

News Release

21 March 2023

Digitalisation driving growth for logistics experts

Embracing digitalisation is allowing Vantec Europe, a leading logistics and warehousing company to expand its offer and win new clients.

Vantec Europe – which has 13 sites across the UK, including ten in the North East – has developed an array of bespoke digital infrastructure that is putting it at the cutting edge of logistic processing.

The company has significantly invested in 3D immersive technology for training and development. Building and installing 3D immersive suites across the organisation, including: two at its Washington Hillthorn site, one of which houses a forklift truck simulator; one in its Turbine site; and more in facilities managed on behalf of its customers. The use of virtual reality (VR) also gives staff true to life tuition.

In addition, the business has developed its own software systems for everything from finance and HR to safety and procurement.

“Digitalisation is the next stage of the industrial revolution,” said Martin Kendall, managing director of Vantec Europe Limited. “We realised a few years ago that you have to be on that journey otherwise you’re going to be left behind, so we restructured the business to have a specific engineering and digital transformation department, including employing our own programmers and 3D artists.

“We have created all the software and systems that are needed for immersive training ourselves, in house, and our bespoke systems drive many parts of the business to ensure we’re using big data effectively to make us as efficient as possible.

“The great thing about doing it in house is that the team creating these systems are embedded in our business, they understand what our needs are and can turn things around quickly.”

The idea behind the developments is to train employees in safety, process and quality standards in an engaging, immersive and safe way.

The initiative has been so successful that the company has had interest in its training offer from the wider Vantec Corporation around the world, including shipping pop-up 3D immersive suites to Japan, with discussions taking place with colleagues in America and Mexico.

Martin said: “All the systems, screens and processes that we use in real-life are built into the immersive training so it’s as close to the real thing as it can be, meaning staff are familiar with everything by the time they get out onto the shop floor.

“There are so many potential hazards on a shop floor that you can’t adequately train people in a sterile environment. We want to bring the reality into the training and have taken it to another level by using VR.”

The idea for the immersive training was developed after Martin was invited by Sunderland City Council to an event at the University of Sunderland.

“Back in 2017, I got the opportunity to go along to the opening of Sunderland University’s first Living Lab,” said Martin.

“Having been sceptical initially about how worthwhile going along to the event was going to be, it probably only took less than a minute of seeing the technology to know ‘we need this in our industry’ and that’s where the idea came from.”

Vantec is keen to highlight the career opportunities in the sector and is using the immersive spaces for school visits.

The adoption of a data-driven approach is also allowing the firm to use data to fine tune its processes to make operations as efficient as possible.

“This is now part of Vantec’s USP,” added Martin. “When we’re out there trying to win new business, the last thing we talk about is what we do on the shop floor – they are expecting us to be able to provide that service.

“They want to know what is going to differentiate us from other companies and it’s this sort of creative business technology that we talk about.”

Councillor Graeme Miller, leader of Sunderland City Council, said: “Vantec is an excellent example of a forward-thinking, innovative business and it’s great to have them in the city.

“They are helping to drive further investment and opportunities in Sunderland, building on everything they have done to date, and I look forward to seeing how the company continues to grow in the future.”

And in its strive to be at the forefront of the industry, Vantec is also involved in a partnership project – supported by Sunderland City Council – which is working on self-driving HGVs.

Project V-Cal – led by the North East Automotive Alliance along with other organisations including Vantec, Nissan, StreetDrone, Nokia, Newcastle University, ANGOKA and Womble Bond Dickinson – will run up to four zero-emission autonomous HGVs between Vantec and Nissan’s Sunderland site, on private roads where the vehicles will navigate traffic lights, roundabouts, and other road users.

The HGVs will operate without any personnel on board but will be monitored by a remote safety driver as backup, a major step towards deploying the technology on public roads.

The project scales and expands the initial 5G connected automated logistics (5G CAL) proof of concept project.

Martin said: “Having spent the last two years proving the 5G CAL concept works, we are very pleased to have been awarded funding that will allow us to scale up our autonomous delivery ambitions. Our next challenge for V-CAL is to have our HGV driver removed from the vehicle and operating the Tele Operations rig, controlling up to three autonomous vehicles at one time.

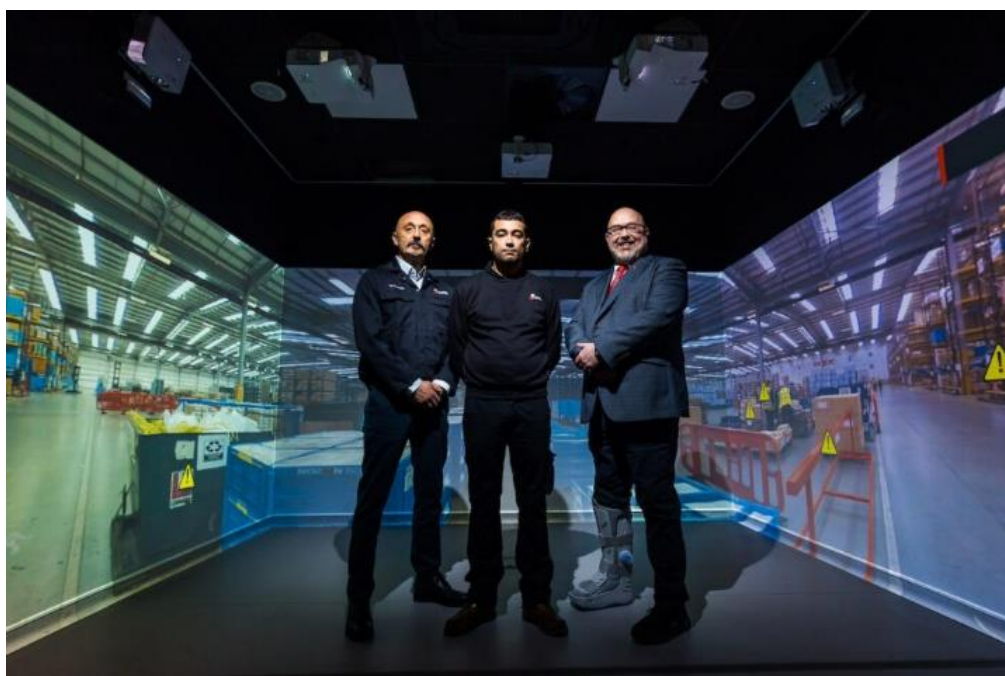
“This is a significant step towards an autonomous supply chain on a much larger scale. Always taking safety into account and working with our current HGV drivers, we are looking at ways to complement our existing driving operations, offering the opportunity to reskill drivers and to offer a very credible complementary logistics solution to our partners.”

Cllr Miller added: “The potential benefits of autonomous vehicles in industry across the world is huge and it’s exciting for Sunderland to be at the forefront of these developments.”

〈Pictures at the event〉

Image:

L to R – Martin Kendall, MD Vantec Europe, Paul Clark,



Toward New Dimensions

LOGISTEED

【Contact Information】

Vantec Europe Limited
Communications

Communications@vanteceurope.com

Tel: +44 (0)191 416 1133