

# CASE STUDY

Reference Symbion, Brisbane Australia:  
Partnering with Symbion to fulfil pharmacy  
customer expectations by delivering in-full  
and on time competitively

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symbion 



**SSI SCHAEFER**



# A PERSON WITH MEDICAL NEEDS AT THE END OF EVERY ORDER

Symbion is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the EBOS Group Limited, a large and diversified Australasian marketer, wholesaler and distributor of healthcare, medical and pharmaceutical products.

Simply described by Simon Bunde, Executive General Manager, Symbion is in the business of distributing medicines to pharmacies and hospitals, always knowing there is a patient or consumer with medical needs at the end of the chain.



“It’s quite amazing to see what sort of solutions teams can come up with through collaboration and having interesting and challenging debates about real world problems that we try to solve. We were collectively quite innovative in the way we approached it. We had some very meaningful dialogues about how to do it and what the key risks were, and [the system] is a testimony to the teams that worked together.

We are very lucky to have partners like SSI SCHAEFER who assist us and understand what we go through.

We do leverage off their knowledge a lot to make sure that whatever is designed is up to date and incorporates the latest thinking, as well as our own thinking.”

Simon Bunde  
Executive General Manager -  
Strategic Operations & Innovation  
EBOS Group Ltd

In August 2019, Symbion’s new state-of-the-art warehouse and distribution centre in Brisbane, Australia was officially opened.

This facility is now one of seven Symbion facilities in Australia and one of 50 EBOS facilities in Australia and New Zealand together.

A company launch statement explained the site incorporates

the latest in automation technology developed by one of the global leaders of intralogistics, SSI SCHAEFER.

The statement also added that the new facility operates with industry-leading accuracy and efficiency, ensuring that Symbion is ideally positioned to support the future needs of Australia’s changing healthcare market and can continue to deliver for patients.

This installation builds on the success of the company’s Melbourne distribution center, also completed in partnership with SSI SCHAEFER. Together, both companies have a good relationship. With a thorough understanding of Symbion’s goals, demands and requirements, SSI SCHAEFER implemented a solution in Brisbane that met all of Symbion’s needs.

In the highly competitive environment that Symbion operates, high peak performance in all aspects of the solution was essential: software, operators, machinery. The ambitious solution designed and delivered was customer-bespoke involving a unique integration of SSI SCHAEFER technologies to accommodate customer-specified high throughput and fast response times.



# UNIQUE INTEGRATION OF SSI SCHAEFER TECHNOLOGIES

The Brisbane facility includes the single-level shuttle system SSI Cuby arranged in the patented 3D-MATRIX Solution®. The Brisbane system consists of five SSI Cuby aisles, over 100 SSI Cuby shuttles and high-performance, ergonomically-optimized goods-to-person two-level Advanced Pick Stations. It also features the latest security and storage arrangements for fridge lines, dangerous goods and specialty medicines.

This 3D-MATRIX Solution® design means that any bin can be delivered to any pick station, increasing picking efficiency, enhancing flexibility, and reducing order processing time. It also enhances stock accessibility meaning minimum stock levels and a larger SKU range can be kept.



QA Station

## THE PROJECT GOALS

- Fast order turnaround times, even on peak days
- High picking productivity and accuracy
- Minimal shortages and maximum degree of order fulfilment
- High resilience and redundancy to ensure continuity of supply
- Capacity to deal with future business growth without additional capital expenditure
- High space utilization
- Fast ramp-up time and migration from previous site
- Functionally rich Warehouse Control System







Increasing order fulfilment speed



SSI Cuby shuttle system in the patented 3D-MATRIX configuration



SOLUTION

SSI SCHAEFER carton and bin conveying system

## IN FULL, ON TIME AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE POINT

Due to the automation and efficiency of the system, the time between order receipt and shipment can be regularly as short as 45 minutes, and the system processes 9,000 orders a day.

The goods-to-person system enables operators to pick directly to the order bins from the two-level Advanced Pick Stations. The ergonomic solution from SSI SCHAEFER has been specifically developed for this task and makes goods-to-person picking highly efficient. It provides clear user guidance and monitors picking accuracy via light curtains to ensure the right product is placed in the right order bin.

Additionally, the Brisbane facility incorporates an A-Frame over 60 m long. The SSI SCHAEFER A-Frame is an automated order picking solution which enables rapid processing of multiple orders, even under peak loads. At Symbion Brisbane there are 1,500 configurable product channels and the A-Frame is replenished via the adjacent carton live storage for bins, which is automatically replenished by the SSI Cuby shuttles.

“Scalability and flexibility is a key part of the design process and the way we lay it out does anticipate the future needs of the business. One of the key benefits for us is that we can do a number of roles from a single technology. We have access to all the products that we can call out in any sequence at very high speeds. It is quite a simple and robust system. We are very pleased with it.

Simon Bunde  
Executive General Manager - Strategic Operations & Innovation at EBOS Group Ltd

The order finishing area includes Strapping machines, Lid Closing machines, Document Drops for various shipping documentation and despatch ramps at outbound.

The incoming goods area consists of automatically supplied decanting stations and features a tare scale to ensure loading accuracy and tolerance checking.

