



# Planning of a timber package begins in the forest

Photos: Westas Group

Westas Group operates on the principle that all of its activities are planned in advance and each order for wood to be cut is accurate in terms of the timber type and quantity required. The company has expertise in sawing timber in special lengths and dimensions and in performing challenging drying processes.

With quick deliveries representing a definite trump card in the industry, the company aims for efficient material flows

at its warehouse. Now, it is enhancing the operations of its distribution center with Trimble's warehouse management application MekaMAP, which makes the work of forklift operators easier and faster while also facilitating efficient warehouse management.

Production Manager **Sakari Virtanen** explains that the Koski sawmill processes 235,000 cubic meters of timber a year, while the corresponding figure for the Pihlava sawmill is 210,000 cubic meters. This translates to about a thousand cubic meters of timber a day for each sawmill.



“Our production is based on small series, and schedules are tight. This presents challenges for efficiency, particularly if sawing and packaging batches are small. Keeping to the schedule is essential because, in addition to quality, customers value timely deliveries,” says Virtanen.

#### AN OVERALL PICTURE WITH A SINGLE GLANCE

For Westas, the procurement of an application for graphical visualization was not a spur-of-the-moment decision. With the significant changes it will bring to the distribution center’s operations, the deployment of a new system is a major venture.

Virtanen says, “When we know exactly where packages are at any given time, it’ll be easier to plan deliveries. At the moment, forklift operators have to spend time looking for completed packages. Also, with the new system, our sales team will be able to see what we have in stock. We have high expectations of the new MAP application.”

A long partnership bringing results



Westas and Trimble have worked together in the past too, and the trust forged during this collaboration was a major factor in the choice of a partner for the application project.



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Sakari Virtanen  
Production Manager, Westas Group



“Trimble knows our way of operating and what we want from a partnership. We didn’t make the decision on a MAP application lightly and we have also put considerable effort into preparing for its deployment. I visited other companies to see the system in action,” explains Virtanen.

The MekaMAP warehouse management system enables the user to see the location of the ready-made packages in the warehouse at a single glance. The real-time monitoring capabilities of the application, which will be available at the distribution center, at the sales office and in forklifts, facilitate the handling of a larger number of packages.

Virtanen emphasizes that in all operations with tight schedules, changes to the software always require significant effort. However, he believes that the project will run smoothly. The Koski sawmill will be the first to deploy the application, with the Pihlava sawmill following suit in August.

Virtanen explains, “We are inviting all those from Pihlava who are interested to come to the Koski sawmill to test the new system. We expect that MekaMAP will bring added accuracy to our warehouse inventories, and the experiences of other users back up this belief.”

#### INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Westas sources the raw material for its sawmills from certified Finnish forests. Pine accounts for 65 percent of production, while spruce accounts for 35 percent. Westas delivers timber to customers in more than 30 countries. In addition to Finland, its main markets are Central Europe, northern Africa and the Far East.

“The distribution center is the heart of our operations, with about two dozen trucks picking up deliveries each day,” explains Virtanen.