

# express



CUSTOMER MAGAZINE 2/2024



## A SUCCESSFUL TEAM

### WELCOME TO KASSEL



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# A LOT ACCOMPLISHED AND WELL PREPARED FOR NEXT YEAR NEW CHALLENGES FOR 2025

Dear readers,

almost at the end of 2024, we can look back at some very eventful and labour-intensive months. Above all, the Postmodernisation Act



was and remains a complex issue that has some major consequences for our industry. The first task now is to implement new regulations and measures step by step. Thanks to the great efforts of our effective teams throughout the system, we have already set important guidelines and are continuing to work on a comprehensive implementation. In this issue, you can read background reports on this and how the revised Postal Act will affect our industry in precise terms.

It is already a tradition for us to look back at the past year, by summing up and aiming at the challenges for 2025. We talk about results, developments and expectations in our in-depth interview, which you can also read in this issue. We focus not only on Night Star Express as a company, but also on how we deal sensibly with general conditions and challenges. Once again, our consistent strategic approach proves its worth, and we are always delighted

to gain an exclusive insight into the work at one of our locations. This time we were guests at Night Star Express in Kassel. We are very impressed and pay tribute to the entire team for their performance and commitment. We will be continuing our coverage tour in the coming year and will be reporting on it in detail here. We wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a happy new year to you all.

Enjoy reading our magazine.

Nikolaus Frantz  
Managing Director Night Star Express

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# LARGER HALL, BETTER TECHNOLOGY NIGHT STAR EXPRESS MOVES TO EICHENZELL



The doors of ZUFALL's Night Star Express site in Michelsrombach will close at the end of 2024. The business and all employees will move to new premises at the John Spedition site in Eichenzell. The hall situation in Michelsrombach had been cramped for some time. There was a lack of space for the daily work and growth plans for the future of Night Star Express. The situation in Eichenzell is completely different. A 1,500 square metre section of the hall there is vacant and offers very good conditions for use. The move will begin on 1 January 2025, and the necessary structural alteration works will take place in the meantime: The hall section will be fitted with new cabling and WLAN lighting. The lorry ramps will be equipped with steel ramps so that they can be used by vans. And an office container in the hall provides space for three dispatcher workstations. The move is a step back to the roots of Night Star Express. Night Star Express was previously based in Eichenzell between 1993 and 2009.

# NEW PARTNER AGREEMENT WITH G. ENGLMAYER

Night Star Express signed a new partner agreement with network partner G. Englmayer from Wels, Austria on 7 August 2024. We would like to thank everyone who supported us throughout the entire process and wish all parties a good and successful cooperation in the future too.

*After signing the contract (from left to right): Thomas Keßler (Manager International Night Star Express), Josef Schöllhuber (Head of Express Transport Englmayer), Robert Breitwieser (Managing Director Englmayer), Andreas Gaber (CEO Englmayer), Nikolaus Frantz (Managing Director Night Star Express) and Christian Gattinger (Team Leader Tagexpress Englmayer)*



# ‘Success is cannot be taken fo

## Nikolaus Frantz on opportunities and challenges

*The logistics business does not sit in an ivory tower. It is exposed to external influences to which it must respond professionally and appropriately. The current year in particular has demanded a lot from the industry. The long and labour-intensive road to the Postmodernisation Act is just one example, but it also shows the scope and impact on a wide range of areas. We also talked about this with Nikolaus Frantz, Managing Director of Night Star Express.*

**Editorial:** Mr Frantz, as a member of the Federal Association of Parcel and Express Services (BPEX) and as a player directly on the ground with various committees and politicians, and as a representative of Night Star Express you have been closely involved in the discussions on the Postal Modernisation Act. In your opinion, was the effort worth it?

**Nikolaus Frantz:** All in all, I think we can be satisfied. Our successes show that by joining forces in the BPEX, we can also make our-

elves heard by politicians and decision-making bodies and that our proposals are accepted. I personally attended a number of meetings in Berlin and the working atmosphere was always very constructive. The aim was to find a viable consensus and reconcile different interests and perspectives. By virtue of their function, politicians focus on different goals than the economy and companies. In addition, information about parcel services is sometimes very undifferentiated and one-sided. We were able to provide important, transparent





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information on this point with valid figures and very recent studies.

