

A woman with a ponytail, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt with a yellow stripe on the sleeve, is looking at a laptop held by a man. The man is wearing a grey sweater and safety glasses. The laptop screen displays a dashboard with various charts and graphs. In the background, there is a yellow forklift and other industrial equipment in a factory setting.

**A shortcut  
to easing labour  
shortages.**

 **JUNGHEINRICH**

# Shortage of skilled labour in logistics drives automation and use of AI.

The increasing shortage of skilled workers, particularly in the logistics sector, is no secret. A survey by the Descartes Systems Group among supply chain and logistics managers reveals alarming figures: 37 percent of respondents face a significant labour shortage, and 58 percent indicate that the labour shortage negatively affects their customer service.

The lack of qualified personnel poses significant challenges, especially for large companies with seasonal peaks, such as the Christmas peak in e-commerce. On the one hand, customers expect faster and more reliable deliveries, while on the other hand, there is intense competition in terms of pricing and distribution. Simultaneously, the industry is compelled to invest more in training and development and to introduce more flexible work models to attract and retain suitable employees.

Therefore, many companies are increasingly relying on intelligent automation solutions and the use of AI and data analytics to further optimise material handling and remain competitive in the long run. This could be realised starting with AMR for single processes through to fully automated systems.

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# Fewer people, less safety.

The shortage of skilled workers not only affects operating costs, logistical processes and customer satisfaction, but it also plays a crucial role in workplace safety. When qualified personnel become scarce, it can quickly lead to various safety-related issues within the facility:

1

## **OVERWORK AND FATIGUE:**

Fewer colleagues often mean longer working hours for the remaining staff, resulting in overload, overwork and fatigue – with a significant increase in the risk of workplace accidents.

2

## **INADEQUATE TRAINING AND ONBOARDING:**

Less time can also mean less time for training and onboarding, leading to a lack of awareness of safety protocols and an associated increased risk.

3

## **RISING ERROR RATES:**

A skilled labour shortage may force less experienced employees to take on more complex and hazardous tasks, leading to more errors and a higher risk of accidents.

4

## **NEGLECT OF MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY CHECKS:**

Understaffing may also affect the maintenance and inspection of work equipment, leading to failures and potentially unsafe working conditions.

5

## **STRESS AND MENTAL STRAIN:**

The most crucial point: the pressure to accomplish more tasks with fewer resources increases stress levels, negatively affecting employees' concentration and reaction times.

6

## **REPUTATION:**

Overworked and dissatisfied employees have a negative impact on the working atmosphere and can also negatively affect the company's reputation.

# Black Week, Christmas, etc.: effectively managing peak times.

The shortage of skilled workers in logistics poses particular challenges for peak load management. If there aren't enough qualified people on board, responding to peak workloads becomes increasingly difficult – especially during high-demand periods such as the holiday season or sales events. This can lead to longer delivery times or incorrect deliveries, causing unnecessary customer frustration. Moreover, during periods of high workload, the risk of errors increases as the existing team may be overwhelmed. Equipment maintenance and adherence to safety standards may be neglected under the pressure to keep operations running smoothly, resulting in corresponding safety risks.

Such peak load phases are often bridged with overtime. While this may help in the short term, it is not a sustainable strategy and can lead to fatigue or overload among employees.



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**Could automation  
concepts provide a  
helpful solution here?**



# Relieving employees – a strategic approach from A to Z.

Sophisticated automation strategies can play a crucial role in overcoming the impact of the shortage of skilled workers in logistics. Systems tailored to individual needs and equipped with the right degree of automation not only increase flexibility and efficiency in the warehouse but can also directly impact workplace safety. By automating repetitive or dangerous tasks, companies can reduce dependence on human labour, thereby significantly lowering the risk of accidents. But specifically do these systems have to deliver?

# 1

## **OPTIMISE EXISTING PROCESSES:**

Automation solutions can make logistics processes more efficient by reducing manual tasks and standardising processes. Automated storage and picking systems enable faster order processing and more efficient warehouse management. The use of robotics, automated conveyor and sorting systems, and intelligent Warehouse Management Systems can optimise processes and shorten lead times.

# 2

## **REDUCE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL STRESS:**

Automation can decrease physical strain for employees by handling heavy lifting and repetitive tasks. This leads to less fatigue and a lower risk of injury. Simultaneously, the use of planning and prediction software can reduce mental stress, allowing better resource planning and workload distribution. Automated systems and intelligent software solutions can help reduce workplace pressure. This allows employees to focus on more complex and less tiring tasks, reducing stress and improving safety.

# 3

## **ENHANCE SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE:**

Automation contributes to increased workplace safety by minimising the risk of human errors and taking over hazardous tasks. Automated systems can work precisely and consistently while adhering to strict safety standards. Sensor-based systems and AI-based monitoring can help detect potential hazards early and take preventive measures.

# 4

## **BETTER MANAGEMENT OF PEAK LOAD TIMES:**

Automation technologies enable flexible adaptation to fluctuating work volumes. By using scalable automation solutions and adaptive systems, companies can handle peak workloads more effectively without needing to hire additional staff. Intelligent algorithms and data analysis allow proactive planning and resource allocation, ensuring maximum service quality even during busy periods.

# Seeing opportunities in a crisis.

Realistically, the challenges faced by the logistics industry in terms of acquiring sufficient qualified personnel are unlikely to diminish in the coming years. As a result, risks will increase – not only for the functionality and economic viability of entire business models but also, specifically, for workplace safety. The smart integration of intelligent automation concepts in the warehouse, precisely tailored to individual needs, offers good opportunities for a solution. Such systems not only increase efficiency and flexibility in processes but also reduce error rates and relieve the burden on employees. Make sure that you have a partner at your side who combines all the necessary expertise in this regard to overcome the risks and dangers of labour shortages in the short and long term.



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ISO 14001 in Norderstedt, Moosburg, Landsberg  
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CE Jungheinrich trucks conform to the  
European Safety Requirements.

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