



TAWI

The Complete Guide to Improving Efficiency within Warehousing Logistics

Strike a Balance Between Productivity and People



Intro

Like most modern industries, the logistics industry is a rapidly evolving one. Constantly adapting to technological changes on both the consumer side with increased online buying habits, and the industry side with improved unloading and routing technologies. The industry is the lifeblood of so many other crucial industries and, as a result, it is regularly at the forefront of change and adaptation.

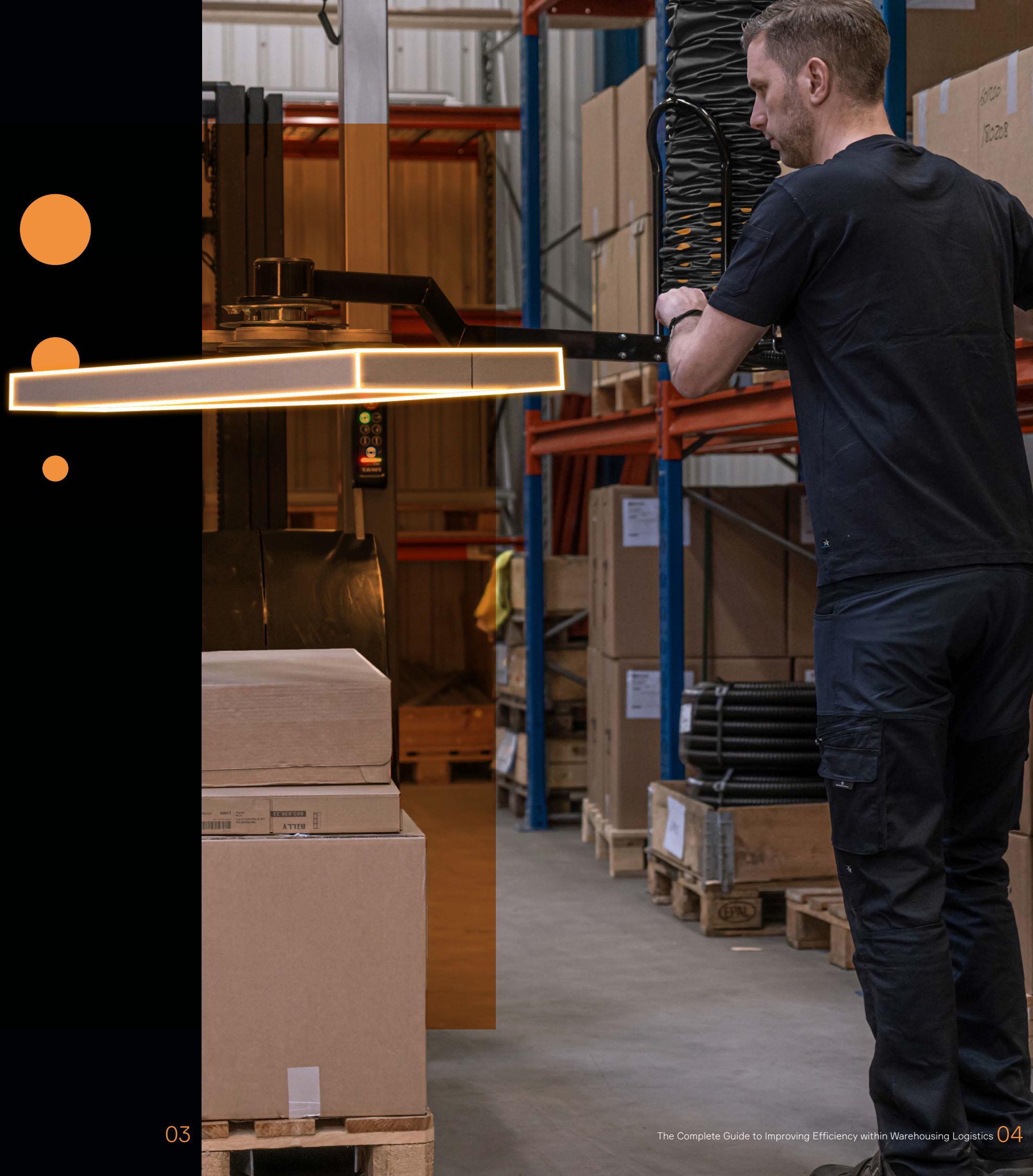
Above everything else, operational efficiency lies at the heart of successful logistics operations. In an interconnected world where speed, accuracy and resource optimisation matter, streamlined processes are not a luxury— they're a strategic necessity.