**Editorial:** Can you give a specific example of this?

**Nikolaus Frantz:** A large-scale survey commissioned by BPEX 2024 shows a high level of basic satisfaction among delivery staff in the parcel industry. The results show that the message often conveyed in the political debate about fundamentally poor working conditions in the parcel industry does not correspond to reality. Our task is to paint an objective picture and bring about improvements. The parcel industry is an important employer and gives many people the opportunity to enter the primary labour market, sometimes without any training. We have also noticed the high level of basic satisfaction here in the company: some drivers have been working for us for several years and obviously enjoy doing so. Nevertheless, we are experiencing that it is increasingly difficult to find suitable colleagues and retain them in the company on a long-term basis.

**Editorial:** Which specific incentives do you provide to counteract this trend?

**Nikolaus Frantz:** Fair pay should be a basic, of course. But a good salary alone will not solve the labour shortage that is spreading across Europe and that affects more than just us. This is why we are increasingly focussing on training, further education, networking and continuous exchange. It is important to us that everyone at our company feels valued and recognised - whether in the driver's cab, in the hall or in the offices. We are also committed to constantly improving the organisation and processes of our work. After all, a shared understanding of the processes and the product demonstrably increases job satisfaction. Or vice versa: if the meaning and logic of a job are not clear, the willingness to identify with and commit to it can suffer significantly. As an employer, we are therefore required to establish and maintain binding standards and trans-



parent communication channels both externally and internally. It's about the big picture.

**Editorial:** How would you summarise the past year? Are you satisfied with the results?

**Nikolaus Frantz:** We have performed solidly again. However, we are also noticing that the

German economy as a whole is struggling and further consequences are not yet foreseeable. This has both cyclical and structural causes. According to the ifo Institute, price-adjusted gross domestic product has stagnated this year following a decline of 0.3 per cent in 2023. We are therefore rather cautiously optimistic about the future. This makes it all the more important for us to realise further potential with innovations, additional products and services and by tapping new markets. This has resulted in promising approaches, measures and sustainable solutions. Our shared mindset helps us enormously to focus on our strengths and opportunities. And we want to continue to grow with it. After all, success does not happen by itself.



# New postal law, new requirements

## Regulations enter into force on 1 January 2025

*The Postmodernisation Act (PostModG) is intended to adapt the postal sector in Germany to the current needs and challenges of the digital and globalised world. The law regulates the framework conditions for the future provision of postal services for letters and parcels and is due to come into force on 1 January 2025.*

The following aspects and consequences are particularly relevant for the CEP sector:

- Market supervision will be improved as the Federal Network Agency and the Monopolies Commission will be given additional supervisory powers. Market-dominance companies can thus be obliged to be more transparent.

If such a company gains advantages by breaching the rules, the Federal Network Agency can skim off these advantages.

- Labelling heavy parcels makes sense. The possibility of continuing to deliver parcels weighing over 20 kilograms alone if suitable aids are available is also a sensible regula-

tion. Such parcels are exceptions in the low single-digit percentage range, which would not justify a general ban.

- The legislator has not interfered with the contractual partner structure in the parcel market, which has been working well for decades. More than 4,000 companies thus continue to participate in a growing market without having to set up nationwide infrastructures by themselves. The CEP sector will thus continue to prove its systemic relevance in the future in order to guarantee the millions of daily deliveries to citizens. And this without having to accept far-reaching cuts.

- Regrettably, competitors in the parcel market are still not subject to the same conditions. This is also confirmed by the

### **What is PQ KEP?**

*Prequalification in the parcel industry is proof of the professional qualifications, financial capacity and reliability of subcontractors. The aim is to prove the honesty of contributions, the social security of all parcel delivery staff and fair competition. The prequalification of subcontractors is an important aspect of equal market access conditions for all providers. The PQ is voluntary, but is required by many parcel service providers as a prerequisite for concluding and executing a contractual relationship. The background to this is the Parcel Carrier Protection Act to support fair competition. It has been in force since 23 November 2019 and is intended to ensure honesty with regard to social security obligations of service providers in the CEP industry.*



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Monopolies Commission. Politicians provide the so-called universal service provider with numerous competition-distorting privileges. From the CEP industry's point of view, this is not necessary, as there is no shortage of parcel services in Germany that would require a mandatory universal service provider.

## CONCLUSION

There are clear framework conditions for operating in the parcel market, which will be (further) scrutinised. This strengthens companies that operate responsibly and makes it more difficult for 'black sheep' to enter the market. The parcel service providers' auditing programmes and the "PQ CEP" prequalification have been effective in this regard for years. The Federal Ministry of Labour also describes these as particularly efficient in its evaluation of the Parcel Carrier Protection Act. Night Star Express also participates in this prequalification programme.



