

FLEXIBLE SORTATION

With e-commerce booming and retailers under growing pressure to deliver goods quickly, effective last-mile logistics have never been more crucial

While e-commerce has made the life of consumers more convenient, the competition among retailers to deliver goods at an ever-faster pace is immense. The unpredictability and complexities of e-commerce have impacted supply chains in multiple ways and have focused attention on the need to improve last-mile logistics. The last mile of the supply chain, therefore, is the game-changer among e-commerce players. Challenged by the continued growth of e-commerce, today's retailers, third-party logistics (3PL) and parcel carriers need more than traditional technology solutions that support the highly dynamic logistics scenario.

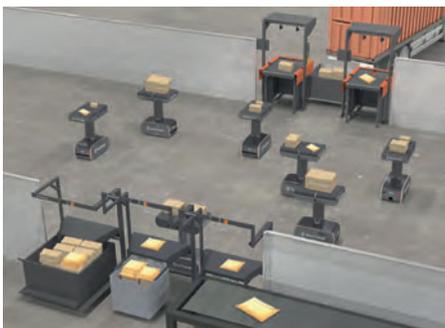
Retail and logistics managers are expected to respond to changes quickly and in a cost-effective manner. Challenges include:

- Rising customer expectation and unpredictable growth in volumes: Consumers expect options such as same- or next-day delivery, or even two-hour express delivery. Since the



Above: The Flexo modular sortation system comprises a fleet of automated robots

Below: Flexo operates 24/7, helping to reduce shipping costs and dependency on additional labor during peak periods



number of products that can be bought online has multiplied, there is a need to fulfill orders with greater efficiency, speed and accuracy. This requires high capital investments and long gestation periods as organizations grapple with the ongoing growth in parcels.

- Volatile demand and seasonal peaks: Multiple seasonal peaks and promotional volatility in parcel volumes result in a system choke, which in turn leads to missed deliveries and dissatisfied consumers. Warehouses need to be prepared to handle peaks and to have scalable sortation systems with high throughput.
- Changing sortation footprint: As retailers try to keep their logistics footprint in tune with the rapidly changing supply chain landscape, they will need to switch or expand locations to continually optimize their network and meet other warehousing objectives. To enable such agility in the supply chain, future sortation systems will have to be mobile and flexible.
- Speed-to-market: When we talk about the future of logistics, it all comes down to speed of responding to market changes and staying ahead of the demand curve by leveraging operational responsiveness. The cost of operation shoots up when fulfilling express deliveries on a daily basis.

Flexible automation Sortation is a critical and complex step in the order fulfillment process. A typical sorter is selected based on a minimum five-year sales forecast of changes that support the logistics of the future. But peace of mind is not guaranteed – forecasts seldom stand true as unforeseen external forces come into play. With limited bidirectional scalability and mobility, the monolithic conveyors and sorters fail to justify the investment or meet the projected ROI.

Designed to address current and future challenges of sortation, AI-powered flexible

and scalable 'mobile sortation robots' can help to address demand peaks and unpredictable scenarios.

GreyOrange Flexo is one classic example in this category. "The new GreyOrange Flexo is a modular sortation system that fits well in most warehouses thanks to its fluidic layouts, requiring minimal additional infrastructure. This high-performance system, capable of operating 24/7, reduces cost per shipment and dependency on additional labor during peaks," says Samay Kohli, CEO and co-founder at GreyOrange.

Sid Chatterjee, vice president of products at GreyOrange, adds, "The AI-enabled robotics system can be easily scaled to meet evolving business needs to handle large peaks, and reduced during non-peak hours to minimize operating costs. Flexo components are designed for quick and easy implementation due to its simple design, modularity and standardization."

As e-commerce continues to grow, demand scenarios will get more complex. These robots will deliver the flexibility, visibility and actionable insights required to optimize the supply chain, thereby providing a unified and satisfying shopping experience to consumers.

KEY FACTS

- AI-powered flexible and scalable mobile sortation robots help to address demand peaks and unpredictable scenarios
- Traditional automation has failed to adapt to dynamic scenarios
- Robotics and AI contribute to both profitability and expectations

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