

How Labour Shortages are Affecting the Logistics Sector and Why Automation is the Solution



This is an unprecedented time for the logistics sector. A once in a century pandemic combined with an aging population has led to considerable labour shortages. To complicate the situation even further, all this is happening at a time of unprecedented growth as more consumers turn to online shopping with the expectation of a speedy delivery right to their door.

With fewer workers now available, considerable challenges are facing the sector. So how can warehouses overcome labour shortages and still meet their deadlines?

Thankfully, technology is ready to step up and revolutionise how the sector operates. Through the digitalisation and automation of practices, warehouses can meet the demands of the modern world by improving employee productivity and reducing waste.

Let technology help us get more done with less.

The Causes of Reduced Warehouse Worker Availability

Although logistics is one of the hardest-hit sectors, labour shortages are affecting a broad range of industries. For example in the UK, research shows the summer of 2021 had the highest vacancy growth since 1998, with the supply of workers dropping at its fastest rate in four years.

The reopening of sectors post-lockdown caused a spike in labour requirements; compounding this was the lack of overseas workers due to for example Covid travel restrictions and Brexit in the UK.



Three Major Consequences of Reduced Warehouse Worker Availability

1. A shortage in workers means warehouses have to offer increased wages to entice more people to apply. This is not an isolated increase in cost for logistics employers; it also spreads to consumers and manufacturers/suppliers.
2. Less staff at a warehouse puts significant strain on the existing employees. Being asked to work longer hours in an already taxing job often leads to reduced accuracy in tasks or more errors occurring.
3. Without finding ways to provide the same services with less staff, warehouses cannot deliver the same results. This means longer delivery times for their clients and a reduction in the overall movement of goods.

To overcome reduced warehouse worker availability, warehouses must rethink how they operate.

The Benefits of Warehouse Automation

Thankfully, there is technology tailor-made to automate every stage of warehouse operations. Automation can be incorporated into inventory arrival, movement within the facility and delivery using significantly less human assistance. Whether it is

- Warehouse management software,
- Scanning inventory with mobile devices,
- Simple access to cloud-based storage,
- Smart shelves and pallets using RFID tech,
- IoT sensors,
- Or incorporating robotics,

There are many ways automation can make warehouse work easier.

They say, “Never let a good crisis go to waste.” The current labour shortages can become the kickstart warehouses need to embrace automation and reap the benefits on offer.

Autonomous Mobile Robots (AMRs)



AMRs are one of the most exciting areas for growth in warehouse automation. AMRs assess their environment and move inventory through the facility without direct human supervision, replacing manually operated forklifts. As a result, they eliminate labour intensive and repetitive physical tasks, improving warehouse efficiency, and reducing employee workload.

AMRs are a great way of overcoming reduced worker availability and transform how inventory moves within warehouses.

With the reduction in warehouse worker availability, now is the perfect time to learn more about automation and how it can change your business processes. Check out the HD-1500 autonomous mobile robot, OMRON's strongest AMR and see the next logical step in logistics.

From the incoming raw goods up to the palletising, OMRON can provide you solutions to easily integrate new technologies into your business model.

About OMRON

As a leading company of automation centred on its proprietary Sensing & Control + Think technologies, OMRON Corporation is engaged in a wide range of businesses, including control equipment, electronic components, social systems, healthcare, and the environment. In the field of industrial automation, OMRON supports manufacturing innovation by providing advanced automation technologies and products, as well as through extensive customer support, to help create a better society.

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