

THE LOGISTICS POINT

ISSUE 8 | SEPTEMBER 2021

EXCLUSIVE
VIDEO CONTENT
INSIDE

DEMYSTIFYING LOW EMISSION FUELS

WOMEN & LOGISTICS

The industry is opening up because of new generations

DEVELOPERS & TECHNOLOGY

How technology can help developers improve

E-CARGO BIKES IN THE CITY

The English city that leads the way on ecargo bikes

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LAST MILE MONTH

OCTOBER 5TH,
12TH, 19TH
AND 26TH



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Michael Hegeman
VP eTrac Technologies



Daniel Bianco, Transport
planner Brighton & Hove
City Council



Sandra Rothbard,
Principal, Freight Matters



Seb Robert,
CEO, Goprh



George Kitchen,
Founder, Do It Properly



Paul Needler,
Partner, Arcadis

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RIGHTHAND ROBOTICS
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EDITOR'S NOTE

I have been fascinated by the last mile for so long! How could you not be? It is one of the most challenging areas for logistics and supply chain and during the pandemic its importance has grown even more.

Because of that we at The Logistics Point think that the last mile deserve its own month. We would like to invite you to the Last Mile Month Event in October, starting on the 5th and finishing on the 26th. During each Tuesday of the month, a group of incredible last mile experts and pioneers will come together to showcase and discuss the best practices in last mile logistics. [The event is free and you can register here!](#)

In this edition, we focus on a few very important areas of last mile: e-cargo bikes, lockers, technology adoption. In addition, you can also learn about the cost of low emission fuels, how women are progressing in logistics and how working from home has affected us all.

Well, that is not all but I will leave you discover it on your own :)

Nick Bozhilov
Editor in Chief
nick@thelogisticspoint.com



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IN THIS EDITION



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**EXCLUSIVE
VIDEO
CONTENT**

DEMYSTIFYING LOW EMISSION FUELS

Low emission fuels are something logistics and supply chain organisations all around the world are worried about. There are many options but not all of them will deliver the same desired results. Rik Arends, Technical Manager at Smart Freight Centre, spoke to The Logistics Point about low emission fuels and how companies can understand where to start from.

What are the different types of low emission fuels?

Let me start by saying that there is not a single solution on low emission fuels out there. There's actually quite a wide range of different fuels that exist, ranging from the different biofuels that are being produced from different feedstocks to electric and hydrogen solutions, and also depending on the mode of transport.

And how can companies choose out of all of them?

By definition, it is going to be about cost and the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). At Smart Freight Centre, however, we want to add the concept of Total Emissions of Ownership (TEO). When you talk about the lifetime of operating a

vehicle you have a certain cost but you also have the total emissions.

When we are talking about low emission fuels what are the biggest misconceptions?

The biggest misconception is that it is too far away and not necessarily important. It's something that's going to happen for everyone. And if you don't invest in it now or in the very near future, it's going to be a very costly affair for you. You can see it happening with the European Union 'Fit for 55' legislation. Carbon prices will go up and you will have to pay for the carbon costs of your emissions in one way or another. Therefore, already investing in different technology can pay out in the longer run.

What is the role of governments in this?

The biggest hurdle at the moment with low emission fuels is that cost is very high compared to other alternatives. The capital investment cost for an electric truck is significantly higher compared to the one for a diesel truck. Helping with subsidies and making it clear what the roadmap for the future is will be very beneficial. Support and clarity by governments is very needed for the long run.

When you talk about the lifetime of operating a vehicle you have a certain cost but you also have the total emissions.



RIK ARENDS, TECHNICAL MANAGER,
SMART FREIGHT CENTRE

The GLEC mission

The Global Logistics Emissions Council (GLEC) was established in 2014. GLEC has grown into a voluntary partnership of more than 150 companies, industry associations, programs, experts and other organizations. The mission of GLEC as an industry-led partnership is to drive emission reduction and enhance efficiency across global logistics supply chains. They do this through global, harmonized guidelines for reporting and reducing logistics emissions that work for business. The GLEC's work together with GLEC partners involves the development of guidelines, testing with companies, and advocacy for industry-wide uptake and aligned policy.

