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Tomorrow's Logistics

Delivering in tomorrow's congested cities

Congestion is a critical city logistics issue. Craig Ryder, Director of Go Supply Chain, explores some of the many solutions to getting deliveries through the last mile challenge.

Factors are mounting to make congestion a critical urban logistics issue, not least the rapidly expanding urban population. London, which stands apart as a global 'megatropolis' is forecast to be knocking on the door of 10 million residents by 2024. They are living and working in an increasing number of buildings converted into multi-tenanted developments and new, mixed-use skyscrapers. These densely populated buildings generate multiple deliveries but often lack a consolidated loading bay and internal delivery system, resulting in delivery drivers parking vehicles while making time consuming treks to find the apartment or office.

A corresponding shift in retail dynamics has seen the growth of convenience stores supported by little and often deliveries. Then there is the e-commerce revolution that has made free, next day and same day delivery the new norm. To deal with all of this, many retailers are operating large distribution centres outside cities as hubs, which deliver to smaller depots within the inner city. From there, the last mile becomes the most challenging and expensive portion of the delivery journey – and is set to get even more so in the future.

Delivery vans can negotiate the obstacles of urban deliveries better than large lorries but lack their economies of scale, thus there are more on the streets, further contributing to city congestion.

It is likely that tomorrow's logistics will see an increase in traffic and environmentally friendly delivery vehicles, such as cargo bikes and electric vehicles, which can negotiate congestion and low emission zones during the last mile or two. We may also soon see self-driving autonomous vehicles, equipped with 'intelligent' mapping systems and connected to a vast pool of data stored in the Cloud, will be able to anticipate congestion and dynamically reroute accordingly, ensuring that the best route is always followed.

For further information visit <http://www.gosupplychain.com>

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Editor Notes

Go Supply Chain Consulting Limited is a logistics consultancy firm offering supply chain and logistics consulting services to clients across industry sectors including retail, FMCG, fashion, automotive and technology. The company is independent from logistics service providers and vendors of equipment and systems.

Founded by an experienced and capable team of logistics consultants, Go Supply Chain combines practicality with a highly analytical approach, reflecting its blend of operational and consulting experience.

Clients range from global corporations to fast-growing, entrepreneurial companies. Go Supply Chain works both in the UK and internationally – the team has completed projects in 16 countries.