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### *Mandatory labelling for parcels*

*Night Star Express informs about adjustments*

### *New Postal Act in force - first changes*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*the 'Act on the Modernisation of Postal Law' has been in force since 19 July 2024. The aim of this law is to ensure adequate and sufficient postal services nationwide in the future, strengthen fair competition, promote appropriate working conditions and provide incentives for an environmentally sustainable postal sector. In addition, the new Postal Act synchronises postal services with European postal regulation. Therefore the postal amendment not only has an impact on traditional letter delivery, but also on the parcel market. This letter informs you about the first changes.*

*The new postal amendment also introduces a labelling requirement for parcels. From 1 January 2025, parcels weighing more than 10 to 20 kg and parcels weighing more than 20 kg must be labelled accordingly.*

**Therefore please note the following adjustments for your shipping systems as of 1 January 2025:**

*If you are a user of 'Night Star Express online order entry', you do not need to do anything. Please continue to send us the correct package weights.*

*If you generate your shipping labels using your own programming or via third-party providers, please have system adjustments made to ensure correct labelling on the label. A corresponding guideline is attached to this letter. Please also ensure that the actual package weights are determined and correctly recorded in the system before the label is created.*

*We will keep you informed about further developments and changes and thank you for your support!*

## NIGHT STAR EXPRESS ADJUSTS PRICES FOR 2025 LARGER PORTFOLIO, MORE INNOVATIONS

Night Star Express GmbH Logistik, the leading provider of overnight express logistics, is adjusting its prices for Germany in the coming year. In the first half of 2025, the increase will average out at 4.9 per cent. This is due to still rising costs in various areas of the supply

chain and necessary investment activities to improve quality and optimise processes.

'We want to continue to offer our customers high added value with our services and products in the future. To do this, we need a solid financial basis. It also enables us to further

expand our portfolio and develop new, innovative solutions. This also includes the area of digital transformation,' explains Nikolaus Frantz, Managing Director of Night Star Express GmbH Logistik.

# High basic satisfaction

## Survey of delivery staff

*Most delivery staffs employed by the contractual partners of parcel service providers in Germany reflect a high level of basic satisfaction with their work. This is shown by the results of an anonymous survey conducted by the business and transport consultancy KE-CONSULT.*

More than 1,000 delivery staffs took part in what is by far the most comprehensive empirical survey of its kind. Only delivery staff employed by contractual partners of parcel service providers were surveyed. For the first time, those potentially affected by numerous planned political regulations had the opportunity to express their opinions themselves. Until now, various political and trade union players

had made generalised claims about the industry over the heads of delivery staff. These are mostly based on selected negative individual examples. The survey results that have now been published show that the message often conveyed in the political debate about poor working conditions nationwide in the parcel industry does not correspond to reality at all.





In 2023, the volume of parcel, express and courier shipments (CEP) will increase slightly by 0.6%. This corresponds to an increase of around 25 million shipments, with the total shipment volume growing to around 4.18 billion shipments. The decline in the first half of 2023 was more than 1.6%, while the second half saw an increase of 2.6%. The overall trend shows: The decline from the previous year has been halted. But the uncertainties in the CEP market remain.



Around 260,500 people will work in the CEP sector in 2023. These are 2,700 or 1% more employees than in the previous year. In total, 570,100 jobs depend on the CEP sector.



Most respondents are satisfied with the most important areas of their work: **84 per cent** with their work in general, **93 per cent** with their employer. **70 per cent** are satisfied with their salary, with almost three quarters of respondents (**73 per cent**) receiving more than the minimum wage.

85 per cent of respondents stated that they had not completed vocational training. The parcel industry therefore offers numerous jobs for low-skilled workers on the primary labour market. They can thus finance their own livelihood and are not dependent on state aid. The companies also offer people without vocational training the opportunity to integrate into the labour market and thus into society, and the respondents can well imagine doing the work in the long term. Almost 80 per cent still want to be working as a delivery person in two years' time. The respondents chose their work themselves. Only in a few cases they took on this work because they saw no other options.

#### AI, HEALTH, EQUIPMENT: FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS

'Parcel delivery staff do an outstanding but also challenging job that deserves the utmost respect,' says Marten Bosselmann, CEO of the German Parcel and Express Logistics Association (BPEX). 'The results of the survey show that the political and media perception of delivery staff being fundamentally exploited is simply wrong and that the call for a ban on contractual partners in parcel delivery is unjustified. Nevertheless, parcel service providers are continuously working on improving the working conditions of delivery staff, be it through suitable equipment to reduce their workload, the use of artificial intelligence and many other measures.' Particularly in view of labour shortage, no company can afford not to pursue the health and satisfaction of its employees as a central goal. Motivated, well-equipped and protected staff are a cornerstone of the success of any company.