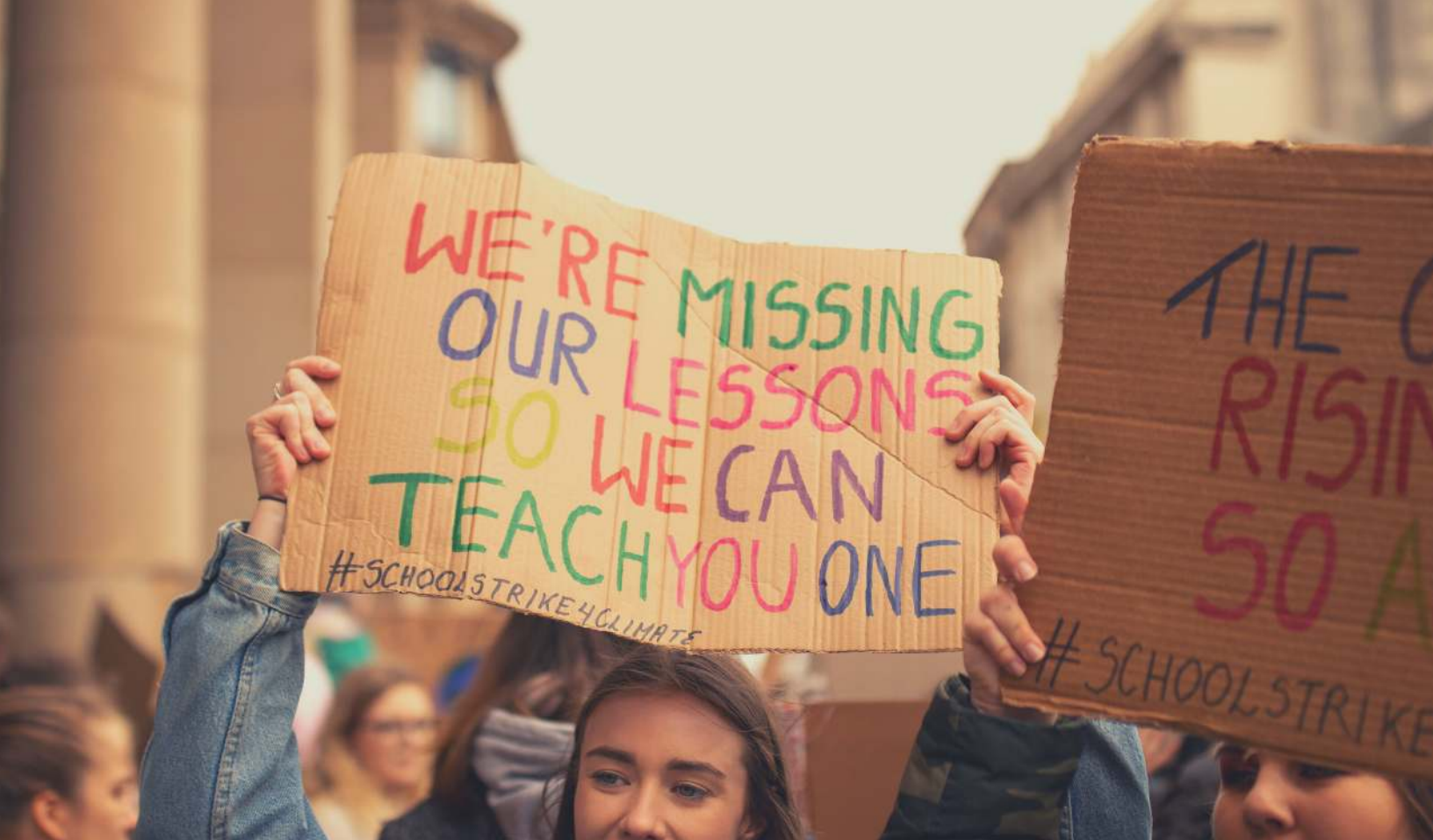
Where can logistics companies find more information and how can Smart Freight Centre help?

We at Smart Freight Centre have established the GLEC Partnership to discuss Low Emission Fuels and develop industry standards. There are a lot of misconceptions about which fuels are really sustainable. There are certain fuels out there that are being presented as more sustainable but in fact are increasing your emissions. So we can guide companies with making sure that they choose the right fuel and actually reduce their emissions.

To learn which fuels are more sustainable and how to choose the one that is right for your operations watch the video interview with Rik Arends below. *

Fit for 55

The Fit for 55 package is a set of proposals to revise and update EU legislation and to put in place new initiatives with the aim of ensuring that EU policies are in line with the climate goals agreed by the Council and the European Parliament. 'Fit for 55' refers to the at least 55% emission reduction target which the EU has set for 2030. The proposed package aims to bring the EU's climate and energy legislation in line with the 2030 goal.



MILLENNIALS AND GEN Z DRIVE DIVERSITY UP IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

'Traditionally a large part of the population has not been aware of the supply chain opportunities,' begins Dana Stiffler, Managing VP at Gartner, when asked if women feel like the industry is welcoming enough for them. One of the reasons is that for a very long time logistics and transportation have been seen as mostly physical jobs where males are needed. In addition, the work atmosphere for women in supply chain and logistics has been far away from welcoming on many occasions.