Efficient logistics reduce costs, enhance customer satisfaction and provide a competitive edge. Whether it's minimising delivery times, optimising inventory management or embracing sustainable practices, operational efficiency ensures smooth operations and keeps businesses ahead in the dynamic global marketplace.

For years, there has been a misplaced belief in the industry that efficiency and productivity improvements have to come at the cost of the health and safety of your workforce. To find out whether this is really the case, the TAWI team has spoken to clients and researched the industry to highlight the trends and options and how best to navigate them in optimising your warehousing logistics operation.

Contents

- 05. The Future of the Warehousing Logistics Sector
- 07. Navigating the Warehousing Logistics Challenges
- 10. Improving Efficiency in Logistics
- 11. Prioritising Employee Well-Being in a Labour-Short Market
- 14. Can your technology and your team work together?
- 15. Why Investment in Warehousing Logistics Is Crucial



The Future of the Warehousing

Logistics Sector



When assessing the evolution of the logistics space there are some key questions. What does this industry look like in 5 to 10 years? What should you be preparing for now to get that critical advantage against your competition? Customer expectations are increasing. The consumer wants ever-increasing speed of delivery and this is spreading into the B2B space also.

Increasingly, businesses are asking - if Amazon can deliver a vast majority of its stock in a day, why can't I? Or my partners? The innovations of the B2C space crossover into the B2B due to their close similarities in process, at least before the "last mile".

This expectation for quicker and more reliable deliveries is almost completely at odds with the push for tailored and customised products.

This leads to acute pressure where the industry is being pulled in two different directions and having to maintain the pace of change in both contrasting areas.

As a result, it's abundantly clear that technology and innovation will play an increasingly large role in the industry. Efficiencies now have to be found in the spaces between, to offset the potential time and resources required to manage additional product customisation.



How can you shorten order picking time?



How can you better utilise your loading bays?



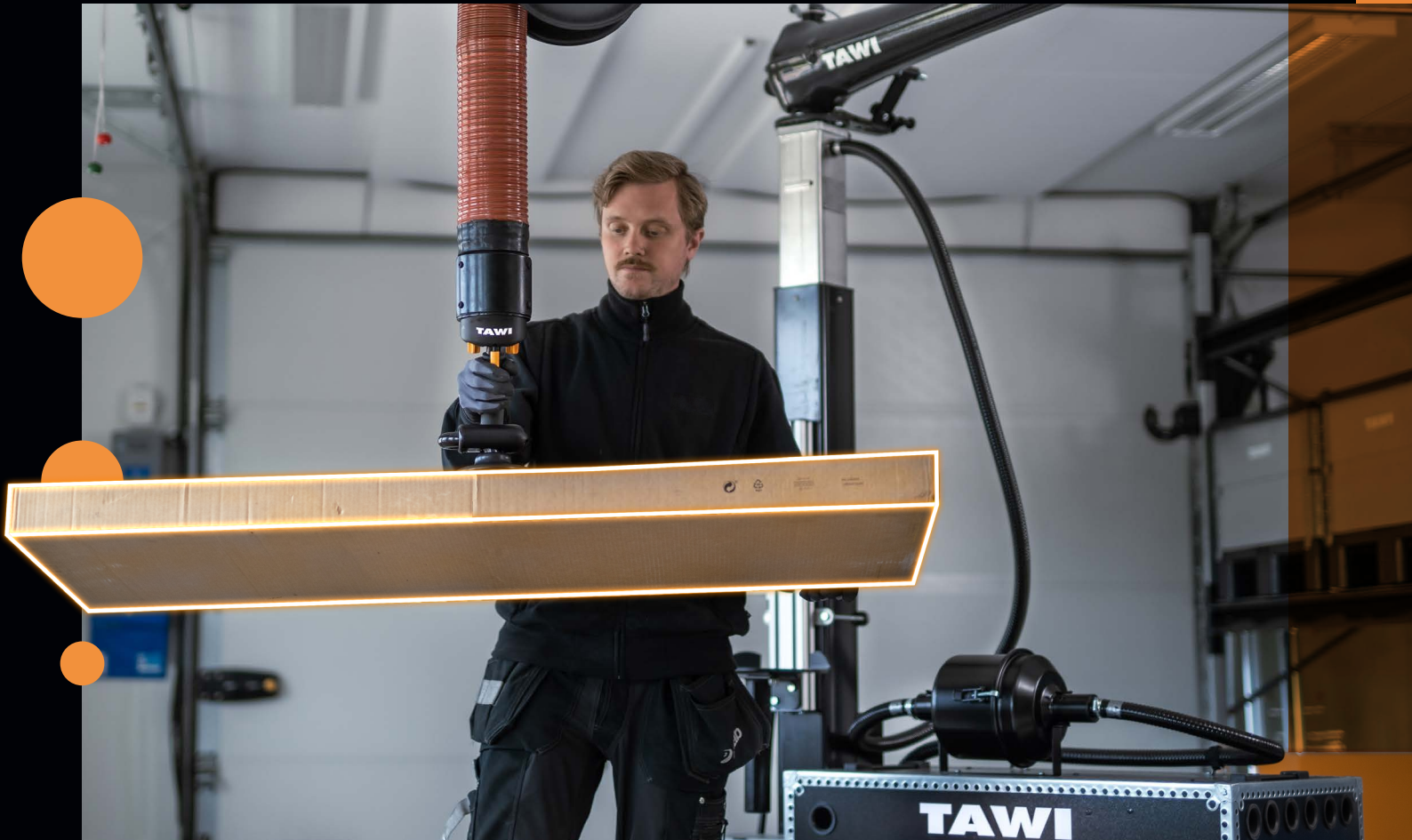
How can you leverage your current workforce without expanding the team?

