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Siemens launches pilot project with e-cargo bikes in Stuttgart

Better by bike

Siemens is currently testing a sustainable delivery service with e-cargo bikes in Stuttgart. The campaign is part of an overarching project of the Building Technologies Division aimed at environmentally friendly delivery of Siemens spare parts products – using electric cargo bikes in the inner-city area and electric trucks in the outskirts. The project was developed in cooperation with the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg.

Spare parts delivery by e-cargo bike

Siemens has launched the pilot project together with veloCARRIER. veloCARRIER is a service provider start-up from Tübingen specializing in city logistics, last-mile and same-day deliveries per cargo bike. The start-up has already taken to the roads with its electric cargo bikes in eight German cities. The sturdy bicycles live up to their name: Nowadays they can carry payloads of up to 200 kilos and have a battery charge range of four to five hours.

“The response from our customers regarding these new methods for delivering replacement-part products has been overwhelmingly positive,” says Andreas Metko, who works in Supply Chain Logistics for the Siemens Building Technologies Division. “When it comes to delivery time, order processing and reliability, delivery by e-vehicle can absolutely keep pace with traditional delivery methods – possibly even exceed them.”

Relief for the city centers

Almost all the major German cities are struggling with traffic congestion, noise and air pollution. The e-cargo bike has caused none of these problems since it took up its delivery rounds in the city environs of Stuttgart, supplying Siemens Building Technologies customers with their spare parts packages. "The widespread, cross-industry use of cargo bikes could solve the problems related to inner-city

environment, air and quality of life, if not in one fell swoop, then at least drastically," said Tobias Meyer from the Institute of Supply Chain Management at the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg.

"If driving cars is banned in the near future, delivery traffic in the cities could come to a standstill," Meyer went on to explain. "Most delivery vehicles are still fueled by diesel. In other words: Companies delivering by e-bike will not be affected by driving bans."

Same performance, no impact

A good bike service provider will actually provide the same performance on the last mile as a package driver with a motorized vehicle. This also applies to the transparency of the service provided: Thanks to Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), complete milestone integration is guaranteed and the whereabouts of each delivery can be tracked and checked on the monitor at any time.

And how does this work in winter? veloCARRIER did not take up cycling just yesterday. The start-up has already gained a lot of practical experience in the field and can therefore also guarantee delivery in winter. The forwarding agent delivers the goods to the depot by 10 o'clock in the morning each day. There, the goods for delivery are loaded onto the bikes and then pedaled to their destinations. That's the way it works today. And in the future?

The bike of the future

Developments in cargo bike design are progressing in huge strides. The next generation of human-powered utility vehicles should be able to transport loads of up to 400 kilos. The new bikes will then also be fitted with detachable cargo boxes saving loading and unloading times. The goods will already be loaded on exchangeable carrier racks ready for pick up; the courier then cycles up to the pick-up point, detaches the used, empty rack, clips on the new, fully loaded rack, might even change the battery at the same time – and in no time sets off again. The bike can practically be in non-stop operation on the roads.

Next step: The StreetScooter

Starting in the springtime, the StreetScooter, a van-type electric truck, will be tested within the scope of the overall project for deliveries and pick-ups in the greater

Nuremberg area. Delivery services in the future will be partly electric, both in the city center and in the countryside. The response so far has been extremely positive.

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