More women, however, look at the industry and realise that it is an exciting place to work with a lot of opportunities.

Stiffler is honest about her belief that some male leaders in the industry have not been as welcoming as others. When talking about some of the areas where there are more men, it is natural that women cannot see themselves being part of them. 'Sometimes it has been challenging for women to fit hourly roles with their overall responsibilities,' Gartner's expert continues.

Accepting change

A huge factor for women in logistics is how much support they would get from the leadership of the company. Very often two different sides of the same company can have two very diverging attitudes towards women.

Due to the pandemic more employers are realising they will have to accommodate people's lives. 'That has been to everyone's benefit but especially to women's' Stiffler adds.

The type of roles, prior to the pandemic, often required a lot of travel which for many women was hard to do due to their commitments at home. With employers becoming more flexible, more women are able to work from home and can consider supply chain roles. 'We have proven that for a lot of roles you can work remotely or in a hybrid way,' Stiffler explains. The expert believes that this was a key factor for the improved representation of women in the supply chain. As the world is coming out of the pandemic, it is hoped that the flexibility will remain and will allow women to keep their jobs in the industry. Should there be a hard return to the office, where employers insist on everyone working from the office, it is expected that many people would seek new opportunities elsewhere.

Improving diversity

Despite the recent increase in the number of women in the supply chain, organisations still have work to do. Stiffler recommends a few areas where companies should look at, if they want to



DANA STIFFLER, MANAGING VP AT
GARTNER

retain and attract more women. One will be the recruitment process. She advises firms to align their internship programs with local universities. 'There is still a big difference in a lot of the university programs,' Stiffler admits. Multiple professional organisations can also provide support and help organisations find the right candidates and keep their recruitment unbiased.

An important aspect is how to retain women in the organisation. In order to provide a fair ground, companies are looking at their internal process for promotions. It is crucial to ask how decisions are made, and how to take bias

Even smaller and more conservative organisations are thinking about retaining and attracting more women because Millennials and Gen Z are more vocal about their wish to work for diverse firms.

out of them. Some companies are setting goals and objectives for what they want the representation to be. Increasingly executives' compensations are tied up to reaching these goals. Organisations have realised that more diverse teams perform better and have higher success.

A popular technique people are using is the appointment of an Auditor, who would monitor meetings where promotion decisions are made and look for unconscious biases in language. This helps to clear biases and adds more awareness. 'This is someone who is very respected but doesn't have a personal interest in the candidate that is being discussed. If a woman is described as aggressive, they can alert people how they are using language.' Another interesting way of removing bias is by assuming that all candidates have been already promoted and to try and decide why they wouldn't get the promotion.

Diversity & Leadership

A big number of supply chain organisations do not plan to focus on any aspect of diversity and inclusion. The largest global organisations have made significant progress in a short amount of time, but smaller and medium size companies are still behind. Public held companies are more visible and their investors and customers are much more demanding. Privately owned organisations, on the other hand, are hard to monitor and often do not change until the very last moment. 'SMEs are not experiencing the same kind of pressure and they will be slower to act,' Stiffler says.

Even smaller and more conservative organisations are thinking about retaining and attracting more women because Millennials and Gen Z are more vocal about their wish to work for diverse firms. 'Older supply chain leaders are forced to think differently because people are not accepting their job offers,' Stiffler says. 'Young people are not very excited to come work for them because they look very old-fashioned.' *

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MARIN'S
A Quad In-store company



**EXCLUSIVE
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DIGITISING THE POINT-OF-SALE IMPROVES VISIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Small and medium size retailers have often struggled to bridge the gap with their larger competitors when it comes to implementing technology. According to Julian Fisher, CEO and founder of Jisp, and Stephen Back, Managing Director, Marin's UK & Ireland, SMEs can now use smart technology for a fraction of the price and with the same results as the big retail.

Fisher and Back discussed in a video interview with The Logistics Point (watch the full video below) the possibilities that digital Point-of-Sale solutions provide to retailers. Firstly, as consumers are looking for faster ways to interact with brands, companies are opening their doors to sales opportunities and promotions by implementing digital solutions. According to Fisher the biggest advantage for retailers and brands for Digital PoS is the ability to gather real time data about who buys what, when and where.

Fisher's words are echoed by Back, who manages a company specifically focusing at the Point-of-Sale experience. 'Traditionally brands find it very difficult to understand who is buying their products,' explains Back and continues, 'With the digitally enabled PoS we are able not only

to capture what is being bought but also the demographics, their age and gender.'

All of that information is of extreme importance to brands that are looking to better connect to their consumers. In addition, the digital PoS allows consumers to understand the story of the product better and engage in promotions faster and deeper. For retailers the benefits come from receiving any payments straight away and not having to wait for the end of a promotion.

