

What value do pallets add to your automated system?



With the acceleration of logistics flows as a result of the changes in consumption patterns, an increasing number of businesses are turning to automation for better productivity and reliability.

This is particularly the case for **large retail** chains who have had to adapt to these changes fast by equipping themselves with higher storage facilities and ever more **automated warehouses**.

In order to support this growth, LPR- La Palette Rouge, the **European pallet pooling specialist**, has developed a comprehensive range of pallets for the market, and provides ongoing technical support.



What can you do to reduce your supply chain costs?



e-Commerce explosion

The pandemic led to an explosion in e-commerce, which has had a knock on effect - an expectation of ever shorter delivery times. This new way of ordering not only impacts **transport**, they also affects **production lines** and the entire **logistics chain** from storage to transport, through to transport and packaging.

To assist in accelerating processes and flows, **automation** is now essential for companies looking to improving performance and responsiveness while reducing human intervention, **reducing risk** to employees and **maintaining quality** of service to the end customer.

Accelerating automation

The automation of production lines is nothing new, but it's the production volumes that are increasing.

In logistics, the trend is accelerating even faster, as **Mr. Lévêque of Ulma Handling Systems notes** :

“ *There has been a significant increase in equipment automation at logistics companies over the last 5 to 6 years, often imposed by their customers who ask them to consider mechanised solutions to meet new productivity requirements* ”

The same opinion is shared by **Yves Degouve, LPR's Director for the Western Europe region**:

“ *The automation of our industrial customers started a long time ago. We saw the biggest changes at distributors about five years ago with the Intermarché, Leclerc, System U warehouses which mechanised their platforms. And it's picking up speed!* ”

Major retail chains have taken a twofold approach to automating their warehouses: **increasing throughput and storage capacity**. They are being developed on XXL platforms that are increasingly mechanised, with a densification of storage in **high-bay racking based warehouses**. Constraints are amplified by growing urbanisation and scarcity of land.

No one doubts the productivity gains that **robotisation and integrated logistics solutions** can bring. This end to end management of **logistics flows** leads to gains in performance and responsiveness. Production and storage sites, as well as **warehouses for major retail**, are experiencing a transformation. Customers are in the process of altering their own infrastructures, changing their production lines to become **high-capacity production lines** and upgrading their storage warehouses by moving towards more **automated warehouses**.

Choosing the right pallet for your automated supply chain?

The pallet - a key component in the supply chain

Increased use of automation has highlighted the importance of pallets, as **Remy Lévêque** points out :

“ From a simple handling support, it has become an essential element to be taken into account for the proper operation of automated systems.

A good quality 'automation ready' pallet is extremely important for our systems to work effectively. We guarantee our customers an agreed rate in excess of 96%, including breakdowns and incidents. Our machines are reliable, but we have to make sure that loads will not cause problems on the lines or racks

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In **logistics warehouse management**, the challenge is to avoid production stoppages. But in a world of accelerated process automation using mechanical equipment, the risk of breakdowns or incidents is higher **if pallets are not properly calibrated**. As production lines are much faster, the **quality of pallets** used must be higher to **reduce breakdowns and production stoppages**. In automated warehouses, pallets must be considered as part of the **planning process**.

These new-generation warehouses are equipped with machinery which is **heavily reliant on pallets**. This begins pallet storage and retrieval machines that pick the goods at one location and then **pick the pallets** from another location – marrying the two ready for the next process.

Another piece of equipment used is the **Pallet Shuttle**: this is a motorised shuttle that moves along the racks to deposit and extract pallets. Finally, **AGVs (Automatic guided vehicles)** transfer the loaded pallets ready for shipping.

From the outfeed from **high-speed production lines**, to automated storage facilities, pallets are **conveyed autonomously** (without any human intervention).



Pallet users will often install a **calibrating machine** at the start of the line to inspect the pallets and load them safely. This reduces the potential for production stoppages that could cause health and safety concerns where human intervention is required to release jammed pallets. **Production stoppages are a serious risk**.

Human intervention can be dangerous, especially in **high-bay warehouses** which can be up to 40 metres high and accommodate thousands of loaded pallets.

The “**Good practices for optimised logistics**” guide, confirms the importance of interoperability and the need for **standardised and well-calibrated pallets**. The inspection process should be in place throughout the **pallet's life cycle**, from design to delivery. Minor defects can become critical with automation. « *We encourage our automated customers to use pallet pooling experts like LPR to ensure they get quality pallets* » Remy Lévêque explains, “ this is to avoid any support issues. Moreover, major retail is increasingly insistent on this quality.”

