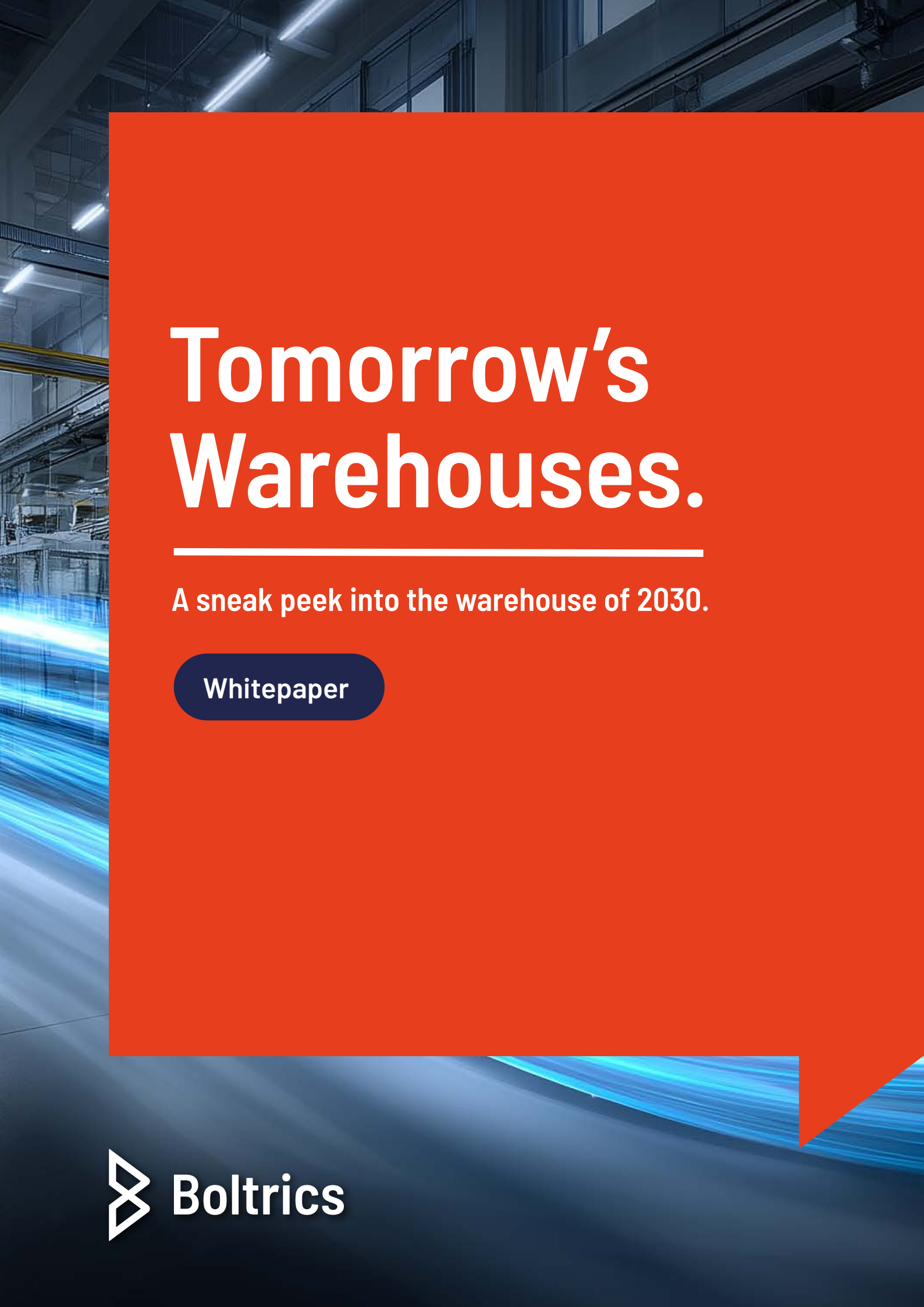


Tomorrow's Warehouses.

A sneak peek into the warehouse of 2030.

Whitepaper

Boltrics

Introduction

2030 is here sooner than you think

Will your warehouse be full by 2030? That's the question you need to be asking yourself right now. To continue responding to challenges in the logistics market and meeting your customers' needs, you need scalability, agility, expertise, and management capabilities. These are qualities of your operation that don't develop overnight. They require deliberate choices. Not tomorrow. Now.