Paperless environment

Back talks about the time when retailers and brands had to deal with paper coupons and how marrying up PoS and digital together has sped up the whole process. Due to Covid more consumers are looking at paperless and contactless solutions and retailers need to be able to respond to this demand. Both Jisp and Marin's are planning to expand the work they do together. With the digital PoS they will be able to provide more security to brands that retailers are compliant with pre agreed terms and that customers are actually interacting with their products.



JULIAN FISHER,
CEO & FOUNDER, JISP



STEPHEN BACK,
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
MARIN'S UK & IRELAND

'Our collaboration will continue with developing opportunities to expand how brands can promote their products,' finishes Fisher. For Back the solution will be able to offer more than just promotions to both brands and consumers and be a sustainable way to bring retail into the modern age.

Watch the full interview with Julian Fisher and Stephen Back below.*

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HOW TECHNOLOGY PROVIDES OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPERS

In the UK land for development is limited. Developers, specifically in logistics and supply chain, are keen on optimising all the space they have. Technology could help speed up the process and provide much needed efficiency. 'As a developer you need to be squeezing every centimetre from the space in order to optimise the economic return,' says Luke Buchholtz, supply chain and real estate professional.

For Buchholtz, the main benefit of using technology when developing sites is the speed. His words are echoed by Adrian Short, Project Lead at the architectural firm GeblerTooth. Short looks at how technology can help when changes are made at the very last minute. GeblerTooth has developed software that can help developers and supply chain organisations to better understand how each change in the design will affect the overall project. 'There is a tangible benefit for the developer to use a software tool when they have already gone quite a long way down the road with the architect,' Short explains.

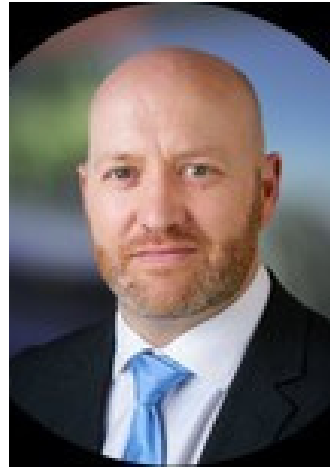
Controlling market changes

Mosaic-i has developed the ability to process data quickly so developers can quickly respond to market changes. Site dynamics can change quickly, depending on economic conditions and individual company preferences. As such developers can often find themselves in a position where things are not up to what is expected. GeblerTooth's tool can generate thousands of options in minutes and even some that have not been considered. 'We can search for every possible combination that gives you the best coverage for a particular site,' Short continues.

Developers can also choose the minimum and maximum characteristics they would consider before running the simulation. This gives additional ability to remove scenarios that would obviously not work. 'This frees up architects' time to do what they do best,' Short believes. 'The machine creates the results and the architect can curate them, using their knowledge and recognition skills as a human.'

Augmentation to design

The tool is not designed to remove the architect from the development process. Short thinks its role is to add value and provide options. Architects and developers are free to ask 'what if' questions and quickly receive answers for a decreased cost. 'Even adding 3% to 4% to a building can make a big difference,' Short adds.*



LUKE BUCHHOLTZ,
SUPPLY CHAIN AND REAL ESTATE
PROFESSIONAL



ADRIAN SHORT,
PROJECT LEAD,
GEBLERTOOTH

Parameters

The tool developed by GeblerTooth uses three main parameters. The first is the building's size, followed by the coverage. 'You can input that you want nothing less than a 30% coverage,' explains Buchholtz. It can also provide information about parking spaces and the yard. The tool is able to consider changes in all areas as the rest change.



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E-CARGO BIKES TAKE OVER BRIGHTON & HOVE

The role of governments and city councils in creating more sustainable logistics cannot be underestimated. Daniel Bianco, Transport Planner, at Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) in England, spoke to The Logistics Point about how the city is engaging with logistics organisations and its project for electric cargo bikes.

The story of the e-cargo bikes in Brighton & Hove begins with the Council applying for funding from the Department for Transport (DfT). The project acquired 12 cargo bikes and these can be seen on the streets, delivering goods and services as a transport method for different companies that are taking part in the project.

In the beginning BHCC considered a few different options such as an ecargo bike library. BHCC finally chose to focus on creating a fleet of cargo bikes that would carry different goods and services around the city. According to Daniel Bianco, it was very important to show both businesses and everyone living in the city that cargo bikes exist and they can be a viable alternative to delivery vans. 'The whole point of the project is to demonstrate that

e-cargo bikes can be used in so many ways,' Daniel explains.

