

Zebra Robotics Automation™



SUMMARY



Customer

JAS Worldwide
Atlanta, Georgia

Industry

Third-Party Logistics

Challenge

Reduce pick time and unnecessary walking by streamlining manual processes.

Business Outcomes

- Streamlined unit-picking workflows for faster operations
- 15% decrease in pick time
- 50% reduction in employee travel time within the warehouse
- 35% labor cost savings
- An all-in-one solution for efficiently picking and transporting a wide range of products to cater to diverse customer needs

Solution

- Fetch100 Connect

JAS Worldwide Improves Picking Efficiency by Over 15% with Autonomous Mobile Robots (AMRs)

Improving customer results and employee morale by enabling faster picking and less walking

Founded in Milan, Italy, and headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, JAS Worldwide has provided transportation, contract logistics, and supply chain solutions to global businesses since 1978. The company operates in more than 100 countries and employs a global workforce of over 7,000 individuals, making it one of the largest family-owned third-party logistics providers on a global scale.

In recent years, the supply chain landscape has undergone a profound transformation due to e-commerce and omnichannel retail. This fundamental shift has required organizations to reevaluate their operational strategies extensively, seeking solutions that enhance efficiency and consistently surpass the evolving demands of their diverse customer base.

“Today, e-commerce represents 70% of the activities in our facilities and with this comes a completely new mindset on how to approach our operation,” explains Sebastian Tschackert, Executive Vice President, JAS Contract Logistics. “The industry has evolved, and we have to evolve along with it,” adds Will Stark, Vice President of Operations at JAS.

With its global reach and a people-first culture, JAS Worldwide has leveraged Zebra’s Robotics Automation Solutions to help enhance efficiency, reduce operational bottlenecks, and elevate customer satisfaction.

Shifting from Manual to Automated Processes

“The key challenge in the supply chain industry is the lack of digitalization,” Tschackert explains. Though JAS had already operationalized many processes and embraced some new technologies, it had yet to implement automation in its warehouses. Workers were still manually picking and packing orders, losing precious time walking back and forth to various parts of the facilities.

“We wanted our people to be able to focus on that core process of picking, packing, and shipping without running around and doing non-value-added walking,” says Chika Afamefuna, Global Head of Processing and Engineerings at JAS Contract Logistics.

Looking to drive efficiency, improve customer experience, and stay on the cutting edge of the industry, the Contract Logistics team decided to pilot Fetch AMRs in its 300,000-square-foot Olive Branch, Tennessee facility.

“The goal of our business is to become the most customer-centric supply chain organization in the world with customers at the center of everything we do, including digital solutions,” says Tschackert.

Seeking a Holistic, Flexible Solution

When JAS sought to enhance its operations, the question was not merely about optimizing for one customer or one product type; it was about finding automation, processes and systems that could benefit all its customers across the board.

“One of our unique challenges is that we have a lot of different customers,” Stark says. “We have different size products, different requirements, different ways of doing business. If we invest in something that is for one customer and by chance that customer goes a different direction, we’re now stuck with something that’s unique to them.”

With an established reputation in high-end products across categories including fashion, medical, automotive and outdoor, the Contract Logistics team was also looking for a solution that would work with its process of unit picking rather than pallet picking.

Revolutionizing the Unit Picking Experience

The journey to identify the right solution led JAS to Zebra Robotics. “A lot of the AMRs on the market were a little smaller and very unique to certain types of products,” Stark says. “The Zebra option was able to have different customized carts and different processes to be able to pick all of the different products that we have in our facility.”

In the new facility equipped with AMRs, employees pick the required items, trigger the mobile robots, and witness the seamless exchange of a full cart for an empty one. This automation has resulted in a 50% decrease in travel distance for workers.

“We noticed immediately that we have a 15 or 20% gain in terms of picking and getting the orders closest to the users for either picking orders, packing the orders or shipping the orders,” Stark says.

“We live in a fast-paced world where customers want things yesterday,” Afamefuna says. “The AMRs help us pass time and cost savings on to our customers and the customers to their consignees – and that’s the future.”



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Rapid Integration, Tailored Solutions

According to Afamefuna and Stark, incorporating AMRs into the workflow was exceptionally smooth, requiring only a few days to implement throughout the extensive facility.

“Within two days we had a working platform, we had it picking and packing. By day three, the process was done, and the employees were utilizing the product,” Stark says.

“What made the difference for us was that Zebra came to the table and really tried to understand what opportunities we have in our business, what challenges we have in our business, and model the solution around us, rather than forcing us to adapt to the Zebra model,” Tschackert says.

“Working with the Zebra team is very seamless,” Afamefuna says. “They are like an extension of us.”

Elevating Morale

According to Stark, initially, employees expressed concerns about the potential impact of automation on job security. That’s all changed. “Everyone has embraced the use of AMRs. When the team saw how the AMRs were being used and the benefits they delivered, they were all onboard.”

“It’s been really beneficial for our employees to develop that skill set,” Afamefuna says of working with AMRs. “And there’s a cool factor to it when you are working, and you see the robots running around and actually helping you increase throughput.”

Highlighting the often-overlooked benefits of automation, Stark sheds light on the human side of integrating AMRs.

“Outside of actual efficiencies, where we look at the monetary gain and return on investment on the AMRs, there’s also an employee gain. When we look at our people, it’s very important for us, for our employees to be happy in the facility, and having them walk less in very large facilities is an absolute gain,” Stark says. “It’s fun to go to the facility and watch what’s happening and the people smiling and seeing how they treat the AMRs as one of their coworkers.”

Underscoring the foundation of JAS’s success, Tschackert emphasizes its guiding principle. “The JAS leadership philosophy and company culture is ‘people make the difference,’ and we truly embrace it,” Tschackert says.



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Will Stark, Vice President
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Limitless Potential

JAS Worldwide recognizes that automation, streamlined processes, and advanced systems are the keys to maintaining its core values and staying competitive in an evolving marketplace. The company's vision extends beyond the immediate improvements in its operations; it encompasses a broader ambition to expand its global network with Zebra Robotics as an integral partner in this journey.

"The long-term sustainability of the organization is of critical importance to what we do," Tschackert says. We're not being chased by short-term trends; we are focusing on making sure we continue to grow the organization for the long run."

The team already has other uses in mind for the AMRs around the facility, and the robots will soon appear in other JAS warehouses around the world.

"We never deploy a solution at a single site or a single country, it's always a global adaptation of any new technology as far as it's possible," Tschackert says. "The vision is to very quickly broaden this across our global network. Within the next to two three years, you will see an AMR in each JAS Contract Logistics warehouse."



To learn more about how Zebra Robotics Automation can help your operations, scan the QR code



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