Better warehouse management tools to deliver a data-first approach, new technological infrastructure and automation all have a growing role to play in the industry moving forward.

Competition will continue to be a factor. As with Amazon, other large businesses are looking to set up their own logistics infrastructure, with some even looking to share the physical infrastructure between companies rather than rely on existing logistics partners. This increased collaboration is creating a new paradigm in the form of the 'Physical Internet'. Taking influence from the 'traditional' internet, it involves the logistics sector adopting standardised packet types - Think TEU containers but also at a

smaller level - and standard protocols. The goal is to streamline the entire process and squeeze even more efficiency from warehousing, haulage and logistics. Early trials and adopters of the model have seen increases in vehicle fill rate, smaller stock housing and reductions in greenhouse emissions.

Lastly, sustainability remains a constant as it does in every major industry. How can an industry almost entirely reliant on transport begin to tackle the impact it has on the planet?



Navigating the Warehousing Logistics Challenges

In 2024, Efficiency isn't just a buzzword - it's a strategic imperative - and the logistics sector is grappling with a host of challenges that demand innovative solutions. Let's explore these hurdles and how forward-thinking companies are overcoming them.

1. Labour Shortages

The European logistics industry faces an uphill battle with labour shortages. Contributing factors include an ageing workforce, disinterest among the younger generation in logistics careers and heightened demand for logistics services. As the situation worsens, companies must rethink recruitment strategies, invest in training programs and create enticing career paths to attract and retain skilled workers.

With this problem, comes technological solutions. Automation and robotic lifting solutions - including container unloading tools - can help fewer workers deliver on the demands of a decreasing workforce.

2. Real-Time Data Tracking

In an era of instant gratification, real-time data tracking is a non-negotiable. Customers expect transparency—from order placement to delivery. Companies that leverage advanced tracking technologies gain a competitive edge. Whether it's GPS-enabled fleet management or IoT-powered inventory monitoring, real-time insights enhance efficiency and customer satisfaction.

3. Regulatory Compliance & Safety

The logistics industry operates within a web of government regulations. Compliance with safety standards, environmental norms and trade policies is essential. Companies must stay informed, adapt swiftly to changing regulations and invest in robust compliance management systems. Noncompliance can lead to fines, operational disruptions, and reputational damage.

Regulatory compliance goes hand in hand with the notion of reducing hazards, threats and accidents. They have a value in-and-of themselves but the knock-on impact of accidents is reduced productivity due to reduced capacity and increased red tape.

4. Cost Management

Rising fuel prices, maintenance costs and overheads pose significant challenges. Cost management requires a delicate balance. Companies must optimise routes, reduce idle time and explore alternative fuels. Technology plays a crucial role—whether it's route optimisation algorithms or predictive maintenance tools.