LPR is the best pallet pooler for smooth automated operations

LPR service centres, a valuable support for logistics players

LPR's European wide network ensures that it is able to provide a **standardised service** and pallets which are of optimum quality, **ready to use in automation**.

The undeniable acceleration of processes and flows linked to automation, coupled with **increased quality requirements**, has led LPR to implement reliable and flexible solutions to meet the growing demand for **automation ready pallets**.



Automation adds a little complexity to **pallet management**, starting with the checking of the pallet. The pallet must be subject to increased **quality control** in order to eliminate critical defects that could prevent it from working at a customer's site.

LPR has more than **125 service centres** located **across Europe** for pallet sortation and repair. LPR has implemented a continuous improvement strategy for these centres to meet new requirements, increase its responsiveness and the **quality of its services**.

Over the past 5 years, LPR has been upgrading its service centres with **top-of-the-range technological resources** to optimise inspection processes. This allows it to ensure that its pallets meet the required standards for specification and compliance.

LPR uses both **human eye and automation** to provide the very best in inspection for defects. Using both reduces the rate of critical defects leading to an **optimum compliance rate**.

LPR has installed **calibration machine and automated lines** in its service centres to meet the needs of its customers. LPR adapts to the needs of its customers and their **warehouse environments**. The goal is to increase productivity and process safety.

LPR's automated calibration systems carry out a systematic dimensional and structural check for sorting repeatability, i.e. the ability to repeat the same operation indefinitely: height/width for the passage of the forks, twisted blocks, alignment of the pallet with the blocks, missing material etc.

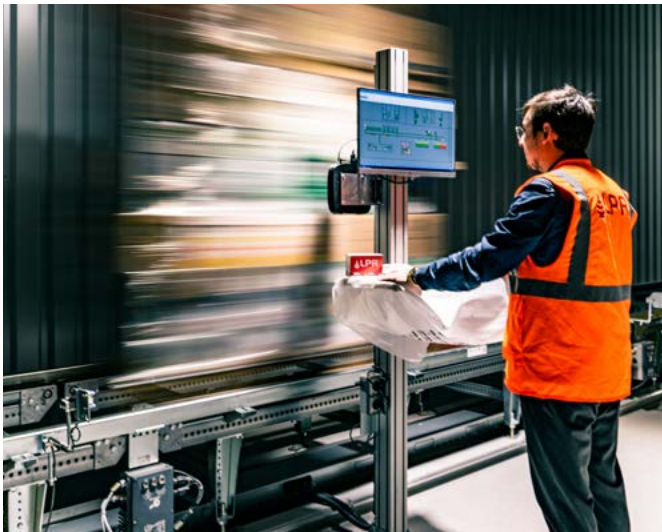


In addition to improving reliability, LPR is also increasing its productivity. In fact, it can process **200 to 320 pallets per operator per hour**, whilst reducing the manual impacts on the operator by using equipment such as vacuum lifts and semi-automatic sorters.

In 2019, LPR and its logistics partners invested in several **new automated lines** to improve the quality of sortation and repair of its pallets. Furthermore, every year, LPR directly invests nearly a quarter of its turnover in the **purchase of new pallets**, to maintain the **quality of its pool** and to support its strong year on year growth.

Support and innovation

LPR adapts to its customers' needs and implements **sustainable and flexible solutions**. LPR guarantees a **minimum pallet rejection rate**. To provide even greater responsiveness for manufacturers using **just-in-time** production, LPR is opening service centres close to its customers' sites. Partnerships have been created with carriers including Lahaye or MGE.



Technical support is a very important element of LPR's service. LPR is increasingly contributing its technical expertise, sharing best practices and working closely with its customers to understand their specific needs.

Customers often do not realise the **importance of pallets to their business**. With the move to increasing automation, pallets have come into sharper focus.

When looking at a **new automation project**, it is essential to ensure that pallets are considered at the planning stage. LPR works with its customers to assist in early stage planning and testing, to ensure the **success of the project**.

Are you looking for an efficient solution to automate your supply chain?

Our pallet rental service offers a customised, reliable and economic solution. A five-star service that can be constantly adjusted to meet your needs. Covering pallet delivery, transport, storage and collection, our pallet pooling service manages the entire process for you.

Contact us to see how working with LPR can help you to improve your pallet management processes and reduce your logistics costs!

More info ?

Would you like to find out more about our products and our logistics services? Please visit our website or contact us directly via sales.uk@lpr.eu

Contact us!