B2C shipments will increase by 3.4% in 2023. They are returning to growth after the significant decline in 2022. The B2C share of total shipment volumes will also increase significantly.



The volume of B2B shipments fell by 3.8% overall. Reasons for this include the decline in overall economic development in Germany and the export slump due to the slowdown in economic development in the target countries.

#### About the BPEX

Founded in 1982, the German Parcel and Express Logistics Association (BPEX) represents the interests of the courier, express and parcel industry (CEP) in Germany. Around 4,000 companies ensure nationwide delivery from the Hallig to the Alm, in the city and in the countryside. The entire industry in Germany currently realises an annual turnover of 26 billion euros, employs around 258,000 people and transports around 4.15 billion consignments per year.

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# Always deliver top quality

## Welcome to Kassel

*The ZUFALL Night Star Express facility in Kassel has had a loyal clientele for many years. These include important customers from the commercial vehicle parts, automotive, service technology and solar and heating sectors, among others. We were on site.*

In 1928, Kassel was the founding location of today's ZUFALL logistics group. 'Today, the Night Star team comprises around 30 employees. Together, we handle an average of 1,200 outgoing consignments and around

600 incoming consignments every day, and we have the smallest regional area in Germany,' explains Günther Harder, who has been Operations Manager since 2012. He celebrated his 25th anniversary at Night Star





Photo below: positive exchange on-site (from left): Muhammed Ucan, Günther Harder, Manuela Fernandez and Maksim Todorovic



Express last year. 'I am convinced of our product because we always aim to deliver top quality to our customers. The fact that Night Star Express has been one of the market leaders in this segment for more than 30 years is due to the people who represent Night Star Express every day. We manage to achieve optimum co-operation.

We manage to work together across all locations and we always try to find a common consensus.' Another invaluable advantage: 'We are there for our customers regionally and personally. They don't end up on an anonymous hotline or are passed from one centre to the next. Some of our customers have been loyal to us for many years and the cooperation has worked wonderfully well. We simply know each other.'



What will the night be like at Night Star Express tonight? Günther Harder (left) and Maksim Todorovic at a briefing

And of course, without the well-coordinated team on site, not everything would run so smoothly. 'We really are a great team here. One can rely on the other, we stick together,' says Manuela Fernandez from the Tag service team and team leader since 2018. After training in logistics, she completed a degree and also works as a trainer. ZUFALL currently has a total

of eleven trainees in the commercial and industrial sectors in Kassel. The young lady has no problems with acceptance: 'You have to have a certain amount of assertiveness. But at the end of the day, what counts is expertise, experience and respectful interaction with one another.'

**NETWORKING THROUGH REGIONAL MANAGERS**

Muhammed Ucan, Process and Regional Manager from the Night Star Express system centre in Unna, regularly visits the locations assigned to him, including Kassel. 'In addition to Kassel, my area of responsibility includes the locations





in Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Fulda, Leipzig, Erfurt, Belgium and the Netherlands. For regional reasons alone, these are very different locations. Our aim is to further develop the system concept together, establish comprehensive standards and best practice examples.' The colleagues also work together on various projects to regularly exchange information and create synergies. 'This has already led to very good results, for example in process handling and the introduction of various applications, including in the digital area.' A collective mindset is important to Muhammed Ucan. 'We work in a network and everyone is part of it. We want to utilise it as efficiently as possible and build on it systematically. An early warning system, which has proven to be very effective, also helps us to do this.'

The visits to the locations enrich his work: 'I am a committed networker, I like to communicate with an additional view from the outside and, conversely, I also learn from those around me. This creates an enormous drive, because we can make a difference.' Another focus of his activities at Night Star Express is the conceptualisation and implementation of training courses and further education. The transfer of theoretical and practical knowledge is an important criterion here. We want our teams to be as competent and technically skilled as possible.



### GOOD COMMUNICATION IS THE BE-ALL AND END-ALL

Günther Harder thinks the approach is a good one: 'Of course, we are constantly exchanging ideas within our own company, but the support from the system centre broadens the focus even further and offers sensible approaches to solutions.'

