

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2023



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DB Schenker opens automated e-commerce logistics hub in Spain

Freight forwarder DB Schenker has opened an automated e-commerce facility in Spain to service its retail customers in Spain, Portugal and France.

The 50,000 square meters warehouse in Guadalajara features more than 200 robots and an optimised packaging system.

The facility, situated in the Henares industrial park – 50 km from Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport, is equipped with a Goods-to-Person picking system to handle nearly 55,000 units per day using Autonomous Mobile Robots (AMR) provided by AMR technology specialist Geek+.

The system features pick-and-pack solutions designed for fast and flexible online order fulfilment and efficient returns handling.

An automated conveyor system is designed to ensure on-time processing and fast delivery times to establish Adidas, DB Schenker's leading customer at this site.

To optimise the volume of parcels and utilisation of transport vehicles, packaging is adjusted to the exact size of the product that is shipped through an automated solution. This results in reduced CO₂ emissions throughout distribution, said the freight forwarder.

Alfredo Alcalá, DB Schenker's contract logistics product manager in Iberia, said: "DB Schenker is committed to serving the e-commerce sector with its innovative power and proven reliability.

"The automated solutions of our Guadalajara operations were installed in a record time of only four months and already proved their stability and flexibility around Black Friday and the Christmas season."

The logistics hub includes is certified 'BREEAM Very Good', aligning with DB Schenker's sustainability goals.



Women in logistics: An untapped potential awaits

Logistics and transportation is one of the most critical and complex components in the entire supply chain ecosystem. However, unlike the IT or financial services sectors, logistics has never been a coveted industry to be in, especially for women. Even today, the sector continues to be dominated by men.

Here are some of the reasons why women have not chosen the logistic industry as a career option :

Sense of unsafe working environment

For long, the sector has been highly fragmented and unorganised. The entire logistics ecosystem involves several stakeholders right from port/ terminal operators, to fleet operators, to godown owners, to customs authorities, etc., which are largely owned or managed by men. Since all these job were not integrated, as they are today with the help of technology, it required the logistics and supply chain executives to deal with these stakeholders at different levels. Additionally, with safety and lack of adequate amenities and infrastructure at the godowns and ports

being some of the prime concerns for women, logistics and transportation was being looked at as a “man’s job”.



Hiring bias

Even today, there are very few women who have been able to make a mark in this industry in the leadership positions. While gender parity and inclusions are discussed in the Board rooms, there is still a massive disparity when it comes to inducting women in key operations. Due to the increasing adoption of technology, we are seeing recruitment happening for corporate office jobs rather than hiring talent at the managerial or decision-making positions.

Inadequate horizontal career growth opportunities

While on one hand there continues to be a little resistance from the industry when it comes to hiring women, women themselves are hesitant to take up jobs in this sector. This is largely because of the lack of awareness about the growth prospects in the sector. Some of the corporates, on the other hand, have been hiring women only to adhere to the gender parity norms, but they are not being trained adequately to grow within the organization and take up challenging jobs.

Role of technology

Technology and automation have been a game-changer for all the industries. Today, a majority of the operations which are complex in nature are being integrated through technology. As a result, companies which are technologically advanced, have started hiring women to manage the complex operations remotely. While there are very few women who are keen to take up sales operations in this industry, when it comes to management of the supply chain, they are at the forefront. This is because the entire data and systems are accessible at the click of a button. Therefore, if we see the entire logistics ecosystem today, we will find women being a part of complex operations, right from customs clearance to managing cargo operations to inventory management at the warehouse level, etc.

Role of infrastructure

The government's focus on improving infrastructure and connectivity has enabled women to take up jobs largely into the D2C and B2C segments when it comes to on ground works. Today, we find women working in warehouses and as last mile delivery executives in this space. However, the percentage is still very low.

Why should women be a part of the logistics sector?

By nature, women can easily handle complex situations. Women have proved their mettle in all the sectors where they have ventured into. The penetration has been slow, but it is increasing gradually. Likewise, given the kind of disruptions we are witnessing in the logistics and supply chain ecosystem, we will definitely require a large pool of talent to efficiently run the businesses. There are a number of opportunities that lie ahead in this sector which women can and should explore.

Change in approach is crucial

While the initiatives like gender parity and inclusion have played a major role in bringing women in the mainstream in the logistics sector, there is a lot that needs to be done to actually get the right talent into the sector.

While making provisions for inclusion is one way by which we can bring more women into the mainstream, there is a need for organizations and even educational institutions to train women to take up complex roles in this sector. Once we build that confidence among women to take up all types of roles in the logistics ecosystem, we will see many women proactively becoming a part of this sector. It is time that we realise that we need to look beyond gender and have an efficient workforce.



