



## QUEEN BEE USES OVERNIGHT EXPRESS

SPECIAL SERVICE FOR BEEKEEPERS

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## MUCH ACCOMPLISHED AND WELL EQUIPPED NEW CHALLENGES FOR 2025

Dear readers, The new year feels like it is rushing past us and has already brought some new developments. At Night Star Express, we are also already hard-working: The focus is on the further development of our quality and innovation offensive having the motto 'Deliver 2025'. In this latest issue of 'express', you can find out what this means, what the entire network is doing to achieve this and what our plans are for the future. This issue focuses on the areas of operations and system planning. The latter area concentrates primarily on using detailed calculations and simulations to determine suitable new locations for our system. Another focus of our work is analysing routes in order to make individual adjustments.

distributed locations throughout Germany. This ensures that the goods are delivered safely and on time - even if there is no staff on site. This approach offers particular advantages,



especially for deliveries to hard-to-reach or open locations. This much can already be revealed: Those involved, including customers, are delighted. In other news, our colleagues from Night Star Express Benelux have successfully relocated and are happy at their new location in Ittervoort, as you can also read here.

We wish you an enjoyable read

Nikolaus Frantz  
Managing Director Night Star Express

'Unmanned unloading point' is the name of the project developed by our shareholder company ZUFALL. The idea behind it: Colleagues supply unloading points, such as empty containers, at

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## BECOMING A 'FIRST AIDER OF TOMORROW' WITH JONA AND JONI NIGHT STAR SUPPORTS PROJECT

'Helping is strong' is the motto of the 'Johanniter', who have been successfully teaching first aid to children in nurseries, kindergartens, schools and youth groups for years. They are supported by the hand puppets Jona and Joni. To reinforce what they have learnt, the 'Johanniter' have developed an easy-to-understand colouring, play and work book, a poster and an app in collaboration with 'K&L Verlag'. We at Night Star Express stringly promote this project as it is an excellent idea.

The book, with lots of pictures to colour in, teaches girls and boys the skills they need to provide first aid in an emergency and to recognise everyday sources of danger at home, during leisure activities and in traffic. On 44 pages, Jona and Joni talk about their experiences in the world of first aid. Using child-ori-

entated case studies, they give advice on first aid and prevention. At the same time, teachers, educators and parents can discuss and practise the illustrations with the children. The app offers learning videos and is also a digital learning success control. It shows the children whether they have solved the tasks correctly and incentivises them to fully complete the book. With the support of many local companies, the colouring and workbooks, posters and the app are distributed free of charge to nurseries in the district of Unna. 'You can't start meaningful road safety education early enough. That's why we are happy to support this exemplary commitment,' emphasises Nikolaus Frantz, Managing Director of Night Star Express.



**WOULD YOU LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT? HERE YOU CAN FIND FURTHER INFORMATION:**





# Sprint and endurance runner at the same time

## CEO Nikolaus Frantz on high energy input

*Night Star Express has been one of the leading overnight express service providers in Germany and beyond for more than 30 years. However, consistency is just one of the company's strengths and one of the reasons why customers and partners choose the company. We spoke to Nikolaus Frantz, Managing Director of Night Star Express, about other barometers of success.*

**Editorial team:** Mr Frantz, which qualities do you value about Night Star Express in addition to its constant market presence?

**Nikolaus Frantz:** Let me mention the following keywords: Reliability, precision, commitment, quality, investment, competition, flexibility, courage, discipline and focus. All of these together make up our clear stance. They are reflected both internally and externally. Our daily incentive and ambition is to always fulfil our tasks for 100 percent plus. Every employee in our company knows this and does their

best to achieve it. 'First class' also includes our customer promise. And we consistently endeavour to keep it. Our core expertise is an important and indispensable driving force. It enables us to adapt quickly and early to changes in the business market environment and fulfil individual customer requirements with customised solutions. The big challenge is to act quickly and flexibly while maintaining our high quality standards. In sporting terms, we are both sprinters and endurance runners.

