MADE4NET

SUPERCHARGE YOUR WMS:

How AI and Automation Are Redefining 3PL Efficiency

Overview:

If you're running a 3PL today, you know the pressure is real. Margins are razor-thin, costs keep climbing, and customers expect you to offset inflation with efficiency gains—year after year. On top of that, they want faster responses, more flexibility, and seamless systems. Meanwhile, finding and keeping skilled warehouse staff has never been tougher.

Technology should help—but too often, platforms fall short of delivering the core capabilities required to adapt and scale with your business. The ability to integrate with modern tools, deploy new functionality quickly, and provide real-time visibility isn't optional—it's essential. As customer expectations rise and the demand for automation, analytics, and agility grows, a strong digital foundation in your WMS becomes the difference between simply keeping pace and truly leading.

Your WMS is the backbone of your operations—a foundation that keeps everything running smoothly. But as market pressures continue to rise, smart 3PLs are layering AI, automation, and advanced analytics on top, unlocking new efficiencies and creating more agile, high-performing operations.

A Closer Look at AI in the Warehouse

When people talk about AI in logistics, it can sometimes feel like a buzzword. But as Sean Mitchell, Vice President Of Customer Success, Gather AI explains, in the warehouse context AI plays three distinct roles—each practical and powerful:

The Eyes:
AI Vision

AI vision systems act as the eyes of the warehouse, using drones, cameras, and sensors to capture real-time data. The goal is complete visibility and traceability—knowing exactly what's on the shelves, where it's located, and where discrepancies exist.

The Brain:
Machine Learning

Once data is captured, machine learning steps in as the brain. It interprets the information, using pattern recognition and predictive analytics to identify errors, highlight variances, and even anticipate future needs. Visibility becomes intelligence.

The Partner:
AI Copilot

Finally, AI works as a partner or copilot. It surfaces alerts, guides decision-making, and automates repetitive steps so that people can focus on solving problems and creating value. Instead of replacing humans, it makes them more effective.

From Theory to ROI:
The Business Impact of AI

AI in the warehouse isn't theory—it's already changing how 3PLs operate. Gather AI customers, for example, have achieved a 90% reduction in manual cycle counting by shifting teams away from scanning every location and toward investigating only exceptions.

At the business level, the impact shows up in two powerful ways:

Top-Line Growth:
AI helps ensure inventory accuracy, order fulfillment, and service-level compliance—protecting revenue and improving customer satisfaction.

Bottom-Line Profitability:
By automating manual work, optimizing labor, and preventing costly errors, AI drives efficiency in an industry where margins are razor-thin.

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GATHER AI

In short: the WMS provides the backbone, but AI supplies the vision, intelligence, and partnership needed to scale smarter—not harder.

Be Sure Your WMS Can Keep Up

AI can add vision, intelligence, and partnership to warehouse operations—but only if your core systems are strong enough to support it. As the backbone of your operation, your WMS has to do more than manage inventory and direct workflows. It needs to create the foundation that allows emerging tools like AI, automation, and advanced analytics to plug in and deliver real value.

For a long time, 3PLs saw the WMS as just the cost of doing business. As Chipper Farley, President of 3PL Solutions, Made4net shares, many providers treated it the same way they treated the electric bill—something you paid to keep the lights on. That mindset has shifted. Today, technology is a strategic investment—a core part of how a 3PL competes, wins customers, and delivers value.

From Monoliths to Constellations:

Not long ago, most providers expected the WMS to do everything: manage the warehouse, track inventory, handle billing—essentially the "one system to rule them all." But the modern reality looks very different.

Now, the WMS is just one part of a constellation of systems: automation tools, AI platforms, analytics engines, transportation software, and more. To thrive in this environment, your WMS has to play well with others. That means seamless integration, clean data sharing, and workflows that are open to augmentation.

A Competitive WMS Should:

Provide clean, accessible data that automation, AI, and analytics tools can use.

Integrate seamlessly with the rest of your tech stack.

Support augmentation—allowing external tools to add efficiency and intelligence.

Scale with the business, adapting to new complexity without costly rip-and-replace upgrades.

Plainly put: your WMS can't just stand alone—it has to collaborate.

When the WMS plays well with others, you unlock the full potential of the broader technology ecosystem and position your operation to scale smarter, faster, and more profitably.

Why This Matters for 3PLs

Customers are no longer just buying space and labor. They're buying visibility, control, and intelligence. Increasingly, the technology team is as important in the sales cycle as operations or account management—because shippers want to know you can give them real-time answers, actionable insights, and flexibility.

The right WMS, supported by the right ecosystem, is how you deliver that.

Getting Started with AI:

Modernization doesn't have to mean ripping out your core systems. Many 3PLs are seeing success by layering new capabilities onto their existing WMS.

