

## SUCCESS STORY



## INFORM and ASB Logistics Develop Individual Solutions in Vehicle Logistics

For the customized IT-solution in vehicle logistics of the software provider INFORM, ASB Logistics received the highest possible subsidy from the EU-sponsored Digital Bonus Bavaria. With the end-to-end control and optimization of all transport and workshop processes, ASB intends to digitize all processes, and respond reliably and flexibly to customer inquiries at all times. The goal is to expand its leading position in a rapidly changing industry environment.

ASB Fahrzeug-Logistic GmbH

ASB Logistics is a medium-sized transport and logistics company with over 65 truck units, specializing in car, agricultural, and construction machinery, caravans, and motorhomes as well as special transport, with over 100 employees. The customers include the most renowned car, truck, land, and construction machinery manufacturers worldwide. With the vehicle logistics center in the heart of Europe, ASB Logistics offers its customers a wide range of services, such as vehicle storage, damage management, repairs, and vehicle refinement. ASB Logistics also relies on state-of-the-art digitalization and optimization of all business processes.

www.asb-logistic.de



Key Objectives

- Tailor-made solution for vehicle storage, workshop center, and transport management;
- Complete transparency across the entire supply chain;
- Flexibility and reliability already in the planning stage;
- Optimized utilization of all resources such as vehicles, personnel, lifting platform, or spare parts.

"Welcome to the heart of Europe," Christian Binder says as he welcomes his customers in Röhrnbach, a small town in southeast Germany, about 30 minutes from Passau. Binder has been Managing Director of ASB Logistics for 14 years. With over 100 employees and an annual turnover of currently around 11.5 million euros, ASB is one of the most successful medium-sized companies in the world of freight forwarding. ASB transports and modifies around 60,000 vehicles and vehicle parts every year. These include new and used cars, but also special transports of mobile homes, tractors, and boats, as well as construction and agricultural machinery, and even unusual special transports. "Everything that hums," says Binder.

In his welcome, he is serious: "Seven or eight years ago, I thought about our location. I drew our locations and all the locations of vehicle-producing plants in Europe on a map. If you connect the distances to our location using a ruler, you can see that we are very centrally located in the middle of their transport network." In order to add another competitive advantage to his company beyond the favorable location, he is investing heavily in the digitalization of all his processes.

Same Day Transport Solutions

"Large haulage companies rely above all on mass," says Binder. "They hold long-term, but also rigid contracts with the automobile manufacturers." However, the managing director no longer considers this approach to be appropriate for his company. "If an automobile manufacturer calls at 5 p.m. because they spontaneously want to place 1,000 new vehicles on a car terminal and possibly even have them refitted with additional components, we will have a solution the very same day. This flexibility is what sets us apart. The large haulage companies must first spend a week examining their existing capacities and contracts to see whether they can utilize their resources accordingly.

ASB draws a good part of this flexibility from its new IT system for vehicle logistics from the Aachen-based optimization specialist INFORM. Together, the two companies developed a scalable solution adapted to ASB's processes. On the one hand, the system offers continuous, real-time transparency of all transports, vehicles, components, personnel, and orders. On the other hand, intelligent algorithms based on operations research and artificial intelligence control and optimize operational processes in all phases of the storage, workshop, and transport process.

"Our system schedules all known orders and puts the individual work steps into concrete, optimized sequences so that ASB can use its existing capacities to the best possible extent," says Hartmut Haubrich, Director Vehicle Logistics Systems at INFORM, explaining the system's main functions. "The trick is that this distributes the existing orders over the capacities in such a way that all deadlines can be met." Specifically, the algorithms control and optimize:

- all vehicle movements (Where does which vehicle park when, or when does it have to go to which workstation in the workshop center?);
- the shift planning of the employees (Who does what, when?);
- the sequence of order processing in the workshop center (Which vehicle needs which modifications, inspections, washing, repairs, etc., and when?);
- as well as the parts planning in the warehouse (air conditioning, tires, number plates, etc.).

"INFORM helps us to better structure the processes and procedures in our logistics center with less organization," summarizes Binder. "In order to cope with our growing order load, I would have had to hire three new employees just to deal with the bureaucracy, which we now handle automatically. We are 20 to 30 times faster than before."

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Growth Through Flexibility

To enable the new system to work in real-time, all employees are equipped with mobile devices running a mobile application from INFORM. There, they find their next, immediate task and give feedback at the touch of a button on the start and completion of all work steps as well as any disruptions.

Many routine activities can be significantly shortened as a result. For example, if a delivered new car has been scratched, employees used to have to manually obtain approval to photograph the vehicle. To do this, they had to take the photos, download them from the camera to a PC, check them manually, edit and sort the images, write a damage report, have it signed, send it to the customer, reply to the customer, obtain a repair permit, and much more. Today, the employee takes the photos with the mobile application, enters a damage code, and creates a repair order. Everything else happens automatically in the background.

"I see IT as much more than just an annoying cost item," says Binder. "Everything is changing in our industry at the moment. Since January 2020, you can order Sprinters from Daimler via Amazon. You won't get far with old contracts." In order to be able to further boost its growth, ASB, therefore, relies both on the flexible processing of orders from manufacturers and on end-customer business, which often tends to be spontaneous. Micro-enterprises, such as farmers, but also vehicle and construction machinery dealers, often look for a transport solution for their vehicles overnight. "The market still offers a lot of potential in this segment," says Binder. "The B2C business will increase and leave one or the other dealer out in the cold," adds Haubrich. "It is therefore important for us to provide efficient systems at an early stage, which will allow us to help shape the transformation."



Christian Binder,  
Geschäftsführer von ASB Logistics





### A Role Model in Digitization

The joint project of ASB and INFORM was supported with a maximum grant of 50,000 € from the digital bonus of the European Union, which was approved by the state of Bavaria. The Digital Bonus Bavaria promotes initiatives such as this one and thereby supports the sustainability of local businesses. Binder is proud of the recognition, but also thinks back critically to the application phase. Only three companies in his district of Freyung-Grafenau applied for the subsidy; only ASB received the approval. "It was a highly complicated procedure with many detailed questions from the authorities. We worked intensively and well with INFORM to explain the innovation and the technical procedures in detail." Half of the EU's funding in this area is not even called up because of this complexity, he says.

The development and application phase lasted a good year. Since November 2019, the overall solution has been in use at ASB with outstanding results. The digital bonus was paid out in March 2020, but the cooperation does not end there. In the future, the overall solution is to be expanded to include planning and optimization of all transports as well as machine-learning functionalities that will make planning even more precise. Binder also wants to develop an app-controlled transport platform that will make booking vehicle transports as easy as booking a flight. "And think of the omnipresent challenge of sustainability," says Binder. "We can make a good contribution to reducing climate-damaging emissions by optimizing our internal and external transports. Using algorithms, our capacities can be optimally utilized, and unnecessary movements of vehicles can be avoided."

### Main Results

- Complete digitalization of logistics processes;
- Faster throughput by 20 to 30 times thanks to automated processes and very good usability of the mobile app;
- Real-time transparency and reaction in all processes;
- Solution-finding for rush orders possible on the same day;
- Optimized planning of all vehicle movements, truck loading, order sequences, duty roster, and resource utilization;
- High degree of automation of all administrative processes.

**If you would like to know more, we look forward to hearing from you:**

**INFORM GmbH** / Manufacturing Logistics Division

Pascalstr. 35, 52076 Aachen

[vls@inform-software.com](mailto:vls@inform-software.com) / [vehiclelogistics.software](https://vehiclelogistics.software)