**Editorial team:** And what would you consider to be your company's clear strengths?

**Nikolaus Frantz:** Night Star Express offers very special advantages that give us a competitive edge. Strength number one is the unique co-operation within the network. Each of our partner companies has an individual profile as well as specialised market and industry knowledge. This helps us to continuously develop the Night Star Express product. Our other strengths include being absolutely close to our customers and we convey a high level of logistical expertise. We are extremely flexible in our performance. We always keep our feet firmly on the ground and yet we have a great dimension and strong charisma. And what we are particularly proud of is our European focus, which has grown organically over the years. In addition to its core market of Germany, Night Star Express is increasingly at home in Europe and is gaining local access to regional markets and customers. Be it under our own management in neighbouring countries or with European partner companies at an identically high service level. Our declared corporate goal is to expand our overnight express service even further Europe, which is also part of our corporate strategy.

**Editorial team:** What importance do you attach to communication?

**Nikolaus Frantz:** Anyone who knows me knows that I am a convinced advocate of communica-



tion. Better more than too little. After all, we are all pursuing the same goal: to deliver sensible work in the interests of all those involved who meet our high standards. The great art is to reconcile different perspectives and judgments. This is only moderately successful if aspects are not addressed, tasks are not properly understood or problems are not clearly identified. Communication at eye level is already part of the solution. If we all internalise this, we will be on the right track. After all, the challenges we face every day are becoming ever more complex, and there are many aspects that are beyond our control. Increasing competition, globalisation, the use of artificial intelligence, a condensed working environment, labour shortages, a growing number of regulations and, last but not least, our customers, some of whom have to reorient them-

selves: This requires a finely tuned, focussed interaction in which the formations can or must change again and again.

**Editorial team:** Your motto for 2025 for Night Star Express is Deliver2025?

**Nikolaus Frantz:** The focus is on improving quality in all areas and focussing on developments and trends that will take us forward in the medium and long term. Focusing on a course of consolidation with the hope of better times is no longer enough these days. We have to move with the times and ideally, look around the corner beforehand. This helps us to change direction if necessary without losing sight of the big picture along the way. Speed plays an advantageous role here, and this is a self-explanatory part of the traditional DNA of logistics. We also demonstrate a high degree of willingness to change, openness to new ideas and creativity in dealing with innovative developments. Our perseverance is another special quality of ours. In this respect, we are very well positioned for the future.



# The network always in view

## Analysing, planing and controlling

*Fiete Kraß works at the Night Star Express system centre as a manager for system planning and network control. His core tasks are complex and multi-layered. His keen eye for detail and the necessary neutral bird's-eye view help him to realise them.*



'The spectrum ranges from strategic to tactical to operational planning, as well as support with the respective implementation measures,' explains the 32-year-old, who already came into contact with logistics during his bachelor's degree. He gained his first experience as a trainee in freight management at Fraport AG at Frankfurt Airport. 'Logistics, and transport logistics in particular, fascinated me right from the start. The CEP sector and the express business present exciting challenges that require a high degree of flexibility, precise processes and creative solutions - that makes it particularly varied.'

Fiete Kraß explains system planning according to the step-by-step model: 'Strategic planning involves determining the optimum number of locations to reach each postcode according to service level. This area of work also includes calculating the appropriate geographical location and area allocations of locations as well as the optimum number and capacity of HUB and consolidation locations.' However, the focus is even broader: 'Tactical planning includes determining favourable transport and loading routes in long-distance transport and regularly reviewing the network structure, taking volume developments into account. Operational planning concerns route planning in local transport as well as transport capacity management and schedule-based route optimisation in long-distance transport.'

