A Good Product in the Right Place at the Right Time

In a survey on logistics and distribution, also briefly presented in our Consultant supplement, the highest ranking tool in terms of practicability was applications for managing warehouse operations in real time. Even 84% of US companies participating in this survey are already using them, while 11% are planning to upgrade such systems. Mobile applications also ranked high on the list – in the USA mobile applications in the fields of logistics and distribution are used by all retail companies participating in the survey.

How does Damjan Širca comment on the results of this survey given that he is the Director of Epilog, a company developing its own IT system for warehouse management, AtlasWMS. "There is a peculiar dialectics at hand. Namely, the more theoreticians teach that warehouses and transport bring no added value to products, the more it is shown in the market that merely having a good product is not sufficient by any means. A good product must also reach the customer at the right time at the right place. This is what adds value to it. The optimisation of logistics processes is possible not only with timely but also with advance informatics – we have to be forward-thinking and be able to foresee future events. It is only in this way that we can make sure that we don't miss the right moment. This is a newly discovered logic, which is in fact an old common-sense logic claiming that logistic processes need to optimised, monitored, recorded and supported with IT systems and relevant technologies. The technology that is topical today is mobile computing – regardless of time and place, the user must always be connected with a logistics information system. High land prices and expensive labour coupled with the fact that automated systems can be specialised and adapted are making such systems, in particular automated warehouses, ever more attractive.

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What about just-in-time deliveries? "Just-in-time often proved to be just-too-late. Timely delivery, of course, is the ultimate goal, but in a distribution process there needs to be some reserve, which is not cost-free. But certainly the most expensive thing is if you can't deliver goods to a client by the promised deadline. A warehouse offers that reserve time in which you can breathe in and it lets you adapt to new circumstances. You simply do some things a little earlier and create a stock of goods. To operate fully without this reserve is difficult, practically impossible. Sometimes it is cheaper to hire a private jet and take the product directly

to the production facility – contract penalties are namely too high. Some companies in China provide just-in-time warehousing in such a way that they keep unsold goods in trucks at all times and drive around Europe. When someone calls them they drive there. We can certainly say that just-in-time delivery is most reliably ensured by automated warehouses. AtlasWMS is adapting to all just-in-time circumstances, with advance reservations, with stocks etc.," adds Damjan Širca, the Director of Epilog.

AtlasWMS

The Slovenian warehouse management software package is successfully managing more than 50 large warehouses across Europe.

- Multi-language support
- 100% traceability
- 24/7 support
- Reliable data protection
- SAP, BaaN, Navision connectivity
- Stock management in various units of measurement simultaneously
- Advanced inventory support
- Zone management
- Batch management
- Owner and consignment management (3 PL)
- Automated transport systems support (MFCS)
- Automated scales support

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