Good communication is the be-all and end-all for him anyway: 'My credo is: you don't have to be friends with everyone, but you must have a contact person at every interface who you can rely on and depend on at all times.' This is all the more important because the challenges are constantly increasing. This applies not only to the operational business, but also to additional tasks that are increasingly on the agenda. 'Take, for example, the effects of the Postal Modernisation Act and the associated mandatory registration of all postal service providers, which includes us as Nachtexpress and our cooperation partners. This is an enormous bureaucratic effort that ties up additional time and human resources. Complying with rules and regulations is part of our self-image. They are important and necessary. But you just have to keep an eye on the big picture and continuously follow up. We are also happy to provide support in order to steer everything in the right direction.'

Constant contact with the drivers is also part of the daily routine, reports Maksim Todorovic, a service employee who has been part of the ZUFALL team since the start of his training,



*Team leader Manuela Fernandez appreciates her work and also supervises trainees with her many years of experience.*

'There are regular meetings the evening before to discuss the routes and suggestions for optimisation. There is also detailed information on new customers and their specific requirements. We have had very positive experiences with this because issues can be clarified immediately and promptly.' During the entire handling pro-

cess, a presentation with important and up-to-date information is shown on a screen in the transshipment warehouse. New employees are instructed on safety, handling and quality topics via this screen. 'The presentation or online training course is easy to use and openly accessible to everyone, so we can update it daily, and its clarity and graphics make it easy to find your way around.' Maksim Todorovic continues: 'We support each other as a team. That's what makes our work so high quality. I really enjoy working at Night Star Express and feel that I'm in very good hands here.'







# Strong economic power Germany

## MX Award: Apply now!

*An award that has it all: The primary aim of the Manufacturing Excellence (MX) concept is to promote cross-industry collaboration to create a network for communication between experts from science and practice. Innovative and creative solutions should not only strengthen international competitiveness in the long term, but also Germany as a business location, especially in holistic interaction.*

The guiding principle of the Manufacturing Excellence Award is: 'Recognising strengths - setting standards'. The MX Award in Germany was founded in 2004, modelled on the successful MX Award in the UK. For almost 30 years, best practice solutions have been hon-

oured there and companies have been recognised. The MX Award in Germany is the established counterpart and a prestigious benchmarking competition for best practices in the industry. The annual MX Manufacturing Excellence activities focus on securing and fur-

ther developing value creation in Germany. The exchange of expert knowledge is motivating - a good opportunity for specialists to share their expertise and make progress together. This exchange is essential for production managers and service providers in the area of value cre-



### What is assessed?

The overall winner of the MX Award is awarded to (medium-sized) companies that achieve a very good score across all the categories analysed. The results' evaluations of recent years in both the UK and Germany have confirmed that companies that consider and optimise all sub-areas in a holistic concept are among the top companies in their sector. The assessment categories include excellent performance in all areas of the company, long-term customer loyalty and the development and introduction of new products. The jury also assesses innovative company processes, logistics and network management, information technology, management culture and employee integration as well as the company's quality management. The award ceremony is followed by a tour of the company. As part of a one-day event, the 2024 winner in the 'Employee Integration' category, the VW plant in Wolfsburg, provided insights into an inclusive demography project, shop floor management and the 'Group Lean Centre' learning location, to name just a few examples.

ation in order to recognise innovations at an early stage and implement them directly in their own processes. Especially in the current situation, such initiatives are more important than ever. They show positive examples of successful production in Germany and provide stimuli for sustainable growth and competitiveness.

'The MX Award offers a unique platform for promoting excellence in lean manufacturing and production management in Germany. The focus is on the exchange of expert knowledge in order to support companies by improving their production processes and to strengthen Germany as a production location in the long term,' explains René Kröber, Project Manager MX Manufacturing eXcellence e.V. 'Especially in today's world, it is of great importance to make positive examples of successful production in Germany visible and to provide innova-



tive stimuli for sustainable growth and competitiveness.'

### FREE PARTICIPATION AND DETAILED ANALYSIS

Free participation in the MX Award benchmarking competition offers companies a two-stage analysis by MX experts. The online questionnaire of the self-assessment audit provides the opportunity for a comprehensive self-analysis of the company in the first stage. If it reaches the shortlist, it is thoroughly analysed

by independent assessors and proven experts in an on-site business review. The MX feedback is provided in a personal interview and then made available in a written document.

Only companies that achieve balanced results at a high level across all sub-areas in addition to outstanding results in one category are honoured. The participants in the MX Award will be provided with a free evaluation of the benchmarking results in the form of a report after the end of the competition. The success of winners is also accompanied by a media partnership.

**APPLICATIONS FOR THE MX AWARD 2025 ARE NOW OPEN. YOU CAN FIND ALL INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICATION HERE!**



