

Re-usable plastic baskets for the distribution of clothing: easier, safer, and cheaper



Galeria Inno has been using standard re-usable foldable plastic baskets to transport its textile goods to the fifteen stores in Belgium since 2003. Since then the chain of department stores avoids up to 1,200 tons of cardboard waste per year. This solution also makes the distribution safer and cheaper.

prevent pack

Relieving the city centre of waste

Galeria Inno has contacted a service provider in a distribution centre in Vilvoorde to distribute its goods. On a weekly basis, the service provider prepares packages of clothing for the fifteen Galeria Inno sites in Belgium. 'Previously everything was packaged in cardboard boxes,' says Rüdiger Hofrichter, Supply Chain Manager for Galeria Inno. In 2003, the organization switched to re-usable foldable hard plastic baskets. Hofrichter:

'Today, we no longer ship cardboard boxes with goods to the stores. This helps minimize cardboard waste, eliminating up to 1,200 tons of cardboard per year.' The plastic baskets leave for the shops filled and return folded, together with a shipment of sorted waste from the stores. The group has invested in a million baskets. All of them have been equipped with an individual barcode to track the transport movements.

Standardization offers ease of use and safety

SSI Schäfer supplies the polypropylene baskets. The baskets retain their shape and are easy to stack and clean. Hofrichter: 'They are also virtually indestructible. The investment will be written off in 25 years, but we are practically certain that the baskets will still be serviceable by then. Per year only 0.05% of the baskets are damaged.'

The baskets fit perfectly on standard pallets. This way, no empty space is shipped. Galeria Inno uses three different dimensions that can be stacked on pallets in various configurations. This way the trucks can be loaded faster, with less risk of accidents and damage during the handling of baskets and pallets.

good to remember

Galeria Inno packages distribution packs in plastic baskets, avoiding cardboard waste in the stores.

The transports returning with folded baskets are also used to collect sorted waste from the stores.

Standard dimensions enable easy stacking and handling of the baskets.

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How does the distribution centre of Galeria Inno operate?



Step 1: manufacturers deliver in cardboard boxes

Usually, textile manufacturers supply their clothing in cardboard boxes. 'These boxes sometimes arrive damaged because they are not stacked properly during transport,' says Hofrichter.



Step 2: plastic baskets for transport to the stores

The distribution centre sorts the pieces and prepares packages for the various stores. It sorts items into the foldable plastic baskets, neatly stacked on standard pallets.



Step 3: sorted waste together with the return shipment

The baskets return folded. The same return transport is also used to ship sorted packaging waste such as plastic foil and used department store bags from the stores back to the distribution centre. The centre is also a collection point for recyclable materials.

Rüdiger Hofrichter, Supply Chain Manager for Galeria Inno

'Our foldable baskets enable us to avoid using 1,200 tons of cardboard per year, which would otherwise end up as waste in the city centres.'

Your distribution can also save on packaging material

Products have to reach the store shelves in an optimal manner. This requires considerable effort. The general public does not know this and does not see the packaging used in the distribution chain. However, it brings along a large savings and prevention potential.

Tips from Galeria Inno

- Look at the distribution cycle as a whole. Use the return shipments wisely, for instance to simultaneously collect and return sorted waste.
- Ask Val-I-Pac, Fost Plus, and Comeos for advice. They can be an enormous help in providing customized tips and suggestions.

Galeria Inno and the environment

The Inno chain of department stores has existed for over a hundred years. It has been a 100% owned subsidiary to Kaufhof Warenhaus A.G. (Metro Group) since 2001. Since 2004, the group has been officially known as Galeria Inno. The company pays **special attention to sustainable development.**

Realizations:

- **Structured approach to sorting waste at the stores.** Employees participate in Awareness Training, learning how sorting waste leads to a substantial net profit for the company. They are also given tips on how to efficiently sort waste.
- **Realization of a closed EcoLoop for department store bags.** Used bags and plastic foils are collected and processed by third party partner Papier-Mettler into new customer bags.