In this whitepaper, we discuss the top three strategic trends that will shape your warehouse operations in the coming years. The question isn't whether you'll face these challenges, but how you'll address them. This whitepaper serves as a strategic guide. Not to accumulate "more tools," but to make clear-cut decisions that won't limit your operations in 2030.

Your head start begins today.

About the author

With over 35 years of experience in logistics, Tjerk Roossien has an inside-out understanding of the day-to-day realities of warehouse and transport operations. Having spent most of his career working at various leading logistics companies, he now focuses at Boltrics on helping 3PL organizations make future-proof choices regarding their IT infrastructure.



Tjerk Roossien
Sales Manager at Boltrics



Challenge 1

Artificial Intelligence: a hype or here to stay?

The question on everyone's mind: "Should we be doing something with AI?" It makes sense, because suppliers promote it, customers expect it, and you don't want your organization to fall behind. But more and more experts are asking themselves whether AI will really make the difference everyone expects. Or is it just hype?

A clear IT strategy; also for AI

No matter which expert you follow, one thing is crystal clear: AI only becomes valuable when it helps you manage your operations more effectively. Think of: faster prioritization, less repetitive manual work, better planning, and greater predictability. That is where AI adds value for your employees and your operational efficiency. Not because it's called "AI," but because it solves a practical problem. The danger, however, is that you'll be tempted to jump on every AI trend instead of focusing on what your organization actually needs. Before you know it, you'll have implemented 40 different AI agents just to optimize a single process. Moreover, it's nearly impossible to determine in advance whether a major investment in AI, specifically for your organization, will ever deliver the ROI you expect.

> Gartner predicts that, due to high costs and low ROI, 40% of AI projects will be canceled by the end of 2027.

Gartner even predicts that, due to these high costs and low ROI, 40% of AI projects will be canceled by the end of 2027. AI is therefore only valuable if it is part of an actual solution - and if you can apply it in practice to various work processes without coding or workarounds.

Ride along without gambling

Fortunately, you don't have to bet on a single AI promise. Major tech companies, including Microsoft, are making the investment for you. Take, for example, the $80 billion that Microsoft expected to invest in AI by 2025. The smart approach for your logistics operation? Make sure you're ready to apply AI where it delivers proven value, while leveraging platform innovations from these large ecosystems. That way, you'll maximize the benefits of these developments as AI gains traction, without tying your operation down to custom solutions or experiments that don't scale.

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central.



Boltrics' logistics software solution is built on Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central and fully hosted in the Microsoft Cloud. This means you automatically benefit from the ongoing AI innovations from both Boltrics and Microsoft, such as:

- Microsoft Copilot
- Seamless integrations with familiar tools like Outlook, Excel, and Teams
- Predictive insights that make your operations smarter and more efficient.

Challenge 2

From automation to robotization

By 2026, automation will no longer be a luxury. But in five years, it will simply be the standard in many warehouses. It will be something that "just needs to be taken care of." The competitive edge of your logistics operation will therefore shift from automation to robotization. By 2030, you won't be able to afford to still be asking, "Should we automate?" Instead, you need to start asking yourself: "How flexibly can we deploy robotization in our 3PL reality?"

Robotization is an ecosystem

Robotization is coming. Not as a single switch you flip, but as a growing ecosystem on the factory floor. According to the International Federation of Robotics (IFR), 102,900 logistics robots were sold worldwide last year specifically for transportation and logistics. More than in any other industry. Furthermore, this annual growth rate of 14% is expected to continue. The warehouse floor of 2030 will consist of a mix of people, systems, and machines working together. Think of internal transport, robotic picking, sorting, compact storage, and automated counting. And we're already seeing this in practice today - from layer pickers and picking robots to fully automated warehouses. In short, this requires choices you make now in process design and IT. The future has already begun today.

Focus on flexibility

In the logistics market, it's not about the "fanciest" technology, but about technology that keeps working even as volumes, customers, or logistics operations change. 3PL warehousing is rarely uniform. You work with different order profiles, SLAs, labels, and services - often all at the same time on the same floor. That's why flexibility is key when making these choices. An innovative solution that only pays off for a single customer or a single type of workflow can actually limit you in the long run when your environment demands change.

