



Olvi's positive worldview

extends not only to creating an experience for the consumer, but the way in which the brewery operates with respect for people, the environment and tradition. The right kind of automation plays its own key role in this.

Every year, around 100 million litres of drinks of various kinds leave Olvi – the third largest brewery and soft drinks company in Finland – for retailers and restaurants. Up until now the order picking of products to be sent to customers has been done 100 % manually at Olvi's Iisalmi brewery, which has meant a large number of employees in the brewery dispatch department and a lot of forklift traffic. However, in the near future this task will be handled by six Cimcorp MultiPick order picking robots, which will come into operation this spring.

The robots will handle the order picking of drinks delivered both in plastic crates and in dollies. The Cimcorp control system will receive data on the products to be delivered directly from the Olvi ERP system and the robots will pick products onto customer-specific pallets. The control system will also manage the products to be added to the pallets by hand as well as the delivery flow of full product pallets.

"Pallet efficiency will increase, in other words, we will get more litres on the pallet and the margin for error in order picking will decrease," is how the technical director of Olvi, **Pentti Pelttari**, sums up the effects of implementing the order picking system.

An automated order picking system answers the logistical challenges of the beverage industry in many ways. It can adapt to variations in the amount of deliveries and provides flexibility. At best, the delivery time for orders can be halved and delivery rounds doubled.

"The order picking system enables delivery even within 24 hours and several days a week. Another advantage is that order picking can now be done in principle even in a cool and unlit space, which is beneficial for the products themselves in terms of quality."

Beer and juice barrels are collected on the pallets manually, as is advertising material going to the client. For the time being, canned produc-

tion is also outside the scope of the order picking system.

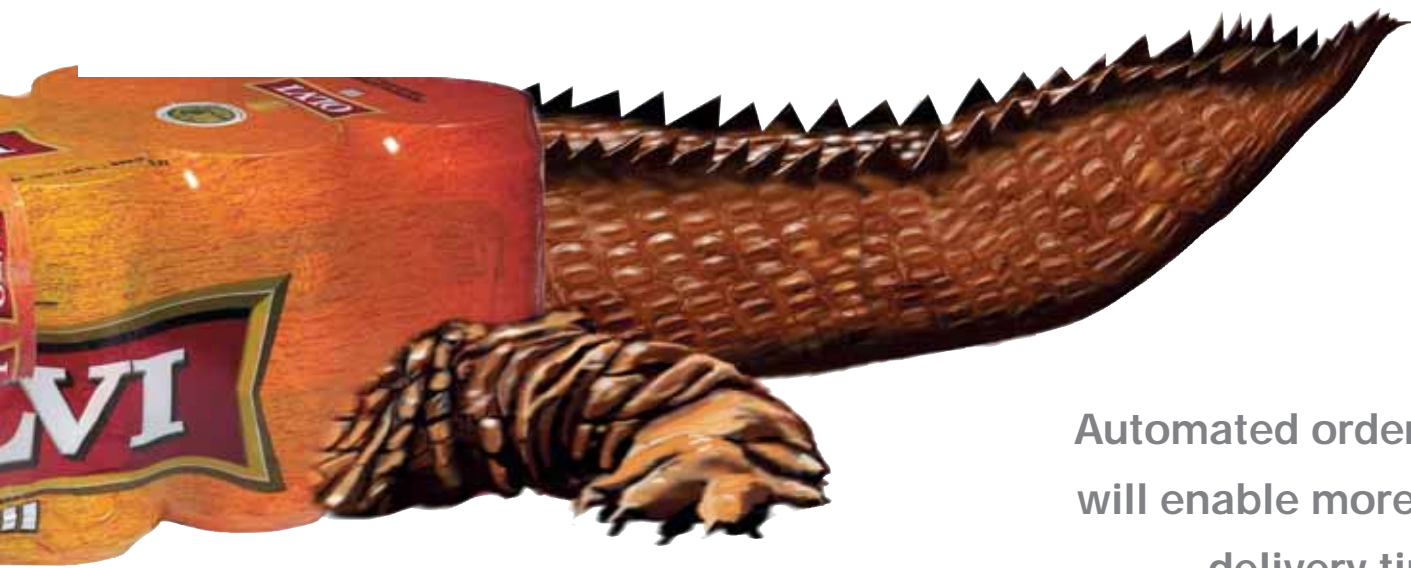
"There are plans to automate the order picking of cans too in the near future. The aim is to develop systems with equipment suppliers and the other breweries."

Environmental awareness

Established in 1878, Olvi is one of the leading drinks manufacturers in Finland. The company has been a pioneer in Finnish brewing in many fields - it was the first to use one-litre glass beer bottles as well as the six-pack.

In the implementation of new automation, Olvi has not been afraid to be a trendsetter amongst Finnish brewers.

"Instead of turning into a factory, we want to remain a brewery where there is room for the manual working culture. However, we do want to automate the monotonous and heavy



Automated order picking will enable more flexible delivery times and a larger product range.



Technical director of Olvi, Pentti Pelttari, talks about the number of benefits automated order picking has provided.

work stages," says Pelttari.

Using an order picking system will also improve occupational safety.

"Forklifts are a safety risk – when production exceeds a certain limit, forklift traffic is chaotic. With the new system, products will be taken by forklift to a single point and the robot

will distribute them in the order picking area."

Environmental responsibility is one of Olvi's key values. The firm complies with the environmental policy of the Finnish Brewery Association and the principles of sustainable development. In practice this means the by-products and waste generated in production are routed for recycling as far as possible, and refillable and recyclable packaging is used.

Olvi has a sorting centre, where glass, metal and wood are collected. Only the smallest part of the waste is sent for landfill.

"Above all the reuse of bottles represents proactive environmental action throughout the industry. The Cimcorp order picking system promotes recycling, because it has been developed specifically for handling returnable plastic crates."

The system of the future

Pelttari predicts that the product range of the beverage industry will expand in the future. New drinks and new kinds of packaging are being launched onto the market continually. Olvi's latest innovation is a 12-pack of beer cans, known as the "crocodile."

Maximum benefit can be gained from an automated order picking system in this product jungle.

"The more products you have, the greater the risk of error. Automated order picking minimizes errors. In the order picking area

now planned, we can also send out many more different products than with a conventional manual picking area of the same size."

Olvi has calculated that the payback time for the order picking system will be about three years. When the order picking system is on stream in Iisalmi, the next natural step will be to utilize the system in the Olvi group subsidiaries operating in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

"I'm sure that they will also implement the Cimcorp order picking system there, once it has met the objectives set for it here and we see how it could be adapted for the Baltic countries."

TEXT | SARI LOMMERSE PHOTOS | HARRI PÄLVIRANTA

▶▶ The Cimcorp automated crate and dolly order picking system will come on stream at Olvi's Iisalmi factory in April–May 2005.

▶▶ The solution for crates is based on the MultiPick® concept and the solution for dollies, the MultiPick® Dolly, is a further development of the original concept.

▶▶ The whole system will be managed by Cimcorp WCS software.