

DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION REVOLUTIONISES THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Birmingham NEC, UK, Wednesday 11th May 2016 - Driverless vehicles, 3D printing, robots operating warehouses and new forms of energy are likely to pose greater challenges to supply chains than ever before, delegates at this year's Multimodal show in Birmingham heard.

In addition, of course, there is the continued growth of e-commerce.

All these factors will not only change the way supply chains are managed, but also how infrastructure itself is used, said Will Whitehorn, who has a variety of roles including a seat on the board of passenger transport company Stagecoach, as well as being Chairman of Transport Systems Catapult.

"Robotics and autonomous vehicles will also change the way we use road and rail networks," he said, "and we will certainly see autonomy in road haulage vehicles in the next few years."

Whitehorn was speaking on the opening day of Multimodal 2016 which saw over 4000 supply chain decisionmakers visit over 300 stands.

He added that in terms of energy, the move away from the use of fossil fuels would also represent one of the largest shifts in modern history, as oil producing companies come under increasing pressure from new types of fuel, as well as the increasing ease of extracting oil via new technologies.

"At Stagecoach we are looking at an electric bus that can operate for an entire day on just a single charge – that sort of technology is going to have a huge effect," he added.

Meanwhile, Peter Loudon, Chief Operating Officer of e-commerce parcel fulfillment provider Doodle, explained how the rate of technological change was outstripping a company that was only three years old, but has already developed a network of parcel stations at sites around the UK.

“When we set up our first shops we were putting in expensive touch-screens for example, but when we wanted to set up Duddle Neighbour we realised we could do that by providing the whole store on a mobile phone so that people could set up a parcel shop in their front room – e-commerce is far outgunning every other development,” he said.

That growth is also catching out retailers, who were already struggling at integrating concepts such as goods returns into their omnichannel supply chains without incurring huge losses.

“Click and collect has been almost traded out of shops by the explosion in demand, so we have lot of retailers asking if we can sell them our technology,” Louden added.

Whitehorn added that the growth of 3D printing, including the fact that it is getting increasingly more cost effective, combined with increasing use of robots in warehouse operations would likely also change the face of those operations.

“By taking humans out of warehouses we can completely change the types of warehouse being operated, and if you combine that with 3D printing – which is already being used in industries such as aviation, where airlines are 3D printing spare parts at airports rather than storing them in DCs – then you are going to see a completely different type of warehouse in operation.

“That will mean that manned warehouses will become much more orientated towards perishable products because you cannot 3D print food,” he added.

The disruptive innovation panel was one of over 20 seminars and workshops involving over 70 expert speakers at the free-to-attend supply chain show.

Registration is open online at multimodal.org

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Picture caption, for a high resolution image, contact Emma at emma@meantime.global

Pictured left to right Peter Louden, COO, Doodle, Will Whitehorn, Chairman, Transport Systems Catapult, Vice President, CILT, Beverly Bell LLB (Hons), FCILT, FIRTE, Senior Traffic Commissioner for Great Britain and Traffic Commissioner for the North West of England, President, CILT, Dominic Regan, Senior Director, EMEA logistics applications, Oracle



ABOUT MULTIMODAL

Multimodal 2016 is free-to-attend and is set to break records, with over 325 exhibitors and up to 10,000 supply chain decision makers expected.

Seventy-two expert speakers will be leading over 21 workshop and panel debates covering industry trends and latest legislation.

Multimodal is the UK and Ireland's leading freight transport and logistics exhibition, which also features a series of topical seminars and master classes, and hosts a Shippers' Village, giving freight buyers a private space to meet logistics suppliers.

Multimodal 2015 was the biggest in the show's history, with over 290 exhibitors and a record-breaking attendance of over 8500 supply chain executives.

Multimodal 2016 is taking place from 10th to 12th May 2016 at the Birmingham NEC.

Visit multimodal.org.uk

PRESS RELEASE



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