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More turnover at point of sale thanks to futuristic design

The WEZ Group, Karl Preuß GmbH & Co. and largest independent retailer of the nationwide EDEKA Group, is using semi-vertical Iconic freezers from Viessmann in Minden and Bad Oeynhausen for the first time.

Ultra-modern loft-style stores with industrial design don't just exist in megacities like London or New York. With the refurbishment and expansion of the existing WEZ store in Bad Oeynhausen and the newbuild in Minden (both in North-Rhine Westphalia), the WEZ Group has now also introduced a new era of store design in Eastern Westphalia. Karl Preuß GmbH & Co. operates 22 supermarkets in the district of Minden-Lübbecke and neighbouring areas under the "WEZ" brand. The company is the biggest independent retailer of EDEKA Minden and the national EDEKA Group.

With modern store layouts, state-of-the-art technology and an impressive product range, the two stores are impressing both the customers and the experts. The WEZ Group has made a clear break with tradition especially in the frozen-food department, exhibiting a daring attempt to impress at the point of sale. This is the first time in the company's history that semi-vertical freezers have been used and these are none other than the futuristic gondola-shaped Iconic freezers from Viessmann. The dimensions are equally impressive: The floor length of double-sided Iconic freezers is 20 metres long in the refurbished Bad Oeynhausen store, and a whopping 30 metres in Minden.

Successful experiment

"It really was a daring experiment. For 40 years we exclusively

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used freezer islands and multideck cabinets in our stores. So at first, we only intended to install and test the new semi-vertical Iconic freezer from Viessmann only in Bad Oeynhausen to see what the customers thought. The construction works at the newly built store in Minden progressed faster than planned, however, and so we were able to open both stores within four weeks. And so we took the risk and ordered Iconic for Minden too – without any test phase at all. But this experiment has paid off all round – for our customers and for us", said Karl Stefan Preuß, managing director of the WEZ Group, who was visibly pleased with the decision.

A pleasant shopping environment is a top priority both at the new Ringstraße store in Minden and the refurbished Weserstraße store in Bad Oeynhausen. "We are using a combination of timeless design and user comfort to create a new shopping experience for our customers in this all-important product group," said Preuß. The anthracite-coloured Iconic from Viessmann with its new design is an attractive feature in both supermarkets and particularly impresses customers with its ease of use. "Our customers can reach pizzas, chips and other frozen foods without having to bend their backs as they used to have to with freezer islands", said Volker Marin, operations manager and project developer at WEZ.

Pleasant for the staff

The staff in the two WEZ stores also appreciate this advantage because restocking such freezers is much better for their backs. "None of my colleagues want anything more to do with freezer islands. Working on semi-vertical freezers is much more pleasant, even though they are slightly more difficult to restock", said Stephanie Albers, Category Manager for fresh and frozen produce, which makes her responsible for 50 percent of the product range. But for Albers, this small increase in the workload has been

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completely worth it: "The new freezers look much tidier inside than the freezer islands did. This gives our customers an excellent overview of the various products. And encourages more purchases."

Clear plus after refurbishment

Besides the customers, the management and the auditors also appreciate the attractive presentation of the frozen produce in the Iconics at the two stores. Turnover in the first half of 2016 from frozen food products rose by an impressive 47 percent compared to last year at the WEZ market in Bad Oeynhausen since the refurbishment. "This wasn't just due to the increase in frozen produce, the new design and optimum presentation of goods using the futuristic semi-vertical freezers have surely made a significant contribution too", explained Preuß, who invested 2.5 million euros into both the refurbishment in Bad Oeynhausen and the construction in Minden. With the 47-percent increase in turnover, the frozen foods department is now the top product group and has given the store as a whole a 30-percent plus since the renovation.

The concept has also taken off in the new store in Minden and is paying off for the WEZ Group: In the first week, revenue at the WEZ store on Ringstraße overtook all other 21 WEZ stores and its weekly turnover now regularly exceeds the 200,000-euro mark.

"We will beat the ten-million-euro turnover that we forecast for the first year", predicts WEZ boss, Preuß.

Positive experiences

More turnover, happy customers and staff – these were the experiences at the two WEZ markets and reinforced by the results of the recent "Iconic in Retail" study. A recent and representative

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customer survey at the EDEKA Schlemmer Markt Struve branch in Hamburg showed: The semi-vertical freezer from Viessmann is hugely popular amongst customers and staff alike and has achieved a noteworthy increase in overall turnover at the point of sale. In Hamburg, for example, turnover from frozen foods increased by eight percent within one month of Iconic being installed.

Karl Stefan Preuß and his team found out about the Viessmann profit-making cabinets from their colleagues at EDEKA Kusenber in Goch, which is also where Iconic was installed for the first time. Mr Kusenber was very happy with the new way of presenting his frozen-food products“, said Stephanie Albers who experienced Iconic live in action. And now the installation of Iconic in the WEZ stores in Minden and Bad Oeynhausen has been highly praised by experts in the food retail sector. "We've had several colleagues asking to see Iconic in Minden and Bad Oeynhausen", said Volker Marin, thrilled at the level of interest.