### **SIMULATION VIA SPECIAL SOFTWARE**

Part of centralised network control is the system-wide planning and evaluation of the network. This ranges from the strategic infrastructural concept to the operational daily route and tour plan. 'We select and implement special software for scene-based modelling and simulation of the network in cooperation with our operations experts. 'In addition, one of our services provides the network with transport-relevant indicators, market trends and developments. These can be used to conduct negotiations with companies and customers via system-wide access and continuous provision. 'The aim is also to control the processes in the network as optimally and efficiently as possible using the most valid, reliable and latest available key figures. 'We are currently working intensively on developing and analysing additional data sources and harmonising them with one another. This should ensure that all company information is understood, interpreted and utilised identically by all

employees at the locations. This also applies to the systems used and the processes taking place.'

### **MAXIMUM EFFICIENT ROUTING**

Route analysis is one example of the main focus of work. As soon as a new customer feeds additional consignment volumes into the system, the system needs to be adapted. Additionally, there are seasonal effects and specific customer requirements. 'Our aim is to route the consignment volumes through our system as efficiently as possible using appropriate timing and well-located sites.' To ensure high quality and reliability, Fiete Kraß and his colleague Daniel Heckel are the direct contacts for the respective system planners in the network and the cooperation companies. The constant exchange and passing on of information is essential. 'We see ourselves as an overall service provider for the entire network and endeavour to find a solution that benefits everyone.'



# Motto 2025: Deliver

## Smooth process with operations

*The operations department is an important pillar in the basic structure of Night Star Express. Our colleagues make a decisive contribution to ensuring that the system runs smoothly. 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including public holidays. It's a job which is really challenging.*

But what is behind the operations department, or OPS for short? Broadly speaking, OPS managers are responsible for planning, controlling, monitoring and optimising processes and business procedures within the company. With their work, they ensure smooth operations at all times, optimise processes and increase

profitability. In addition to a strong organisational talent and analytical skills, the job requirements also include strong communication and leadership skills.

'Our range of tasks is very diverse. Anyone who appreciates variety is in good hands in this job,' explains Sven Hoops, Head of Operations



ity.' In addition to technical input, the agenda included the practical and interactive development of quality-improving measures through various topic-related workshops and discussions in small groups and in plenary sessions. 'We also utilise the close integration and cooperation with the IT and sales teams, who are also present at these meetings alongside the management,' explains the Head of Operations. 'In addition to cross-divisional teamwork, the focus was on the operational priorities of Night Star Express and how we can all play our part. We also discussed quality and customer expectations and the definition of top measures for 2025 to improve quality.'

### MANY IDEAS, GOOD RESULTS

'As a result, we dealt with four core areas as top issues with around 30 sub-categories in various working groups. These are regularly updated at quarterly intervals in the plenary session. We also communicate the content and results in our Deliver2025 newsletter.' Sven Hoops is very satisfied with the event: 'The colleagues contributed a lot of good ideas and optimisation measures, some of which we are gradually implementing. In this respect, we had two very successful days that we will definitely repeat in this format.'

at Night Star Express, whose team at the system headquarters regularly exchanges information and cooperates with the entire Night Star Express network via a regional manager concept, among other things. 'We record, analyse and evaluate process data, identify improvement measures and also develop measures to increase efficiency together with the local teams.' Additional tasks include avoiding bottlenecks through coordination with supply chain management, KPI-based reporting, regular communication with management and holistic optimisation of the value chain. Other focal points include coordinating quality control for incoming and outgoing consignments, using logistics tools to monitor delivery times, ensuring the quality of the goods and ensuring that they are delivered on time.

