

Automation that can power, optimise and protect your supply chain

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Given the state of the supply chain we seem to be experiencing very little of our operations are the same as they were two years ago, and priorities have significantly shifted. Whether you're an operations or logistics manager, IT decision-maker, or procurement professional, the only things that matter at present are augmenting your workforce, sourcing the right supplies, right-sizing inventory, increasing capacity and throughput and finding the right fulfilment and shipping channels.

There are only so many hours in the day and so many people on the clock. If you don't implement, refine, or scale technology systems quickly, it's going to be difficult to see or do much more than you and your team do today. I assume that's why you're attending industry events and speaking with consultants right now – to find out what technologies are available to help you power, optimise, and protect operations today and long into the future.

For example, I am assuming automation is hot on your list, especially in your warehouses and distribution centers. The more decisions and processes you can automate, the more you can free up human workers to focus on tasks that machines are not well-suited to take on. Let me point you toward two types of automation worth a closer look: robotics automation and industrial automation.



Autonomous mobile robots

According to a recent Global Warehousing Vision Study commissioned by Zebra Technologies, nearly eight in ten associates say walking fewer miles per day would make their jobs more enjoyable, even if they had to pick or handle more items. And 83% percent of associates who work alongside autonomous mobile robots (AMRs) today confirm the robots have helped increase their productivity and reduce their walking/travel time. However, what you might find interesting is that 73% of associates who work alongside AMRs today say the industrial mobile robots have helped them reduce errors, while 65% say AMRs have enabled their advancement to new roles or opportunities. They're a low-risk, high reward automation solution given that they can be deployed 'as-a-service'. You don't have to make a significant upfront investment. You could test out 20 AMRs this month as part of a full-service robot as-a-service (RaaS) subscription model and then add 200 more next month.

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AMRs can automatically pickup and deliver everything from raw materials and finished goods to packages and dunnage, and they can also guide newly-hired seasonal workers through picking and put away tasks so they can reach full productivity within hours or days – not weeks or months. And you don't need anyone on the IT or operations team overseeing or controlling their movements. Once configured, they will safely and dynamically navigate facilities on their own per the programmed workflow parameters and facility maps.





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