Global logistics company DHL suspends some operations in Pakistan amid restrictions on outbound remittances

Islamabad [Pakistan], March 1 (ANI): Dalsey, Hillblom and Lynn (DHL), a global logistics company on Monday announced the suspension of some of its operations partially in Pakistan due to the government's restrictions on outbound remittances, Pakistan-based Dawn newspaper reported.

According to Dawn, DHL Pakistan has informed its customers that it is suspending 'Import Express Product' and restricting outbound shipments to a maximum weight of 70 kg per shipment for all customers billed in Pakistan from March 15.

As per the company, the last pick-up date would be March 14 and shipments picked up on or before this date would still be delivered.

The Pakistan Muslim League (N) (PMLN) led coalition government and the State Bank of Pakistan, amid the fast dwindling foreign exchange, imposed restrictions on outward remittances for foreign companies operating in Pakistan.

"The remittances sent by DHL Pakistan cover the cost of DHL's international aviation, hub, gateway and last-mile delivery incurred through our global network for the shipments sent/received by valued customers," the courier service provider said, adding that this constraint has made it unsuitable for DHL Express to continue providing the full product offering in Pakistan.

The company said it is in regular contact with the Pakistani authorities to allow pending remittances to resume the full suite of services in the country at the earliest, according to Dawn.

Islam Khabar recently reported that Pakistan could have made an economic recovery through foreign investments. The country, however, is not known to have an investment-friendly regime.

Foreign investors avoid bringing money into Pakistan due to various factors such as political instability, discontinuity of macroeconomic policy, terrorism, corruption and energy shortages.

In the past two decades, Pakistan has tried implementing several FDI-friendly measures. Wide-ranging structural reforms were attempted by the country to attract multinationals which could become the enablers of economic growth and job creation in the country.



However, effective implementation of such measures remained slow due to ground-level problems in the country including red-tapism, bureaucratic lethargy, rampant corruption, misguided ideology and extremism, Islam Khabar reported.

Corporations from many developed countries have thus struggled to grow their investments in Pakistan.

Companies such as Proctor and Gamble, Oracle services Pakistan, IBM Pakistan, FedEx (Gerry's Group of Companies), Marriot Hotels, and Troy Group Inc. have to approach the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and other departments for minor problems which leads to disruptions in their operation.

Proctor and Gamble's plans for importing raw materials and machinery into Pakistan are in limbo due to SBP's restrictions on the import of machinery.



Logistics & ChatGPT – World of Possibilities

ChatGPT took the world by storm in November 2022, when it was revealed. It was like all other magical things developed in the Bay Area using large language models, and there are several variants in the pipeline. Recently, a programmer in India taught it some relevant government policies and rules and has now created the demo wherein a rural farmer without any knowledge of computers, technology, or even the language, can interact with ChatGPT verbally, and it will not just direct him to the right portal, but will also ensure that he gets the service he asked for. So, the bot translates from a local language to a website in English or Hindi and directs the citizen for getting the correct information.

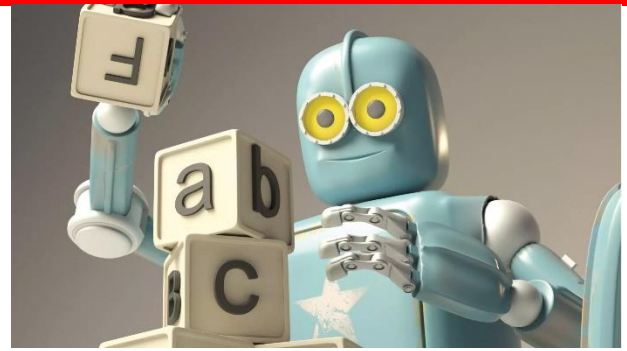
GPT-3 and other AI tools will make it easy for product experiments to be iterated at a much faster scale, and help developers push out features/products that can test waters in just a few days instead of weeks. This will lead to better experiments per USD invested and a great tool for the ecosystem to leverage.

In Supply chain management, blockchain can be used to create a transparent and secure supply chain management system, which can be used to track the movement of goods, from the point of origin to the point of consumption. AI can be used to optimize the supply chain and improve logistics.

The added extension of such LLM (Large Language Models) being developed will be easier interaction with tools, this is a huge step towards customers asking for information in Natural language and getting a specific response. When such models are optimized for regional languages, it can bring down the language barrier and access to public digital goods. One thing it validates is that it is now possible for computers to naturally understand humans without complicated instructions.