Happy customers

A heating specialist is taking part in the project and uses one of the ebikes to travel to their clients. Daniel mentions that the company found that using an e-cargo bike saved time, money and petrol. 'They can park anywhere and their customers are really interested in it,' the transport planner continues.

Another company, taking part in the projects, delivers drinks and has so far accumulated 1,600 plus miles on the bike. 'The bike has completely replaced their van for deliveries.' A bike is also used by the Council to deliver mail and documents between its different office buildings.

Pioneering

As one of the first local authorities to declare a climate emergency, the e-Cargo Bike Accelerator project in Brighton and Hove seems to be a natural step forward. Daniel admits that the city still has a lot of work to do and the plans are to expand the network of ecargo bikes and invest more in the local infrastructure. BHCC also provides a small subsidy to companies to



encourage them to switch from using a diesel delivery van to a 3rd party e-cargo bike delivery firm.

'We need plenty more cargo bikes in the city for last and first mile deliveries,' Daniel says. The city is also investing in improved connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. 'We are looking at areas that can be improved, specifically for the use of cargo bikes.'

You can learn more about the plans of Brighton & Hove City Council and meet with Daniel Bianco at our Last Mile Event. The registration is open and free! [**Register here!**](#)

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The project acquired 12 cargo bikes for and these can be seen on the streets, delivering goods and services as a transport method for different companies that are taking part in the project.



THE LAST MILE MONTH

IS THE LAST MILE OVERHEATING?

As with all other aspects of logistics, last mile operations also experienced change during the last two years. Seb Robert, CEO of the last mile specialist Gophr, however, is not ready to blame all changes on Covid. He spoke to The Logistics Point about how the last mile has transformed and what the future holds for one of the most challenging areas along the supply chain.

'Having the ability to provide a solution that can deliver to all kinds of places and use any kind of vehicle really helped us to navigate what could have been really stormy waters,' Robert begins. This is not a surprise as organisations quickly had to adapt to people working from home and a plethora of new safety regulations. Those who were able to provide a mixed solution that can quickly be adjusted, saw their volumes grow without the capacity struggle.

Robert believes that for many last mile startups being focused on just a single aspect like the express delivery, for example, was a hindrance. Gophr's CEO observed that organisations struggled not only with their capacity but also on the manufacturing side.

A combination of Brexit and Covid was most likely responsible for some manufacturing problems. 'Despite that, many of our clients who had no delivery options from store to home managed to get it up and running very quickly,' he explains.

Apart from grocery Gophr noticed an explosion in the pharmacy sector, as well as Covid-19 test kits. Other types of retail also became interested in last mile solutions as they saw their clients stay at home. 'There was interest from fashion and jewelry shops, as well as DIY' Robert adds. Gophr works with some well-recognised names like Co-op and Hello Fresh.



SEB ROBERT,
CEO, GOPHR

Model change

On the other side of the equation were travel agents whose volumes completely

dropped. In addition, companies that would usually hire a courier to deliver documents between two office locations, moved a lot of that volume online. 'Before the pandemic we worked with a lot of SMEs mainly in London but then we were approached by many larger enterprises, Robert says. 'What they wanted was to get their operations up and running nationally and in a short period of time.'

As the pandemic has calmed down another trend is visible. While the UK was experiencing Covid's peak, there was a surplus of drivers but many of them have now decided to go back to their original industries. Robert is not certain whether the rise in e-commerce and last mile fulfilment will keep up but he believes the overall market attitude has changed. 'It would be naive to think that if you do not have a last mile solution in place it won't negatively affect your business,' he concludes. 'We have seen an explosion in the ten minute grocery delivery solutions. That is interesting because it reminds me a lot of the hot food delivery market from 2007 and 2008.' Looking back at that time Robert says many organisations couldn't find a sustainable business model and some of the newly born last mile providers might follow their path.

Having the ability to provide a solution that can deliver to all kinds of places and use any kind of vehicle really helped us to navigate what could have been really stormy waters.



The solution

So what should you do if you want to be profitable? For Robert one of the biggest drivers of inefficiencies in modern last mile deliveries is the requirement for speed, and for very specific use cases like restaurant or grocery delivery. According to him the way to success is to build as many opportunities to serve the widest number of customer types as possible. 'It feels that prices for these are artificially going down as models are being subsidised by investors in startups, or public companies willing to lose money on deliveries like Amazon,' Robert says. The answer is not easy as neither established logistics organisations nor newcomers can overcome market conditions quickly and painlessly. *

Join Seb Robert on the 12th October to talk about last mile fulfilment! Register now!



THE LAST MILE MONTH

AUTOMATING LAST MILE WITH LOCKERS AND ROBOTS

Scaling e-commerce with the tools of the past doesn't work anymore. Technology needs to be deployed in such a way that consumers and retailers can connect and feel satisfied by it. 'Because of e-commerce growth the lockers' market has been growing a lot during the last year,' says Arti Kütt, COO at Cleveron, a company that produces smart parcel lockers and innovative parcel robots.