The question of doing more with the same (or less) remains pertinent in this industry.

5. Sustainability Imperatives

The logistics industry bears a substantial environmental footprint. More than a third of global CO2 emissions stem from transportation linked to logistics. As environmental consciousness grows, companies must proactively pursue sustainable practices. Electric vehicles, eco-friendly packaging and energy-efficient warehouses are steps in the right direction.

6. Future Technology

The future of logistics lies in technology adoption. From AI-driven route planning to blockchain-enabled supply chain transparency, companies that embrace innovation thrive. A robust Transportation Management System (TMS) streamlines operations, optimises tasks and ensures seamless coordination across the supply chain.

There's an increased number of technological solutions changing things within the warehouse side of logistics also. Advanced order picker vehicles greatly increase the speed and capacity of your order-picking teams. Automated and semi-automated container unloaders are growing in popularity allowing more throughput in your loading bays.

At TAWI, we partner with logistics organisations in order to build optimised warehousing and logistics solutions that enable businesses to thrive in these turbulent times.



Improving Efficiency in Logistics

There is no singular silver bullet when it comes to improving productivity and efficiency in your logistics warehouse. As previously discussed, the challenges are numerous so the approaches to combatting them have to be varied too.

While not exhaustive, we've compiled a list of key focus areas. These are collated from our experience developing bespoke warehousing logistics solutions for our global client base and speaking to their teams on the ground.

Advancements in Container Unloading Technology

The adoption of better technology has to be at the forefront of optimising operations efficiency.

The era of uncertain unloading and compromised quality is giving way to a new reality. Computer vision software emerges as the key to precision, prevention and quality assurance in automated container unloading. However, there remains doubt about whether fully automated technology is fit for purpose just yet. The landscape for ergonomic and human-supported lifting technologies is much more mature and capable of offering real productivity gains in your warehouse.

New lifting and unloading technology has the ability to prevent damage, ensure quality, and adapt to dynamic conditions signalling a paradigm shift in supply chain logistics. By leveraging modern technology, logistics companies can enhance efficiency, reduce errors and safeguard cargo integrity during unloading processes. These advancements streamline unloading, minimise manual labour and improve overall productivity.

Want to understand if your business could benefit from TAWI Semi-Automated lifting technology?

Speak to one of our experts today.

Prioritising Employee Well-Being in a Labour-Short Market

A warehouse can be a physically demanding environment, with heavy lifting and physical work often making up much of the logistics worker's day. In a market grappling with labour shortages, keeping staff happy and healthy is not just a moral imperative—it directly impacts performance and productivity. Not to mention the cost implications of losing core team members to injuries which could have been avoided.

Team Building and Belonging

Investing in regular staff get-togethers pays dividends in creating a happy, sociable and productive workplace. Staff nights out, weekends away and family events foster team bonding and a sense of belonging. When employees feel connected and valued, they contribute more effectively to the team.

Shift Work Considerations

Shift work is common in large warehouses, but it can strain workers' families and social lives. To maintain morale:

- **Family Events:** Organise events that involve families, allowing everyone to get to know each other outside the work environment.
- **Flexibility:** Accommodate shift changes whenever possible. Recognise that employees have lives outside work and strive to meet their needs.

Positive Feedback and Recognition

Acknowledging exceptional work is essential for motivation. Consider:

- **Exceptional Work Cards:** Colleagues fill out cards to recognise outstanding performance. These are read out at team meetings, allowing peers to congratulate each other.
- **Tailored Rewards:** Personalised rewards, such as champagne, hot air balloon rides or football team kits show appreciation for individual contributions.



Health and Safety Awareness

Potentially the most important element factor in this dangerous and physically demanding sector. Whether it's slips, trips and falls, or injuries and wear from repetitive (and incorrect) lifting techniques, human safety should be at the forefront of how you operate your business.

A physically demanding environment requires rigorous health and safety training. Regular sessions help prevent accidents and injuries. Prioritising employee well-being ultimately results in a healthy and productive company.

By embracing innovation and prioritising employee welfare, companies can navigate the complexities of today's logistics landscape with resilience and success.

There's a widespread belief that efficiency comes at the cost of safety or even reduction in human resources but this isn't correct. A warehousing logistics business simply can't have efficient and predictable productivity without due care towards the people onsite, especially in the current landscape of labour shortages.



Can your technology and your team work together?