### A SHARED VIEW OF THE ENTIRE VALUE CHAIN

The annual kick-off meetings are always held with a different motto. All divisional and plant managers from national and, in some cases, international partners come together for the multi-day event - most recently in Hünfeld, Hessen. Sven Hoops: 'This time, the focus was on the further operational alignment of Night Star Express. We took a holistic view of the quality of the entire value chain. We want to create the best possible conditions in process steps so that the last mile can deliver impeccable qual-

### About Night Star Express GmbH Logistik

*Night Star Express GmbH Logistik is a merger of several companies and has been on the market for more than 30 years. The specialist for overnight delivery services collects customer consignments by the early afternoon and delivers them the following night by eight o'clock in the morning at the latest, scanned and without receipts. An average of more than seven million delivered consignments a year are the reference for satisfied customers at home and abroad. These mainly come from the automotive, agricultural engineering, construction machinery and pharmaceutical industries.*



# Cooperation, flexibility, prospects

## Efficient solutions for unoccupied unloading points

*Sometimes the simplest ideas are the most elegant solutions: What if unloading points didn't have to be manned? What if no more delivery attempts failed and route planning became more flexible at the same time?*

ZUFALL, a partner company of Night Star Express, has asked itself these questions and worked intensively on various solutions. The timely delivery of urgently needed goods to unmanned unloading points faces companies with logistical challenges. Often there is no one present to receive the goods. This is precisely where the project comes in: Instead of having

to rely on personnel on site, the handover takes place via keys, keycards or similar means of access. In this way, ZUFALL enables uncomplicated and flexible storage of the goods - regardless of whether someone is on site. More than two years ago, ZUFALL took part in a tender by an IT company that was looking for a reliable partner to supply

unmanned unloading points. After winning the tender, a customised concept was developed in close cooperation with the customer, which has been successfully launched this year. Since then, ZUFALL has been supplying unloading points, such as empty containers, at distributed locations throughout Germany. This ensures that the goods are delivered safely



### The advantages at a glance

**Flexible delivery dates:** Flexible delivery, including at night, offers customers maximum planning security.

**Comprehensive information:** All necessary details about the unloading point, such as location and access, are provided to drivers in advance.

**Future-oriented network solutions:** Close cooperation within the network enables partners to offer their customers customised and reliable solutions.

**Documentation/transparency for our customers:** When unloading, drivers take a picture of the delivered goods, lock the loading point again and return the key.

and on time - even if there is no staff on site. This approach offers particular advantages, especially for deliveries to locations that are difficult to access or open.

### STANDARDISED PROCESS, CLEAR GUIDELINES

The system is both simple and well devised. To ensure efficient logistics processing, ZUFALL not only operates its own fleet of vehicles, but also works with various delivery partners. This close networking enables flexible and economical solutions. The biggest challenge was to create a standardised process together with the partners that provides clear guidelines for handling and invoicing. This ensures that everyone involved always has the relevant information when it comes to deliveries for this customer. This is where the partner network NG.Network came into play, providing support with the creation and implementation. The close cooperation between ZUFALL and NG.network ensures that the process takes place entirely within one network - without unnecessary interruptions. The first

step in the process already shows a decisive difference: the goods are loaded as usual, but the driver also receives a key, a keycard or a digital access code. The deadline pressure that often arises due to tight delivery windows is completely eliminated in this project. 'In some cases, deliveries can even be made without a key,' explains Stefanie Milker, Team Leader in Customer Service and Outbound Land Transport Germany. 'Sometimes these are open spaces where the goods can be parked, or a porter or night watchman can be called in.

### COMPLETELY DIGITAL AND NO ADDITIONAL EFFORT

The dispatcher not only provides the keys and instructions, but also passes on all details about the unloading point digitally: 'Our software generates a shipment-related link that is transmitted to the dispatcher via the remote data transmission system. The dispatchers can use this link to call up all the information about the unoccupied unloading point,' explains Stefanie Milker. 'The whole process is

completely digital and the customers keep the information themselves.' After delivery, the link is blocked to ensure the best possible security. Additional work for drivers or companies is avoided: 'Because we want to make the system as easy as possible for our partners.'

