



*One key step to finding answers to any logistics, supply chain, or technology challenge is knowing the right questions to ask.*

*Inbound Logistics assembles supply chain and logistics technology leaders, and asks for their perspectives on the most pressing logistics challenges and opportunities impacting your business.*

*More importantly, these logistics thought leaders can give you guidance when considering improvements to your business processes.*

# Thought Leaders

## 29 2021: NEXT-GENERATION IN-TRANSIT VISIBILITY

By Krenar Komoni  
CEO and Founder, Tive

Collecting and sharing critical shipment data across different platforms, the Open Visibility Network supports 100% visibility across shipments and transportation modes. While it starts with technology providers, it ultimately benefits the end consumers of visibility data.

## 30 ROBOTIC AUTOMATION: NOW IS THE TIME TO DEPLOY

By Karen Leavitt  
Chief Marketing Officer, Locus Robotics

The use of robots in distribution and warehouse operations is more imperative than ever. Here's why automation is on the fast track and how your company can achieve sustainable and significant productivity gains.

# 2021: Next-Generation In-Transit Visibility

To optimize visibility for all customers using in-transit visibility solutions, Tive has launched the Open Visibility Network (OVN) starting with project44 and FourKites.

**Q:** *What is the Open Visibility Network? Is it open to anyone (tech providers, carriers, shippers, etc.)?*

**A:** The Open Visibility Network is the collection and sharing of critical shipment data across different platforms. OVN benefits the end-consumers of visibility data. It starts with tech providers collaborating to get the desired result: 100% visibility across all of their shipments and all modes of transportation.

As collaboration within the tech industry grows – shippers, carriers, and logistics service providers will clearly see the benefit of an extended data set and continue collaborating to increase supply chain efficiencies further.

In the last decade, load-matching, the ELD mandate, and visibility have reduced the empty miles for over-the-road (OTR) loads, enabling carriers to fill their backhaul more efficiently. Now zoom out on a global level – that's what we'll achieve with OVN.

**Q:** *How does the data sharing work? Is there a single dashboard/platform? Is the data integrated into each participant's own systems?*

**A:** Tive data is streamed to the project44 and FourKites platforms and, from there, integrated into analytics dashboards. This data is available in aggregate for mutual project44, Tive, and FourKites customers and attached to shipments. The data is available via

Tive, project44, and FourKites' platforms or APIs.

When we use the words integration and collaboration, we mean them in their truest sense: two-way communication between the parties. Customers want flexibility looking at either their own dashboards or another tech provider's dashboards. For example, a customer that uses a TMS that is fully integrated with project44 will gain complete visibility through Tive's tracker data streaming into their TMS, using the integration between Tive, project44, or FourKites. Conversely, customers using Tive's visibility platform will gain insights from data from project44 leading integrations with carriers and FourKites' leading ETA solution. We are adding more partners every day, which means an exponential growth in visibility data for all customers.

**Q:** *How is the Open Visibility Network different from other in-transit visibility solutions? How does it advance visibility?*

**A:** It's all about the next level of customer satisfaction. If you can add an extra layer of visibility data on shipments, whether it is ELD/Telematics data from trucks, location data from vessels, transactional information at ports/terminals, or direct data from the Tive trackers – why not offer that to all customers? To achieve 100% visibility across all modes of transportation, across all geographies, across all types of carriers, and across all various nodes (ports, borders, terminals) of the network, collaboration is the pathway. It's an inevitable part of bringing the best visibility to the customer in the shortest amount of time.



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## THOUGHT LEADERS

# Robotic Automation: Now Is the Time to Deploy



**Karen Leavitt**

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**Q:** *Are you seeing growing interest in the use of robots in distribution and warehouse operations?*

**A:** Absolutely. Since the early onset of the pandemic last year, there has been a notable increase in the number of companies looking into adding robotics and automation to their fulfillment operations. The pandemic caused a dramatic shift to online behaviors, changing not only the

way retail consumers shop, but also the operations of the B2B industrial segment.

Companies that were previously shifting slowly toward a digital warehouse strategy are now rushing toward it. While labor has been a major concern in the past, the pandemic has exacerbated it with lockdowns and social distancing for health safety requirements that impact recruiting and retention, while volumes continue to increase exponentially. The only viable way to cost-effectively mitigate this problem is through automation.

**Q:** *How can distributors justify the cost of investing in robotics technology?*

**A:** Locus Robotics offers a Robots-as-a-Service (RaaS) model that allows warehouses to add autonomous mobile robot (AMR) automation to their existing operation at a reasonable cost while delivering an ROI that is obtained in months instead of years, and sometimes weeks. RaaS lowers the upfront costs by reallocating a single capital expense into recurring operational expenses.

The RaaS model gives operators the flexibility they need to meet changing demands; when volumes grow due to seasonality or sudden demand spikes, they can simply rent more bots to cover the increase in work and send them back when volume levels return to normal – without requiring extensive reconfiguration or complicated setup. Frankly, if operators are not implementing robotic automation now, they risk falling further behind.

**Q:** *With nearly 95% of warehouses relying on manual labor now, how is Locus helping companies realize the need for automation, and ultimately take the step of adopting robotics?*

**A:** For brownfield applications, Locus is helping companies achieve more productivity using the same footprint of space and workers by digitizing the process of order fulfillment and material movement. For greenfield applications, Locus works with companies to design the fulfillment space around digital fulfillment technology to achieve the maximum throughput possible.

Our solution engineers have over 30 years of experience running distribution centers and use this knowledge to create simulations that prove the business case before it's implemented. The secret sauce is in the multi-bot approach: Workers pick higher rates by staying within zones while a fleet of robots travels between pick destinations and the packing station.

Robots are only half of the automation solution Locus provides. Our total solution includes a robust execution platform that orchestrates intelligent robot and labor direction, as well as provides full visibility of operational performance data to facilitate forecasting, labor planning, and real-time workflow optimization. Our unique multi-bot solution has helped the leading industrial manufacturers, retailers, and distributors gain the flexible automation needed to meet today's demands and position themselves for growth to achieve a sustainable 2x to 3x increase in productivity.