Retailers have struggled a lot and lockers are seen as a way to help them reach their customers better and faster. Lockers can not only make shopping more convenient for consumers but they also speed up operations for retailers. The parcel sector is also benefiting greatly from lockers. The technology helps with deliveries and automates the final mile by putting the consumer in charge of it.

Efficiency Up

According to Kütt there are two types of clients. Some look specifically at cost and how anything they deploy can help them be more cost efficient. For them lockers could really bring cost savings. 'Lockers save a lot of time and minimise labour costs,' Kütt explains. The other type are those who want to optimise the whole process both for the company and offer

the best customer experience as well, for them top pick is robotical parcel machine.

Usually consumers can wait between 10 to 15 minutes at a post office or other shop to receive their packages. Queueing for so long is an unpleasant experience and lockers remove it all together. Consumers are able to pick up their parcels whenever they want and the operation takes less than a minute. 'With lockers the pick up time is around 10 to 15 seconds,' continues Cleveron's COO and calls it a 'major win' for both consumers and logistics operators. For him it is clear that automated services are better suited for modern times and overall have a huge positive impact on revenue.

Successful deliveries

With parcel lockers the successful delivery is almost 100%. Customers are sent reminders through their phones and it is not uncommon for a parcel to spend a long time in the locker. Cleveron is seeing a significant growth in parcel lockers. If before the pandemic retail and logistics were the two biggest segments, now the company is being approached by many different industries. 'We have been approached by office buildings, apartment complexes, hospitals, as well as car rental companies and more,' Kütt says. Beauty shops, libraries, and pharmacies are also becoming a big part of the business. For Kütt the reason for that growth is the convenience and the fact that the business can operate 24/7.



ARTI KÜTT
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER,
CLEVERON AS

Parcel robotics

Cleveron has been in the business for nearly 15 years and a lot has changed. At first the focus was on Click&Collect but as the technology progressed the company is now investing into parcel robotics. The company was the first in Europe to receive authorization to drive its automated delivery robots on public streets in Estonia. Kütt believes that the future of the last mile will be automated and more deliveries will be fulfilled by robots or other automated solutions.*

The parcel sector is also benefiting greatly from lockers. The technology helps with deliveries and automates the final mile by putting the consumer in charge of it.



THE LAST MILE MONTH

ROBOTS AND THE LAST MILE

Autonomous solutions can help the last mile develop and become more efficient. Very often companies are deploying them at the very end of the goods' journey but warehouses can also become a spot where last mile is being optimised. The Logistics Point spoke to Herbert ten Have, CEO of Fizyr about automation and the last mile. Fizyr will take part in our Last Mile Month Event this October.

How can robots help the picking process and increase revenue?

Robots can take over repetitive chores, allowing human labour to focus on value-adding tasks. Once these repetitive tasks of picking and placing items are automated, it can improve job accuracy, reduce chances of any discrepancies, and cut costs. Incorporating an intuitive cutting-edge software and training the robots to fulfil predetermined tasks can easily get the work going, round the clock, at any time of the day, without any limitations of workers taking sick leaves. Getting the robots to help automate the picking process is a great investment in technology that ensures the job gets done without a single day off, supporting the warehouse staff in improving overall job

efficiency, and meeting the growing consumer expectations at any time of the day.

What solutions are based suited for last mile operations?

When a customer places an order online, they would either get it delivered at their doorstep or pick it up from the warehouse. Either way, the choice depends on their convenience. The last mile solution ensures the staff has the final order delivery information way ahead of time to manage shipping hassles, reduce delivery time and associated costs, and provide a smooth customer experience.

One of the last mile solutions could be to pick up the product from the collection point, scan the barcode and walk the last mile, i.e., to the doorstep. By contrast, the last mile solution could also involve a person fulfilling the job to ensure flexible delivery, where the customer can change location and time on the go, and follow a self-service delivery model. Another advanced way could be a curbside pickup, where the Autonomous last-mile delivery robots could assist in delivering the package, independent or accompanied by delivery managers, to complete the job faster.