Futuristic design

Iconic by Viessmann is a completely new type of cabinet to come onto the market. The semi-vertical, 1.50-metre-tall freezer gives the products excellent visibility and optimises the presentation of frozen foods at the point of sale. The futuristic gondola shape with the forward-slanting doors not only makes the Iconic freezers look attractive, it also has an ergonomic advantage for customers as they no longer need to bend their backs to reach frozen foods out of the freezer.

The delivery of 50 metres' floor length of Iconic freezers was something of a challenge for manufacturer Viessmann Kühlsysteme: "It was a great order and took us into a new

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dimension. We'd never delivered so many Iconics to a customer before", explained Stefan Abel, head of German food retail key account sales at Viessmann.

For Peter Wassmann from refrigeration specialist company Hubert Röthemeyer GmbH in Hille (North-Rhine Westphalia), the installation of Iconics in the WEZ stores was also a first. "We have been using cold and freezer rooms from Viessmann for 40 years now. Iconic is the first freezer cabinet from Viessmann that we've installed. And as we have come to expect, everything works fine," said Wassmann.

Wassmann and his team were also responsible for the electronic controller of the Iconics. For this reason, the specialists from Viessmann delivered their semi-vertical freezers without any control technology but prepared them as well as they could for the on-site electrical installation. "All cables were already in place and we were provided with a clear circuit diagram. This is often not the case with other manufacturers. This meant we could install the appliances in no time at all", emphasised Wassmann.

Good service

Operations manager and project developer Volker Marin is enthusiastic about Viessmann's service. "As the construction works in Ringstraße in Minden progressed faster than planned, the freezers then also had to be delivered ahead of schedule. In these situations it is essential to have a competent and reliable partner like Viessmann, who can react flexibly to such unforeseen developments. And it's great that we can always rely 100 percent on the experts at Viessmann", stressed Marin.

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About Viessmann:

The Viessmann Group is one of the world's leading manufacturers of heating, industrial and refrigeration systems. Founded in 1917, the family business maintains a staff of approximately 11,600 employees and generates 2.2 billion euros in annual group turnover. Viessmann operates on an international level with 22 production companies in 11 countries, sales companies and representatives in 74 countries and 120 sales outlets worldwide. 56 percent of sales are generated outside Germany.

Viessmann Kühlsysteme is one of Europe's leading manufacturers of innovative refrigeration solutions. Its product portfolio includes remote and plug-in refrigeration cabinets, evaporators, cold and freezer rooms, refrigeration units and accessories. It furthermore offers installation and maintenance services. Its comprehensive product and service range includes highly efficient solutions for commercial applications.

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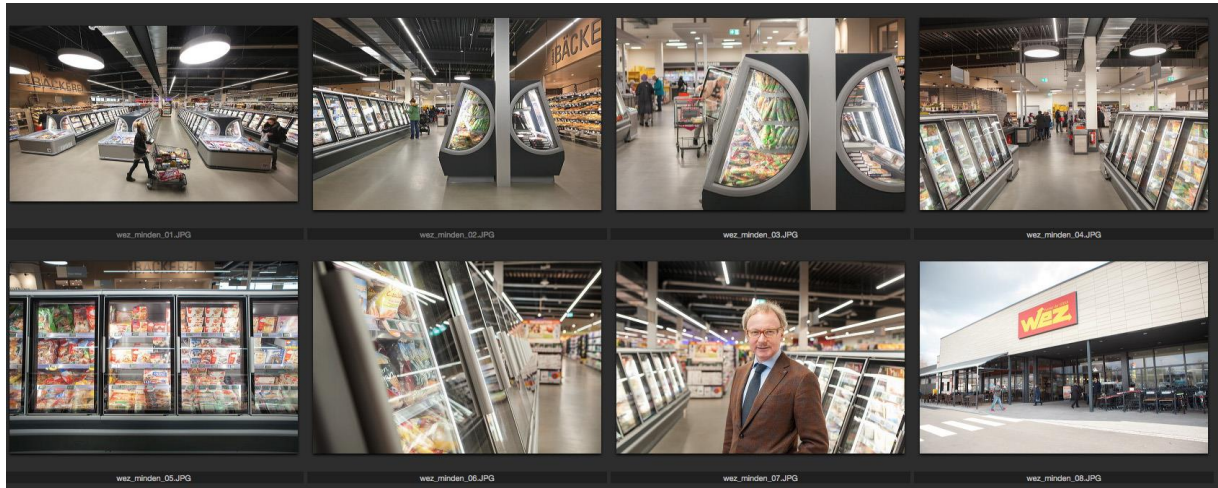
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Captions:

wez_minden_01.jpg

The semi-vertical Iconic freezers from Viessmann create more transparency in the new WEZ store in Minden. Photo: Walter Schmidt

wez_minden_02.jpg

With their gondola shape, the Iconic freezers are real eye-catchers at the point of sale. Photo: Walter Schmidt

wez_minden_03.jpg

With their gondola shape, the Iconic freezers are real eye-catchers at the point of sale. Photo: Jörn Strojny

wez_minden_04.jpg to wez_minden_06.jpg

This encourages purchases: The frozen products are easy to see in the half-height Iconic freezers. Photo: Jörn Strojny

wez_minden_07.jpg

Karl Stefan Preuß, managing director of the WEZ Group. Photo: Jörn Strojny

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wez_minden_08.jpg

The new WEZ store in Minden. Photo: Jörn Strojny

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