

Logistics, IT and property

Exceptional situation in logistics due to Covid

In 2020, Coop's logistics came under severe pressure due to high demand during the pandemic. The strain reached a peak in the spring. Unlike the usual peak times at Christmas and Easter, for which Coop spends months preparing, suddenly and without warning record volumes had to be moved for the supermarkets and for online sales. Both employees and the logistics infrastructures worked flat out. At the same time, we had to make sure that Logistics itself remains fit for purpose and is able to guarantee maximum infection protection for staff. Thanks to the various, prompt measures taken by the Logistics crisis team, the huge challenges were overcome. For example, Coop repurposed distribution centres which, in normal circumstances are responsible for non-food ranges, in order to handle the logistics for the sharp rise in demand for items such as toilet paper, tinned foods, dried yeast, disinfectants, etc. Where possible, suppliers stepped up direct deliveries to the sales outlets. The employees of the closed non-food formats and restaurants were a great help during lockdown...

Hydrogen and biogas trucks

To further improve sustainability, Coop has increased its truck fleet with more vehicles equipped with innovative drive technologies. In 2020, Coop added 2 trucks with cutting-edge hydrogen technology and 3 gas-powered trucks to its fleet.

Novel hydrogen trucks

As a hydrogen pioneer, Coop stays ahead of the game and, in October 2020, began operating one of the world's first mass-produced hydrogen trucks, followed by six more models of this type. A fuel cell generates electricity from the hydrogen in the tank, which powers the truck's electric engine quietly and with zero emissions. Only hydrogen is used, which is produced using renewable electricity from hydropower. This enables Coop to save around 80 tonnes of CO₂ per year, per truck and amass more experience in this field of propulsion. Since 2016, Coop has been operating the first public hydrogen filling station in Hunzenschwil (Aargau) and, together with the association H2 Mobilität Schweiz, is pursuing the target of creating a nationwide network of hydrogen filling stations throughout Switzerland by 2023. Switzerland's main transport axes should be covered by the start of 2021, and six hydrogen filling stations began operating in 2020.

Sustainable biogas trucks

In 2020, Coop purchased two semi-trailer trucks and one triaxial 26-tonne truck that are powered by biogas. As well as far lower particulate and CO₂ emissions, the reduced noise they create is an advantage over convention diesel engines. There are many advantages to using biogas as a fuel. Even driving with normal CNG (Compressed Natural Gas), CO₂ emissions are reduced by 20% compared with a diesel vehicle.

Delivery service for vulnerable groups during Covid

To offer customers in the vulnerable age groups aged over 65 during the spring lockdown the option of having essential foods and hygiene products delivered to their home by volunteers, in the space of just a few days IT developed a special online ordering portal, incorporated this in logistics processes, and set up a dedicated call centre. Initially, customers could download the order list as a PDF and order by phone or e-mail. The goods were prepared in the closed Coop City branches and registered on specially converted tills. As time went on, Coop added more functions, including an order form for electronic orders.

IT introduces Office 365

As part of the upgrade of Office licences, Coop completed the switch to Office 365. The switch involved 7 500 users from administration, began at the end of 2019, and was completed in March 2020 – just in time for lockdown and the Confederation's recommendation to work from home. Very quickly, Office 365 and, in particular, the Teams platform – which can be used for video and voice calls from home, chats, file sharing, the creation of task lists and so on – became an essential tool for Coop employees. People working from home were also supported by additional technical capacities. In autumn 2020, the roll-out of Office 365 began for the sales outlets, all of which now have a modern tool complete with the hardware needed for video conferences.

Automated people counting system in sales outlets

Limiting customer numbers in stores was one Covid measure that Coop had to implement at very short notice in March 2020. Within a few days, a “Coop Clicker App” was programmed and distributed to staff. As a next step, Coop quickly evaluated and introduced an automated people counting system, which uses sensors at entrances and exits to record people’s movements and indicates on a traffic light whether the next person in the queue can enter the store. By the end of 2020, Coop had introduced these people counting systems in around 560 sales outlets.

Sustainability in Coop real estate

Energy efficiency and the production of sustainable energy are key considerations for Coop when planning and implementing its real estate projects. Therefore, all of Coop’s buildings meet the Minergie requirements, and heating systems reliant on fossil fuels are no longer installed. 21 000 m² of new photovoltaic systems were installed in 2020 in line with the target.

Parking with Superpoints

Customers can use their Superpoints to pay parking charges in no fewer than 11 Coop car parks. They also benefit from the automatic opening of the barriers when they enter and exit. The project will be rolled out to more locations in 2021.