Last mile solution could also involve a person fulfilling the job to ensure flexible delivery, where the customer can change location and time on the go,

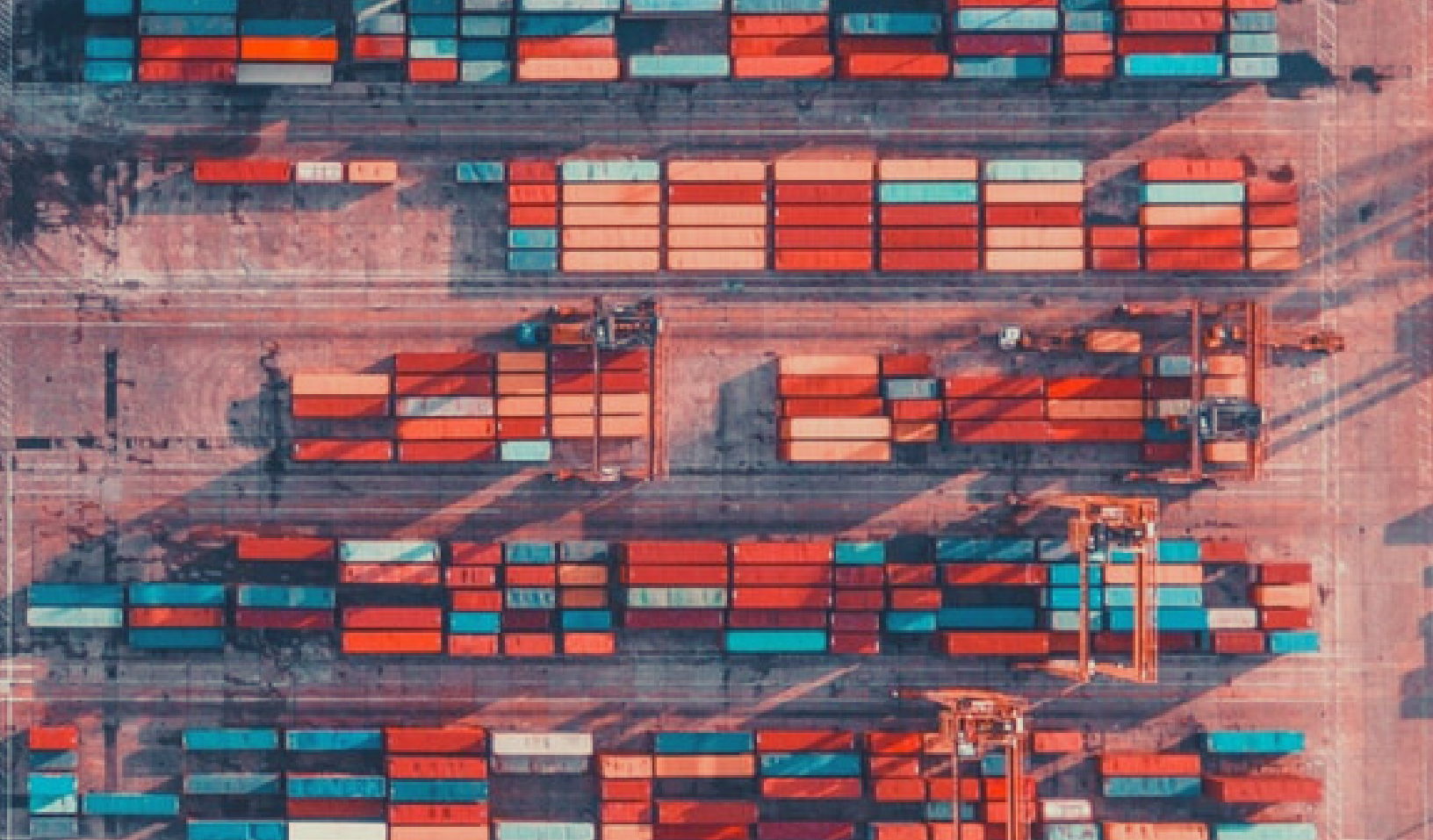


HERBERT TEN HAVE,
CEO, FIZYR

What should companies know when choosing a solution?

It is imperative for companies to understand the type of item to be picked by a robot in a certain environment. They must know if the robot would only be trained to pick small white envelopes or will they also require to pick a box of wine? Where does it need to pick the item and where are they supposed to place it? Once they recognize the variations in items or parcels to be picked, moved and placed, it can help determine the right components required, both hardware and software, to carry out a job. Besides picking the item, how and where would they require the robot to place the item is just as significant in opting for an appropriate solution.

Fizyr's Freek Smoes will be part of a panel discussion on the last mile and warehousing this 5th October. [Join us now!](#)



IOSS NON-EU SELLER REQUIREMENT EXPLAINED

The European Union is changing the way it collects and charges VAT and all non-EU sellers will have to comply. The changes require all non-EU sellers and Marketplaces to collect import VAT at the point of sale on low valued consignments (up to €150) through an 'Import One-Stop-Shop' (IOSS) scheme according to the rates of the consumer's country.

For Ardi Ghorbani, an expert in an Estonian based VAT intermediary company, the changes can have a serious effect on logistics and supply chain organisations. If companies are unable to provide their clients with IOSS they might lose them to competitors. So what needs to be done?