If AI can respond in the same natural language humans are used to, this will bridge the gap between want & delivery very easily. This opens up a lot of possibilities as shown, by the example of ChatGPT.

GPT model trained with general internet data and open public sources has become a huge hit, proving that simplifying access to computation leads to higher usage of technology.

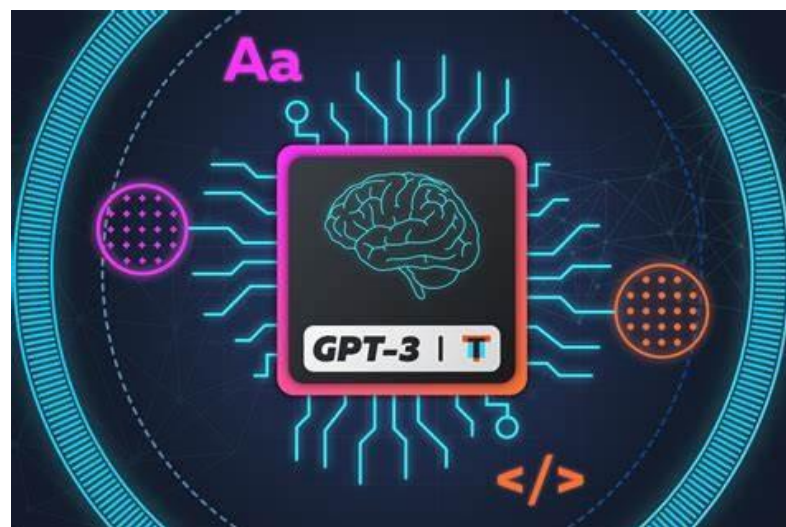


GPT models are now being used in a lot of different applications where previously it required a lot of instruction based or programmatic based customization for set up can now be easily understood and automated using GPT models.

For logistics, which is mostly a phone-based call-based industry. This changes a lot of things, it changes how daily interactions between different stakeholders happen, you no longer have to navigate five apps, 10 screens to get the information required. You can just type it into one box, these are the type of solutions that are going to come in the next couple of weeks, where access to information is going to become a lot easier.

For Logistics, which is heavily fragmented most market data of supply and demand are not centralised and not available online, this creates an entry barrier for the industry.

In general, we are going to see more software that are just going to start off with a chat on-boarding that helps you customize the software to your needs with just natural language. You will no longer need to look for and find configuration find preferences or find complicated hacks to make tools work. The way you need to it brings down the expertise required to use existing technology.





Chinese Firms Step Up Logistics Investment Drive

Chinese express delivery and logistics companies are making a push to improve delivery efficiency and ensure the stability and security of supply chains. Besides, they stepping up efforts to invest in logistics infrastructure globally and provide air cargo services, according to experts.

These efforts are part of a broader push by the companies to improve delivery efficiency and ensure the stability and security of supply chains.

Cainiao Network, the logistics arm of Chinese technology heavyweight Alibaba Group, has raised the number of its overseas distribution centres to 15 to reinforce its global logistics network. It is focusing on last-mile deliveries and smart lockers to improve and localise its services in destination countries.

The company has set up 6 smart logistics hubs around the world. It operates over 3 million square metres of cross-border logistics warehouses, and has over 240 chartered flights for long-distance logistics every month.

Liu Xinyang, general manager of Cainiao Export Logistics, underlined the need to streamline and digitalise logistics capabilities and services, as well as cross-border supply chains.

“The pandemic has highlighted the importance of stable and efficient cross-border logistics services as more merchants shift online to tap a wider overseas consumer base,” Liu said. “Cainiao will continue its commitment to building global logistics infrastructure and enhancing end-to-end global fulfilment services to better support export merchants in their cross-border businesses.”

In November, Cainiao announced the launch of its first smart distribution centre in Brazil, and plans to launch another 9 such centres in that country in the following 3 years.

JD Logistics, an arm of Chinese e-commerce platform JD, is increasing efforts in the construction of logistics infrastructure globally by planning to build more warehouses.

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CONTACT US

TEL: +86-21-32506989 FAX: +86-21-32506989

E-MAIL: [MARKETING@SHA.PREMIERE- LOGISTICS.COM](mailto:MARKETING@SHA.PREMIERE-LOGISTICS.COM)

WEBSITE: WWW.PREMIERE-LOGISTICS.COM

**ADDRESS: RM. 603&304, BUILDING B, NO. 28 XUANHUA RD. CHANGNING DISTRICT,
SHANGHAI, 200050, CHINA**