The site also incorporates a vault for controlled and dangerous medications, a fridge for refrigerated items and a pallet racking area for bulk storage and non-binnable items.

The system, for the first time in Australia, includes WEASEL® automated guided vehicles transporting cased and binned goods across a pedestrian walkway to ensure maximum space utilization and minimal disruption to Symbion staff.



Ergonomically-optimized goods-to-person two-level Advanced Pick Stations



# A ROBUST, FLEXIBLE, SCALABLE SOLUTION

SSI SCHAEFER has delivered a robust business solution for Symbion that is flexible and scalable, helping Symbion to cost-effectively supply in-full and on time on a daily basis.

The automated system is managed by WAMAS® logistics software. This includes the A-Frame, SSI Cuby shuttle system, 3D-MATRIX Solution®, goods-to-person two level Advanced Pick Stations and RF picking. The WEASEL® AGVs and the other various handling machines in the system are also managed by WAMAS®, as are the management screens and system reporting.

To ensure a successful go-live and smooth ramp-up, the system was comprehensively tested in conjunction with Symbion. Through extensive use of system emulation and innovative simulation of real order picking, it was possible to

test the whole system at full capacity and throughput with real products. This resulted in a seamless and hugely successful go-live.

To provide optimal system performance, Symbion has opted for SSI SCHAEFER's Resident Maintenance Module, a comprehensive service philosophy whereby SSI SCHAEFER service engineers are located on the site. This proactive service ensures any issues that arise are attended to immediately, delivering maximum up-time and optimal performance of the system, which are critical factors for the success of the project.



Official opening ceremony with site tour

"With people from SSI SCHAEFER we do have a very good connection. We do have a great amount of interest from SSI SCHAEFER and their people in our business, who really try to understand how they can help us and make things better.

We are very pleased that we can work with partners like that to find solutions that work for us."

Simon Bunde  
Executive General Manager - Strategic Operations & Innovation at EBOS Group Ltd



Carton live storage automatically replenished from the single-level shuttle system SSI CUBY arranged in the patented 3D MATRIX Solution® concept



WEASEL® automated guided vehicles



Chilled, secured picked goods conveyed separately to despatch



# FACTS AND FIGURES

## System Key Figures

Building area	9,500 m <sup>2</sup>
SSI Cuby footprint	over 1,500 m <sup>2</sup>
Stock lines	up to 20,000 (medicines and pharmacy lines)
Order lines per day	up to 85,000 order lines per day

## SSI SCHAEFER Scope of Supply and Services

### Planning, implementation, and services

Concept design	A collaborative development of a solution to deliver a system that is scalable and can grow with Symbion's business expansion plans. This facility provides industry leading service levels in a competitive market place. The collaborative partnership continued through construction, commissioning, software testing and ramp-up support.
Services	SSI Resident Maintenance®

### Storage systems

Area	over 1,500 m <sup>2</sup> SSI Cuby footprint with 3 access levels
Storage locations (approx.)	up to 50,000 bin positions approx. 4,000 pallet positions
Storage type	SSI Cuby 3D-MATRIX Solution®
SSI Cuby matrix specifications	5 aisles with over 100 SSI Cuby shuttles

### Picking systems

Goods-to-person	Advanced Pick Stations: two-level
A-Frame	over 60 m long (750+ channels each side)
RF Picking	Bulky and non-totable goods

### Handling systems

Conveying systems	Carton and bin conveying system Weasel® AGVs
Components	Decanting stations Document Drop machines (in line automatic) shipping documentation Lid Closing machines Strapping machines Shipping lanes

### Software

WAMAS® Logistics software	Warehouse Control Software (WCS)
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### Functionalities

- Goods-to-Person picking for small items, including inner packs
- A-Frame picking for fast moving small items
- RF zone picking for heavier items
- Management of the SSI Cuby automatic storage and retrieval system
- Storage of dangerous goods
- Automatic replenishment of the A-Frame CLS
- Order start including bin destacking, bin emptying, bin labelling and carton orders
- Management of material flows from order start to despatch
- Check weighing and QA stations
- Order finishing including lidding and strapping
- Sortation to route of split case, full case, vault and fridge items





## SIX REASONS FOR CHOOSING SSI SCHAEFER

- **Stability**

As a financially independent family business, SSI SCHAEFER is committed to long-term solutions. You can trust that our team of experts will be there for you today, tomorrow and in years to come.

- **Efficiency**

SSI SCHAEFER solutions are scalable and able to grow with your business. You can always upgrade or retrofit.

- **Quality**

As a systems specialist and original equipment manufacturer, SSI SCHAEFER provides tailor-made and high-quality solutions from a single source, specifically designed to meet your challenges.

- **Reliability**

Thanks to our worldwide Customer Service & Support network, SSI SCHAEFER ensures smooth operation of your system, both during and after installation.

- **Know-how**

SSI SCHAEFER solutions are always up-to-date with the latest technological standards and can be easily integrated into an existing IT landscape.

- **Internationality**

As a global organisation, SSI SCHAEFER has local offices worldwide. With over 70 operative subsidiaries, our team of experts speak your language.



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