

A photograph of a warehouse interior. A person wearing a blue jacket is seen from behind, pushing a pallet jack loaded with several cardboard boxes down a long aisle. The aisle is flanked by high industrial shelving units filled with more boxes. The lighting is bright and even.

A sign of the change - skills shortage in logistics

It is becoming increasingly difficult for logistics service providers in particular to fill vacant positions. However, this situation no longer only inhibits the growth of the companies concerned, the staff shortage may even become a danger for the maintenance of the company. In order to remain competitive, logistics companies have to improve their technological competence and work on their image at the same time.

👉 **Industry Innovation**

The reason for the lack of applicants in logistics?

There is a lack of young talents at any qualification level in the logistics industry. Companies are not only receiving fewer and fewer applications for jobs as a driver or warehouse logistician. Planners and dispatchers are also in demand. But not all areas of the industry are affected equally. While larger companies have fewer worries about junior staff, small and medium-sized companies are having more and more problems in compensating the natural fluctuation. The logistics sector has grown considerably in the past analogue to transport volumes. Nevertheless, the sector has failed to position itself as an attractive employer for junior staff and experienced professionals from other branches of industry. Of the three sub-sectors of logistics, i.e. service providers, trade and industry, the first in particular is struggling with this problem.



Logistics has an unjustly bad image, because the import, export and customs sectors offer a wide range of diverse and demanding tasks.

The reasons for this, according to experts, are the generally poor reputation of the logistics sector. Long working hours, simple tasks and low wages determine the image of the sector among applicants. But the logistics sector has a lot to offer: The latest technologies have long been used in many companies, and areas of import, export and customs offer a wide range of varied and challenging tasks. The problem is that the logistics sector, especially the smaller companies, have so far failed to promote this properly. A shortage of HR marketing, for example, is one of the major obstacles to attracting qualified junior staff at all levels.

The logistics of the future

However, for many of the small and medium-sized companies mentioned above, the inadequate maintenance of their own brand is not the only reason for the worries about young talents. As far as working conditions are concerned, they might also fall further behind. After all, they are the particular ones who have to struggle with the challenges of Logistics 4.0. What does this term mean?

Logistics 4.0 describes the logistics industry transformed by the possibilities of digitisation. It is based on a key concept: digital technologies can be used to link machines, objects and people in real time. This means that previously only locally saved information is now available to all participants without delay. This idea, consistently thought through to the end, provides more decentralized decision-making structures and even more automation in logistics. For example, parcels can now

find their way independently through logistics centers or automated warehouses can independently optimize shelf space allocation. This transformation affects all sub-disciplines of logistics, warehousing and transport, as well as production and distribution, and is increasingly decisive for the success of a company, because the efficient management of value-added networks is becoming a strategic success factor in many industries. Flexible delivery with short transit times increasingly determines the quality of products and services, not only for private but also for commercial customers. For more information on our understanding of logistics 4.0, please read the article [Transparent and networked logistics processes - real vision or fiction?](#)

In addition to robots and machines with artificial intelligence, skilled workers are also a key resource in industry 4.0. ©ARD

In order to exploit the efficiency potential of this technology, the information-driven logistics sector needs one thing above all in particular: consistent, high-quality data to optimize processes. Smaller companies in the service sector are struggling to create the necessary digital infrastructure. As a result, they are lagging behind the expectations of their industrial and end customers for increased interaction. This means that they are in danger of missing out on their larger competitors, while the logistics sectors in industry and commerce are often already one step further in the transformation process. One reason for the insufficient ability to innovate is the traditionally low margins in the sector, which make it difficult to invest in the future. But the lack of financial strength is accompanied by a shortage of specialists.

The qualification profiles are changing

Many companies in the logistics sector are hit twice by the low number of applicants: on the one hand, there is a shortage of skilled workers who are still needed for operational activities in warehousing and transport; and on the other hand, the companies are unable to attract enough specialists for the transformation process. After all, the implementation of logistics 4.0 requires employees with the appropriate knowledge. Robots and automatic systems must be planned, programmed and maintained.

In addition to engineers, the companies looking for computer scientists who organize the company's data and gain important information for optimizing the entire material flow network through appropriate analyses. The question of how industry 4.0 also changes the working environment of so-called brain workers, who mainly process data or pursue creative activities, is addressed in our article on [the change in the profession of engineers](#). In logistics, this means that even administrative tasks can often be performed more reliably and accurately by machines than by humans. For employees, the share of creative work such as organizational and technological planning and process optimization is increasing. The change also affects warehouse specialists: although they will be released from standard tasks by machines in the future, new activities in maintenance and repair can be opened up through appropriate qualifications. Where human work cannot be replaced due to its complexity, innovations from bionics such as the [exoskeleton](#) make it as stress-free as possible for employees.

Using the Transformation for Success

Companies in the logistics sector and potential applicants can see the transformation process towards Logistics 4.0 as an opportunity. After all, employees and companies have new possibilities to change their position in the market. Logistics companies that actively shape technological change can set themselves apart from old competitors and secure strategic advantages for success. For this purpose, they must organize existing data, draw the right conclusions in terms of process improvements and create the prerequisites for closer interaction with their value-added partners. In addition to financial resources, companies need the right specialists.

Companies that now want to secure an advantageous market position for themselves in the future should therefore increase their attractiveness for applicants. The substance for the marketing is therefore the optimal use of technology which will enable the logistics sector to inspire technical affinity and at the same time to organise activities such as warehousing with a minimum of stress. Entry positions also offer development prospects, as newcomers can acquire the tools for the increasing tasks with higher added value. The whole sector is in demand, because improving the company's image involves, among other things, the creation of working conditions comparable to those in the industry in terms of working hours, pay and recognition.

How ARTS can support your business

Our experts in [logistics and supply chain management](#) are already working with leading technology companies to realize the vision of Logistics 4.0. With our tailor-made logistics solutions, we support you in optimizing the entire process chain with reference to the central indicators of transparency, flexibility and efficiency. We can also take over operational activities in warehousing, production, distribution and indirect areas at your request. Our long-standing cooperation with leading

companies in the aerospace, mechanical engineering and vehicle construction industries speaks for the high quality standards of our work.

Sources: iwkoeln.de | mm-logistik.vogel.de | bvl.de | onpulsion.de | mm.logistik-vogel.de | verkehrsrundschau.de | handelsjournal.de | hbr.org: tailored logistics the next advantage | hbr.org: the death of the supply chain | hbr.org: the achilles heel of supply chain management



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