



Logistics Office – Pressure Release with Automation

The movement of real people, with real goods operating in real time generates a busy logistics office.

Speak to many people, no two days are the same – well except for the “Admin”.

Incidents happen. There is a lot of skill and knowledge needed to overcome challenges.

New projects, new initiatives and new compliance means that the base line changes frequently.

Dealing with the pressure of goods moving in / out of warehouses, trucks making collections and deliveries. The clock is always ticking. It is where the plans meet reality!

It can be a really rewarding job in terms of the sense of achievement. Lots of phone calls, emails and of course the admin. Getting issues resolved.

Depending on the part of the logistics operation being handled there can be many different IT systems involved such as Warehouse Management System (WMS), Yard Management System (YMS), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Finance, HR, Customs, Transport Management System (TMS) plus of course Supplier Portals, Customer Portals, emails and Excel spreadsheets,

From orders being processed, through inventory management to shipment tracking and monitoring there is a lot of data flowing around systems between a customer Purchase Order (PO) arriving and the final customer Invoice payment closing off the order.

For the business to operate at scale, there are many business processes.

www.ether-solutions.co.uk

Tel: 0845 643 4410

Get More Done, Same Staff – Automate Boring Work

When a new recruit joins the office team of a logistics business, they will need to learn how to perform the various processes, what compliance checks are essential, when management approval is required and how the audit trail is created.

As staff gain experience, the interest in performing routine admin tasks tends to decline. Such staff want to use their knowledge to investigate and solve problems, not be spending lots of effort on admin.

One way to enable staff to progress is to recruit junior staff to perform the admin tasks for them, an alternative approach is to automate the admin tasks so that nobody does the “Boring Admin”.

Automation for office tasks – The Admin

Automation using software robots replicates the activities a person would manually perform on a computer.

Once automation is implemented, it frees up staff time to focus on exceptions, unique scenarios, and activities that enhance quality. Automation turns the office drudgery into opportunity.

Interactions with IT systems typically involve reading from a screen, typing on a keyboard, and moving and clicking a mouse. A software robot can perform read from the screen, simulate keyboard typing, and mimic mouse movements and clicks.

By interacting with existing IT systems in the same way a person would, software robots allow employees to redirect their efforts to more valuable tasks instead of mundane, repetitive work.

Integrating automation into business processes offers several benefits:

- **24/7 Operation:** Automation enables continuous operation, without the limitations of human working hours.
- **Flexibility:** It can handle fluctuations in workload efficiently, managing peaks and troughs seamlessly.
- **Reduced Dependency on Staff Availability:** With automation, there's less reliance on staff being present, ensuring processes run smoothly even during absences.

Admin gets done but not by people.

By incorporating automation, businesses can significantly boost productivity, enabling staff to contribute more strategically and add greater value.

The plan is great but Monitor for issues

The best logistic operations are well planned. Everything is resourced in a timely fashion and things run smoothly. The plan will be great before “Real Life” kicks in.

Active monitoring and tracking are required to ensure that any incidents and deviations from the plan are alerted as soon as possible. Once a problem is identified it's impact can be assessed and potential mitigation action taken.

The need for pro-active checking can be high. Some staff in logistics offices spend many hours checking on the state of the operations. This type of "Re-assurance" checking consumes effort but only delivers the value of "Things are OK".

It is an ideal task for automation, so that staff can be alerted when their input is required. They can be alerted if a 3rd party system is un-available so alternative monitoring / checking can be used e.g. Phone calls.

When an issue does occur, it can often require mitigation to applied to several items quickly. For example, notifying 50 customers that a container ship is not going to dock for 24 hours. 50 emails each specific about the goods that are on the ship. Re-scheduling the trucks to pick-up the containers, etc.

Automation of processes used in mitigation can often free time for logistics staff when they are under the most pressure.

Keep Coping not Automating

The business is operating, everybody is busy, the business can cope.

Nobody disputes that Automation will deliver benefits, why would any business not want them soon?

Is it possible to keep asking staff to do that extra work?

Staff have lives. They go home at the end of each day and the business hopes they will come back the next day. How many business processes could operate without staff or on a skeleton team?

With recruitment being difficult, it is good business sense to get the most out of the staff who are available.