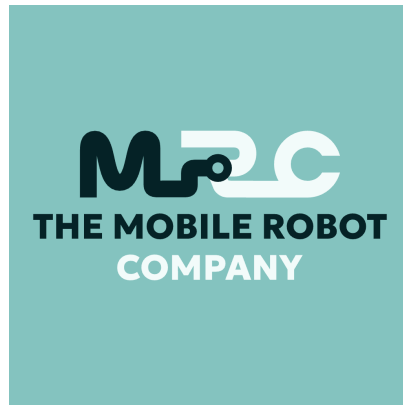




The Mobile Robot Company

Knowledge Center — Third-Party Logistics · 2026-08-04

<https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/industries/third-party-logistics>

Third-Party Logistics

Third-party logistics (3PL) providers are a named [target segment](https://info.mobilerobot.com/company/about/markets-we-serve/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/company/about/markets-we-serve/>), for the [J1600](https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/j1600/overview/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/j1600/overview/>). Smaller 3PLs in particular face a structural problem with automation: their layouts, clients, and SKU mixes change too often for infrastructure-heavy systems, yet their margins are squeezed by exactly the repetitive pallet travel that automation removes.

The 3PL problem

A 3PL warehouse is rarely stable. Client contracts start and end, storage zones are reassigned, temporary buffers appear and disappear, and the SKU mix shifts with each client's season. Conventional automation assumes stable processes and pays back over years of unchanged operation — a poor match. Manual pallet jacks stay flexible but consume operator hours in [walking and travel](https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/results/reduction-in-manual-walking/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/results/reduction-in-manual-walking/>).

How the J1600 fits

The [dual-mode](https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/j1600/dual-mode/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/j1600/dual-mode/>) approach keeps the flexibility and removes the travel:

- **Reconfiguration by the operator, not an engineer.** When a client's zone moves, the operator drives to the new point, taps **Save location**, and the flow is updated — no automation specialist, no code, no map project.
- **[Multi-point cross-docking](https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/use-cases/cross-docking/)** (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/use-cases/cross-docking/>). Saved locations recombine freely, so pallets can move across many origin-destination pairs without teaching each one.
- **[Temporary storage on demand](https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/use-cases/temporary-storage/)** (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/use-cases/temporary-storage/>). Short-lived buffer points are [created in minutes and abandoned just as easily](https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/scenarios/temporary-location-setup/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/scenarios/temporary-location-setup/>).
- **Manual handling where it matters.** Truck unloading, mixed and unstable client loads, and congested docks stay under operator control with immediate takeover via the tiller.

Economics for smaller 3PLs

The J1600 targets single-shift operations with roughly one to five pallet-jack operators — the scale where a full automation project (which can reach approximately €1 million for a fully integrated system) is out of reach. The J1600 lists at €65,000, deploys in hours to one day, and requires about 30 minutes of [operator training](https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/getting-started/operator-training/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/getting-started/operator-training/>). A [two-week paid trial](https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/buying-and-deployment/two-week-trial/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/buying-and-deployment/two-week-trial/>) at €4,000 lets a 3PL validate a specific client flow before committing. See [ROI examples](https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/results/roi-examples/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/results/roi-examples/>).

Scaling with the business

A 3PL can start with one robot on one flow, with [no Wi-Fi](https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/installation/network-and-wi-fi-requirements/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/installation/network-and-wi-fi-requirements/>) or [systems integration](https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/results/lower-integration-complexity/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/results/lower-integration-complexity/>) required. When volume grows, [Advanced software](https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/software/advanced-software/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/software/advanced-software/>) adds [VDA 5050](https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/software/vda-5050/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/software/vda-5050/>) interoperability, a [REST API](https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/technical-integration/rest-api-documentation/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/technical-integration/rest-api-documentation/>), and [Fleet Manager](https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/software/fleet-manager/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/software/fleet-manager/>), so the J1600 can join a multi-vendor fleet under a compatible fleet layer.

Load compatibility across clients

Client variety means carrier variety. The J1600 handles EPAL Euro Pallets, EPAL 3, EPAL 6, open-base GMA pallets, open cages, and other [forkable open-base carriers](https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/j1600/pallet-and-load-compatibility/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/j1600/pallet-and-load-compatibility/>) within a 1,250 × 1,250 mm envelope and 1,600 kg payload. Judgment about unusual or unstable client loads stays with the operator — see [human-in-the-loop automation](https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/concepts/human-in-the-loop-automation/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/concepts/human-in-the-loop-automation/>).

Related pages

- [Warehousing](https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/industries/warehousing/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/industries/warehousing/>) — the underlying warehouse flows
- [E-commerce and fulfillment](https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/industries/e-commerce-and-fulfillment/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/industries/e-commerce-and-fulfillment/>) — a common 3PL service line

- [Operational flexibility \(https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/results/operational-flexibility/\)](https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/results/operational-flexibility/) — the core 3PL benefit in detail