"AI has been democratized," says Mitchell. "You don't need a multimillion-dollar budget or a team of PhDs. The key is to start small—tackle one problem, solve it brilliantly, and build from there."

That's exactly what Taylor Logistics did. Their Synapse WMS already managed nearly all warehouse operations, but manual cycle counting was a labor drain. By adding Gather AI's drones, they solved that pain point.

The result: greater efficiency, reduced labor strain, and a stronger platform for growth. Modernization doesn't have to be all-or-nothing —it can be incremental, enhancing what you already have, one layer at a time.

Customer Spotlight: TAYLOR

Taylor Logistics is proving how 3PLs can unlock big wins by layering AI onto their WMS. Their Synapse 3PLExpert system runs the core warehouse operations, but when manual cycle counting became a drain on labor, they didn't rip and replace. Instead, they added AI-powered drones.

Now, drones fly through the aisles, scan racks, and feed results into Synapse. Machine learning flags only the locations with discrepancies, so humans focus on solving issues rather than verifying what's already correct.

The result? More accurate counts, optimized labor, and a smarter, more scalable operation.

Improved Accuracy:
Inventory accuracy increased to 99%

Time Savings:
87% reduction in time required to cycle count cases

Labor optimization:
Reduced from 3 cycle counters to 1 and eliminated the need for costly material handling equipment

Customer Satisfaction:
Improved real-time visibility, control, and communication have strengthened client relationships

Achieving Results with AI:

For Taylor Logistics, adopting AI was about solving operational challenges, not chasing trends. According to Grant Taylor the company's VP of Warehousing, "We felt confident the cycle counting drone technology was ready for mass adoption and Gather AI's solution was the most adaptable to the variety of products we handle."

Taylor Logistics deployed the technology in their largest facility and the benefits quickly added up:

- **Labor optimization:** Teams focus on problem-solving, not repetitive counting.
- **Inventory accuracy:** More frequent and thorough counts improve downstream operations like picking and loading.
- **Customer confidence:** A secondary visibility platform shows pallet status alongside the WMS portal.
- **Flexibility:** Query product attributes, like QC stickers, that traditional WMS can't always track.

Mitchell notes that ROI shows up in multiple ways for 3PLs. "Labor savings are just the start. AI also improves on-time performance, reduces short ships, minimizes shrink, and ensures SLA compliance. The risk is being left behind as AI adoption becomes standard."

Culturally, Taylor sees impact too. "As a leader, I want our team to look for ways to automate and innovate. This technology lets us reward that mindset and gives us agility that larger companies may not have."

Taylor Logistics' iterative rollout—a classic "crawl, walk, run" approach—ensures scalability while controlling risk.

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>
> **Sean Mitchell**
> Vice President Of Customer Success, Gather AI

Closing Thoughts

A strong WMS remains the backbone of any 3PL operation, providing the structure and control needed to manage inventory, workflows, and day-to-day execution. But a real advantage comes from adding complementary technologies —AI, automation, advanced analytics—on top of that foundation. When these tools are integrated thoughtfully, they amplify the value of your WMS, streamline operations, optimize labor, and give customers the visibility and confidence they expect.

If you're reading this paper, the takeaway is simple: invest in a strong WMS, leverage complementary tools strategically, and partner with experts who understand how to make it all work together. The result is a more efficient, agile, and competitive operation built to succeed in today's complex supply chain landscape.

TAYLOR

Taylor Logistics Inc. is a North American full-service 3PL provider with over 3 million square feet of storage space. They offer a wide range of logistics solutions, including warehousing, freight management, and value-added services. With a focus on innovation and sustainability, Taylor Logistics is dedicated to meeting the evolving needs of their clients.

GATHER AI

Founded in 2017, Pittsburgh-based Gather AI is the co-pilot for intralogistics teams. Its platform captures visual data from drones, forklifts, and machines, integrates with WMS and cloud systems, and uses AI to spot issues and guide next steps. Fast to deploy and easy to scale, Gather AI helps warehouses optimize operations without disruption. The solution is trusted by companies across 3PL, retail, manufacturing, food & beverage, and life sciences, including GEODIS, Langham Logistics, NFI Industries, and Barrett Distribution.

MADE4NET

With customers in 30 countries and solutions in 20+ languages, Made4net is a leading global provider of supply chain solutions that help organizations of all sizes improve the speed and efficiency of their supply chain. The company's end-to-end SCExpert platform is adaptable, configurable and scalable to provide maximum Speed-to-Pivot™ for ever-changing supply chains. Made4net solutions provide real-time inventory visibility, labor management, and equipment productivity with performance analytics that drive faster, more accurate order fulfillment and improved throughput.

For more information, visit www.made4net.com.