# New depot in Ittervoort

## Night Star Express Hellmann opens new HUB

*Since the beginning of 2025, activities for the Belgian and Luxembourg markets have been managed by a new hub in Ittervoort (Netherlands). After years of Maasmechelen (Belgium) being the main transshipment base, a new location near the Belgian-Dutch border was chosen.*

The decision in favour of Ittervoort was based on several factors: the favourable location, just a stone's throw from the border, the possibility of completely converting the premises to suit the company's own needs and the growth potential that could be achieved on

this property. The property consists of several halls, of which two halls of 2400 m<sup>2</sup> and 1700 m<sup>2</sup> were initially put into operation. A lot of progress was made in the last quarter of 2024, including the creation of 24 bus and 10 lorry loading areas. This makes it possible

to utilise sufficient space for sorting the many night-time consignments, and the first evening of operation took place at the beginning of the year. Of course, a first working day on new premises always brings challenges; nevertheless, the colleagues mastered the tasks brilliantly and the entire process ran as usual in a very short time. The last details will be finalised in the near future and then the team can look forward to a great future at Ittervoort! We would like to thank the Ittervoort project team for their hard work - it was a labour-intensive few weeks with a great result!



## NEW MANAGEMENT AT NSE HELLMANN B.V.

On 1 March 2025, Patrick Löwenthal, COO CEP Europe, transferred his position in the management of NSE Hellmann B.V. and HExS B.V. to Chris van der Weide and Hans Zwerus. This change in structure is in line with the strategy of Hellmann Worldwide Logistics and CEP Europe (Courier Express Parcel). Chris van der Weide has been 22 years with NSE Hellmann as Operations Director and is thus taking the next logical step in his career within Hellmann as Managing Director. Hans Zwerus, who has been with NSE Hellmann B.V. for three years and has many years of experience in Logistic Finance, is continuing to develop his role as controller and is joining the management board. Together they have the ambition to further strengthen and expand the CEP organisation in the Benelux countries and thus successfully implement their strategies.



Photo from left: Hans Zwerus, Patrick Löwenthal and Chris van der Weide



# Special service for beekeepers

## Queen bee uses overnight express

*Night Star Express's aspiration to develop customised solutions at all times is demonstrated by another of our diverse customer groups: beekeepers.*



There are around 135,000 beekeepers in Germany. Together, they look after more than 950,000 bee colonies, irreplaceable helpers for nature and people. Every spring, most beekeepers have to refresh their colonies. This is because bee colonies are often decimated over the course of the year, whether by weather conditions, such as severe frost in winter, or by pests such as the Varroa mite. However, in

order to be able to harvest approximately the same quantities of honey in summer, some of the bee colonies either have to be bred by themselves or topped up with swarms of bees. Therefore, beekeepers order new queen bees or entire swarms of bees. However, the special requirement for an order is the subsequent transport of queen bees and swarms of bees

Express developed a nationwide concept for shipping bees for beekeepers and providers of beekeeping supplies years ago. With the support of experienced beekeepers, a transport packaging was developed especially for shipping by overnight express that ensures the survival of the bees and at the same time eliminates any risk of being stung for the drivers.

### NEW TO THE TEAM: LUKA SÜNDERMANN TRAVELLING NORTH

Luka Sündermann is also relatively new to the Night Star Express Operations team. He brings his many years of expertise to his new role as Regional Manager North and Process Manager. In the field of logistics, he has primarily gained experience in the areas of leadership as well as project and process management. 'I have found a dynamic and open-minded team here that works in a very solution-orientated way. There are a lot of creative opportunities here to which I can contribute my own ideas.' In his free time, Luka relaxes with fitness training and motorbike riding.



#### SAFE TRANSPORT IN AN AIR-PERMEABLE BOX

During transport, the swarms of bees are placed in a special air-permeable box in which a container with sugar dough is attached. An outer box was especially developed for this reusable box, which ensures the necessary stability during transport and air supply for the bees. The short transport and handling times and the coolness of the night are the particular advantages of shipping bees by Night Star Express.