Striking the right balance between technology and the human touch is a critical challenge for logistics firms. While technology enhances efficiency, the human element remains indispensable.

Firstly, there will be those reading this who side either one way or the other, for increased labour power or complete automation. Choosing to opt for either a lumper service to bulk up resources or an innovative, but ultimately untested, fully automated solution.

Is the human solution the correct solution?

Lumper services have been a staple of the logistics sector for a long time and have provided additional support and capacity to businesses in the space.

There's no denying that throwing more people at the problem will increase productivity but it remains a brute force solution. While it can be argued that using a lumper service may minimise risk of injury to your staff, there's still the same risk of injury to the workers of the service.

And that's before you factor in the fees, reliance on an external provider, less effective quality control and the potential for communication challenges between your team and the lumpers.

Naturally, we don't believe that Lumper services are the best way to go but we explore the pros and cons in more depth in our blog [here](#).

The most effective mix of productivity and efficiency comes with a mix of human and robotic support.

Human know-how and adaptation to situations coupled with technological support for more mundane tasks is the perfect sweet spot. It allows for:

- Understand Customer Needs and be more adaptable
- Have better quality control and critical intervention with human oversight
- Digitise and automate mundane and potentially damaging lifting tasks
- Improved monitoring and adaptability

In summary, technology in sync with human control remains the most optimal approach to. Finding the right balance optimises business performance and enhances customer experience. As a result, that leads to the often difficult conversation of speaking to the board for funding.

[Find out more about how TAWI lifting solutions could work in your warehouse.](#)



Why Investment in Warehousing Logistics is Crucial

Sadly, the market doesn't stand still and nor does your competition. Investment in tools to deliver safe, operational efficiency within logistics is a must but it's often difficult to get buy-in.

Naturally, there's concern from your teams when new technology is considered, could this cost jobs? Could it be seen as cutting corners on safety? Ensuring that your teams are considered and understand the purpose is crucial.

They're the backbone of your operation and as a result, it's only fair to explain and highlight how you're looking to supplement their work rather than replace it. Investment and

modernisation have been scuppered by unions protecting their teams due to ill-thought-out technology adoption policies.

Ultimately, you can't have an efficient workplace if you have a disenfranchised and unmotivated team. They could be your biggest ally but they have to be considered early in the process.

The Board

The other side of the dilemma is the board. Unlocking the purse strings can be difficult. It is important to be able to explain the advantages of spending now to unlock increased productivity and ultimately savings down the line.

We go into more depth about this in our guide - Building a Business Case for Investment in Logistics - but the key areas to focus on include:

1. Customer Satisfaction:

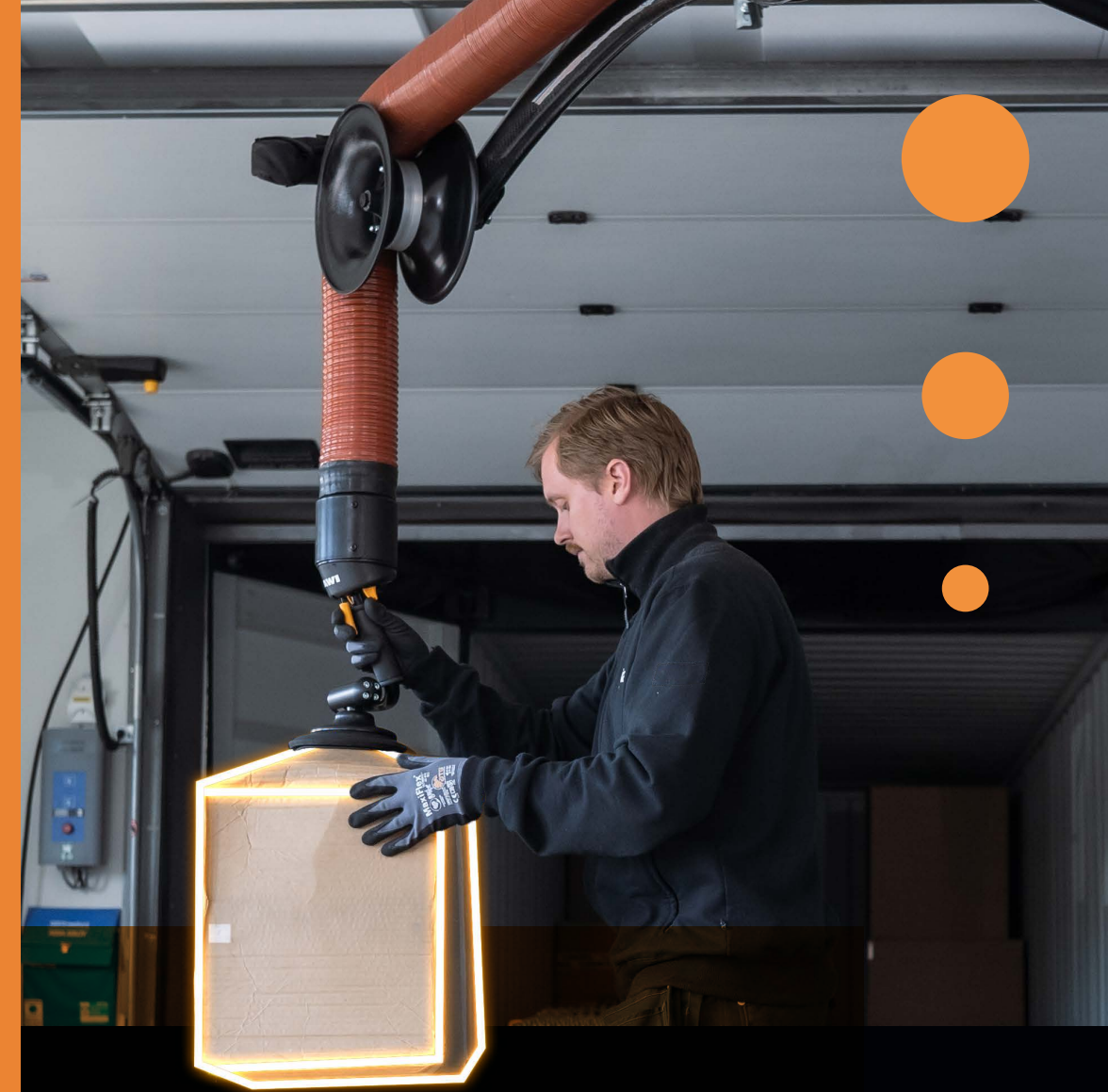
Efficient logistics directly impact customer satisfaction by ensuring that products reach customers on time and in good condition. Timely deliveries not only meet but also exceed customer expectations, fostering positive experiences and building trust in the brand. When customers receive their orders promptly and without hassle, they are more likely to become repeat buyers and advocates for the brand. Additionally, reliable logistics contribute to positive word-of-mouth awareness, further enhancing the company's reputation and attracting new customers.

2. Cost Savings:

Investing in logistics optimisation leads to cost savings across various aspects of the supply chain. Streamlining processes reduces overhead costs associated with transportation, warehousing, and inventory management. By minimising errors and inefficiencies in logistics operations, companies can avoid unnecessary expenses such as rush deliveries, stockouts, and excess inventory holding costs. Moreover, improved efficiency translates to better utilisation of resources, maximising the value derived from each investment. Ultimately, every penny saved in logistics directly contributes to improving the company's bottom line and overall profitability.

3. Competitive Edge:

In today's fiercely competitive global marketplace, efficient logistics provide a significant competitive advantage. Companies that can deliver products faster, more reliably, and at lower costs than their competitors are better positioned to capture market share and maintain customer loyalty. Efficient logistics not only enables businesses to meet the demands of increasingly time-sensitive consumers but also supports expansion into new markets by ensuring seamless distribution networks. By continuously optimising logistics processes and embracing innovative technologies, companies can differentiate themselves from competitors and stay ahead in the race for market dominance.



Conclusion

In the balancing act between productivity and people, remember they're not adversaries. A well-optimised warehouse harmonises both. So, invest wisely, embrace technology and nurture your most valuable asset—the people who keep the wheels turning.

Warehousing logistics isn't just about boxes and pallets; it's about weaving efficiency into the fabric of our interconnected world, a world which is only getting more connected.

If you're ready to understand how TAWI could help with your journey towards a modern, optimised warehouse operation, get in touch. Our warehousing logistics experts understand the process from onboarding and optimising your set up to choosing the right technology for your business.

TAWI

Ready for more
support on your
vacuum lifting
journey?

Click the button below to
arrange a call with one of
our Logistics solutions
experts.

Let's go

