.



The turnkey solution developed by BA Systèmes was based on a thorough logistic analysis, conducted in close cooperation with Sappi. BA Systèmes has integrated the system into the heart of Sappi's production process, comprising of 7 AGVs, an automatic battery changing system (Autoswap), and the AGVs' traffic management through AGV Manager, BA Systèmes' supervision system. The contract also included the supply of pallet racking systems and the connection to existing and new conveyor systems.

Sappi relied on BA Systèmes' expertise to ensure the quality, overall efficiency and reliability of the system. One of the main concerns was to avoid any damage to the palletized paper sheets, a very delicate load. To ensure the integrity of the loads during transport, BA Systèmes has been working with Sappi from the start to adapt the AGVs to their specific needs and develop new tailor-made tools.

At Sappi, there are nearly thirty different pallet dimensions, and some of them are quite unstable due to the unwrapped stacks of paper. BA Systèmes' AGVs developed for Sappi have undergone extensive tests to guarantee safe handling of these various formats. A set of specific tools has been added to the AGV equipment:

- A load backrest to maintain the integrity of the stacks during emergency braking,
- A special pressing device to improve the stability of the paper stack during pick-up, transportation and drop-off, avoiding paper stack deformation and loss of individual paper sheets,
- A wide-range fork width control system to ensure safe handling from the smallest to the largest load,
- A fork board sideshift to minimize the load spacing in the racks and optimize the storage capacity.

The system that operates both in production and storage areas is completely flexible and adapts to every requirement. If needed, one or more AGVs can be transferred from one area to another by a simple keyboard order from an operator.

"BA Systèmes has respected the tight planning of the project. We have appreciated their excellent project management and their thorough analysis and tests to find the best solution for our process and objectives. BA Systèmes knows how to develop complex functions and has successfully integrated them into our process", confirms Christopher Jeurissen, Technologist/Project Manager at Sappi Europe.

About BA Systèmes

French leader in intralogistics systems based on AGV, BA Systèmes supports industrial companies in the full automation of their flows. Over 300 sites in Europe are equipped with BA Systèmes' solutions, hence improving the productivity, flexibility and reliability of processes of Nestlé, L'Oréal, Kraft Food or even Heineken.

Involved in a permanent innovation process recognized by international awards, BA Robotic Systems Group offers its customers its expertise in mobile robotics and allows them to benefit from the cutting-edge technologies and develop as close to their needs as possible innovative industrial prototypes addressing the challenges of the Factory of the Future. Innovative applications are implemented by dedicated activities in intralogistics, industrial robotics and medical fields.

More information on: <https://www.basystemes.com>

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