What's next?

All non-EU sellers and Marketplaces have to comply with the changes and that includes businesses based in the UK. Logistics and supply chain organisations however cannot apply for a IOSS number as they are not defined as marketplaces (deemed supplier). However, the law said clearly that only the seller can register for IOSS (the one who collect the money and VAT) Although some logistics providers have registered for that but for now this is not possible according to the EU. This

would mean they need to turn to VAT intermediary companies like the one Ghorbani works for. The company would then refer their clients to the intermediary which can provide them with the number. This is a kind of partnership between the VAT intermediary and logistics company.

The IOSS facilitates the collection, declaration and payment of VAT for sellers that are making distance sales of imported goods to buyers in the EU. The IOSS also makes the process easier for the buyer, who is only charged at the time of purchase, and therefore does not face any surprise fees when the goods are delivered. If the seller is not registered in the IOSS, the buyer has to pay the VAT and usually a customs clearance fee charged by the transporter.

From 1 April 2021, you can register businesses on the IOSS portal of any EU Member State. If businesses are not based in the EU, they will normally need to appoint an EU-established intermediary to fulfil their VAT obligations under IOSS. The IOSS registration is valid for all distance sales of imported goods to buyers in the EU. You can start using the IOSS only for the goods sold as from 1 July 2021. *



ARDI GHORBANI, AN EXPERT IN AN ESTONIAN BASED VAT INTERMEDIARY COMPANY

What is IOSS

The Import One-Stop Shop (IOSS) is the electronic portal businesses can use since 1 July 2021 to comply with their VAT e-commerce obligations on distance sales of imported goods. According to the VAT rules applicable up until 1 July 2021, no import VAT has to be paid for commercial goods of a value up to EUR 22. The new VAT e-commerce rules abolish this provision as of 1 July 2021. Thus, from 1 July 2021, all commercial goods imported into the EU from a third country or third territory are subject to VAT irrespective of their value.

Logistics and supply chain organisations however cannot apply for a IOSS number as they are not defined as marketplaces (deemed supplier)



LOGISTICS ADOPTS A HYBRID WORKING MODEL

Logistics and supply chain professionals were not spared from the pandemic. For an industry that relies on personal contact for many it was hard to adjust to working from home. Lindsay Mifsud, a Sales Director in a large supply chain organisation, spoke to The Logistics Point about the challenges of working from home and how logistics businesses dealt with the new arrangements.

'Whether businesses survived or thrived during the pandemic depends on who you ask,' behind Mifsud. 'Often we would hear about people being made redundant, for example, or furlough.' For her company, however, volumes remained high and the organisation had to adapt its way of working to make sure employees are protected and contracts executed.

Adapting

Mifsud is open about the struggles of working from home for someone who has spent most of their professional life surrounded by people and working in an office. 'Working in an office is a massive part of my life and not being able to, felt like dropping off a cliff'. Before the pandemic many took the general office chats for something granted but more people have started to realise it is an

essential part of creating a good product and successful team.

Prior to the pandemic logistics was still slow on looking at mental health and providing support to people. In recent months, more and more managers and employees are opening up and the conversation is becoming normal. Mifsud believes it was time for this to happen. 'One of the reasons might be that people who have never had problems with their mental health, are now finding that they are struggling and finding it hard to adjust to the new situation,' she explains and adds how supportive her colleagues and managers are. 'It is spoken about more because more people are experiencing it and paying more attention to it.'

Taking care

Mifsud focused a lot of her time in the beginning of the pandemic on understanding how her team would perform its duties. 'We had general chats about everything,' she says. The company also provided employees with space to share stories and meet digitally. Moving forward, despite it being hard to predict, Mifsud thinks logistics organisations will adapt a hybrid model. 'I have already seen there being more flexibility,' she explains.

Before the pandemic many took the general office chats for something granted but more people have started to realise it is an essential.



LINDSAY MIFSUD,
SALES EXECUTIVE IN A LARGE SUPPLY
CHAIN ORGANISATION

Her words are backed by recent job advertisements for logistics roles that specify a hybrid model of working. Of course, that cannot happen for everyone in the industry as some positions have to be at the warehouse. 'Businesses have seen it can work and it makes sense to happen,' Mifsud adds.

The new type of flexibility will mean that different employees will be offered different ways of working. Some are more productive in the office and others prefer to stay home. Mifsud company is planning to get back to the office but adjusting some areas where it makes sense to use digital platforms like Zoom.

'I am really looking forward to going back to the office,' Mifsud finishes. *

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EDITOR Nick Bozhilov

CONTACT THE EDITOR

nick@thelogisticspoint.com

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