Digitalization of construction projects

Starting in 2020, all new construction projects are planned and delivered using BIM (Building Information Modelling). Using virtual 3D prototyping, this method is used for the networked planning, execution and management of projects. All the relevant construction data are digitally modelled, combined and recorded. The project-specific BIM data provide an overview of the entire life cycle of a construction project, and when construction is complete are used by Facility Management for maintenance.

Real estate projects

In 2020, Coop started a total of 7 real estate projects and completed 19, including 3 new builds, 1 extension, 6 remodels and 9 modernizations/renovations. The Covid pandemic had little impact on construction activities and lead times.

Head Office Basel

On 18 December 2020, Coop concluded the complete renovation of its head office at Thiersteineralle 12 in Basel. The modernization involved upgrading office space on floors one to twelve, relocating the catering facilities and repurposing the area as office space on the 13th floor, a new catering area on the ground floor of Thiersteinerallee 14, the complete replacement of technical installations and elevator systems, and the replacement of the entire façade with 1 900 m² of photovoltaic elements, which have an output in excess of 82 000 kWh.

Aclens

The construction of the “Cinque” project in Aclens proceeded according to schedule in 2020. As part of this logistics project, among other things a new building was constructed which will house a new 12 400 m² empties collection centre, 8 300 m² of new office space for the Romandie sales region, and a Coop Restaurant. Energy will be generated by a waste heat utilization system and some of the electricity requirements will be met by a 1 850 m² roof-mounted photovoltaic unit. In June, a 57 metre-long, 125 tonne footbridge was also built between the existing distribution centre and the new building. The new building will be commissioned in stages from July 2021. The distribution centre in La Chaux-de-Fonds will close as of the end of September 2021 and the Renens one from the end of October 2021.

Oerlikon

After renovation work lasting 12 months, the Center Eleven shopping centre in Oerlikon celebrated its reopening on 25 February 2020. In the shopping centre, customers will find 3 200 m² of Coop retail space, a 3 500 m² Building & Hobby store, along with an Interdiscount, a Coop Restaurant, a newsstand stocking a range of flowers, and a space occupied by a third-party tenant. The upgrade of the mall and communal areas creates a light and friendly atmosphere. With LED lighting, an attractive new colour scheme and electric charging stations, the shopping experience for customers begins in the underground car park.

Lugano Pregassona

After 2 years under construction, in April 2020 the “Minerva” building in Lugano Pregassona was ready for occupation. The 16 apartments are spread over four floors in the building, and all have a parking space in the underground car park plus a separate cellar compartment. They have been built to modern specifications, and are bright and flooded with light, making them highly sought-after on the housing market. All the apartments have already been let.

Uzwil

After around 14 months of refurbishment work, the Coop shopping centre in Uzwil celebrated its full reopening on 28 May 2020. In the mall area, along with the contemporary store format of Coop, Coop Restaurant, Dropa Drogerie, Vögele Shoes and the Orru hair salon, customers can enjoy a complete shopping experience. A new escalator connects the underground car park with the retail outlets, improving customer access. The building meets the Minergie construction standard. The building’s outer shell now has attractive timber cladding and energy supply is supported by a 2 200 m² photovoltaic system on the flat roof. Heating is supplemented by a highly efficient heat pump.

Castione

The sales outlet in Castione underwent a phased modernization between the start of May 2012 and mid-2020, and the Coop retail space was increased to 1 500 m². Architecturally, the building has a fresh, timeless and elegant appearance thanks to the distinctive and protruding canopy construction and the wooden façade. 1 100 m² of photovoltaic panels have been mounted on the roof to generate electricity and help reduce CO₂ emissions.

Vich

The Coop in Vich opened on 19 August 2020. The former sales outlet has been remodelled, and the Coop Retail space increased to 2 300 m². The building also houses a Vitality pharmacy, a Coop Restaurant and a refurbished underground car park with 100 parking spaces for customers. Some of the electricity required is produced by a 1 500 m² roof-mounted photovoltaic unit.

Le Noirmont

The Coop sales outlet in Le Noirmont opened for business on 25 November 2020. Right at the entrance to the village, where there was once a filling station and an old barn, there is now a new, timber-clad sales outlet with 480 m² of Coop retail space and 23 outdoor parking spaces. On the upper floors are 12 apartments and a GP surgery. The new building was constructed to the Minergie standard and fitted with 300 m² of photovoltaic panels.

Broc

The Coop in Broc opened on 2 December 2020. On the site of what used to be a public car park, there is now a new sales outlet with 420 m² of Coop retail space and 18 outdoor parking spaces. On the upper floors are 14 apartments.

Bévilard

The sales outlet in Bévilard celebrated its opening on 9 December 2020. From March 2020, a temporary sales outlet was opened in the centre of the village, while part of the former sales outlet was demolished. The Coop retail space was increased to 570 m² and fitted with 300 m² of photovoltaic panels on the roof.