Your WMS as the driver of innovation

Robots in your warehouse don't operate in isolation. They require coordination: who does what, when, with what priority, and what happens in case of deviations? By 2030, the question will therefore not only be how you deploy robotics in your operations, but above all whether your IT landscape is scalable and integration-friendly enough to orchestrate that mix. That's why you should choose a foundation that can accommodate new technologies without requiring you to redesign your warehouse processes from scratch every time.

At Boltrics, we view robotization as a logical next step in a future-proof WMS.



Through our integration platform DataHub, we connect robots and automation solutions directly to the WMS. Once developed, these integrations are available to all Boltrics customers. As a result, various 3PL providers are already successfully controlling picking robots and complete AutoStore solutions today, with the WMS serving as the driving force.

Challenge 3

Taking the reins: self-reliance and IT maturity.

AI and automation often take center stage when discussing the future of logistics. Naturally, they are also key topics in this whitepaper. Yet many 3PLs base their future decisions on a less obvious factor: how quickly can your organization adapt without relying on external parties? Self-reliance is not just a "nice-to-have" in your market. It is the difference between a warehouse that attracts customers and one that misses opportunities because change becomes too slow or too expensive. Which path will you choose?

The vital role of key users

The key to self-sufficiency lies with your key users and the flexibility of your WMS. Your key users translate the reality on the floor into configurable options within your WMS. They possess the operational know-how to make processes more efficient. And when you work with a WMS that allows these internal experts to customize processes, scan screens, or reports themselves, you can respond flexibly to new customers or changing market demand. You remain in control of onboarding new customers and optimizing processes. Without needing an external - and sometimes expensive - party to do so. That saves time, money, and prevents dissatisfied customers.

> Tight margins force logistics companies to innovate and adapt faster. That doesn't mean charging by the hour, but using software that is up-to-date, stays that way, and can help them stay ahead of the curve."

Self-reliance means greater control

Self-reliance isn't just about reducing costs - it's about control. Control over your processes, scalability, and growth. When you understand your operations, you can adapt them when needed and identify issues early. Instead of reacting after problems occur, you stay ahead by ensuring alignment and continuity across your processes. Not reactive, but proactive. That is what enables consistent performance in a dynamic market. And it all starts with a solid foundation: your WMS.



Author's recommendation

Choices you make now to stay ahead in 2030.

Over the next five years, the pace will pick up even more. Not just technologically, but commercially as well: customers want faster onboarding, greater insight, more variety, and fewer errors. And your organization must deliver all of this with a limited workforce and cost pressures. That's why now is the time to make decisions. Not to follow "the latest trend," but to ensure that your warehouse in 2030 isn't held back by the choices you make today.



Choices for the warehouse of tomorrow

Stick to one guiding principle in every decision regarding AI, automation, or IT: choose a foundation that makes change easier, not harder.

- **Opt for best practices.**
  Standardization if possible, variation where needed.
- **Choose scalability.**
  Expand when the organization is ready, without having to redeploy the system.
- **Go cloud-first.**
  Stay up to date without upgrade projects.
- **Opt for integration-friendly solutions.**
  Automation and supply chain partners require an ecosystem, not isolated silos.
- **Choose people who can lead.**
  Key users as the bridge between operations and IT.



Future-proof your IT.

You don't have to finish everything today. But you do want to choose a foundation today that will accelerate your warehouse in 2030 rather than slow it down.

Boltrics

How can Boltrics help you?

Boltrics helps you stay in control of growth, complexity, and change. With a single integrated software platform for warehouse management, transport management, and freight forwarding, Boltrics supports you in streamlining all your processes. Not by developing custom solutions, but by applying proven best practices developed for and with the logistics sector.

By working with a single cloud platform, built on Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, you benefit from real-time insights, standardized processes, and an IT landscape that grows with your organization. Innovations are made immediately available to you and all other Boltrics users. This ensures that all customers remain continuously up to date with the latest technology, without maintenance efforts or disruption to daily operations. More than 400 logistics service providers use Boltrics to simplify their operations, make their organizations scalable, and build a future-proof IT foundation.

Discover how your business could benefit at boltrics.com.

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The 3PL Industry Solution