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READY FOR BLACK FRIDAY?

HOW THE BEST IN CLASS HANDLE PEAK SEASONS

OPTIMIZING WAREHOUSE PERFORMANCE

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/Introduction/

It All Comes Down to Preparation

There's a familiar tension in the air as Black Friday and other peak seasons draw closer. And it's not just customers eagerly waiting for great deals – behind the scenes, warehouse managers and logistics teams are bracing for impact. Expectations are high on both sides, and when it all works, it's not just a successful sale – it's the start of a long-term relationship.

For many retailers, Black Week is the most critical time of the year. But it's not just about one big shopping week – it's about making good on every expectation that comes with it. Speed. Accuracy. Availability. And if you miss the mark on the expected delivery time, you may lose the customer for good. That's why scalability is everything. The ability to quickly ramp up operations, handle higher volumes, and still deliver with precision is what separates a smooth peak season from a chaotic one.

I've seen first-hand how even the best-laid plans can unravel when the pressure is on. The key to avoid this, in my experience, is to learn from past peak seasons. Analyzing previous performance metrics – such as order accuracy and average delivery times can highlight areas for improvement. For instance, maintaining a high order accuracy rate minimizes returns and maximizes customer satisfaction, both of which are crucial during peak seasons.

In this white paper, you'll hear directly from companies that know what it takes to succeed during peak seasons. Nordic Nest, SportFits, and Helly Hansen each handle massive spikes in demand during Black Week – and share their strategies and preparations that help them turn short-term surges into long-term customer relationships and growth. You'll also get practical insights and actionable advice from Element Logic's own experts. With over 40 years of experience in intralogistics, we know what it takes to build warehouse operations that don't just cope with peak season—but thrive in it. And don't skip the end! There you'll find a checklist on how to turn insights into actions. Enjoy the read – and a smoother peak season next time. Best,



Håvard Hallås
Group CCO
Element Logic

Håvard Hallås
Group CCO, Element Logic



One Third of Annual Sales in Just Weeks

NORDIC NEST

For Nordic Nest, a fast-growing e-commerce company specializing in Scandinavian home design, the final quarter of the year is make-or-break. Around one-third of their annual revenue is generated in Q4, with Black Week as the undisputed peak.

In just a few intense days, thousands of orders pour in. Expectations are sky-high: customers want precision, speed, and reliability. For years, the Nordic Nest team stretched its manual systems to the limit, but the pressure kept mounting.

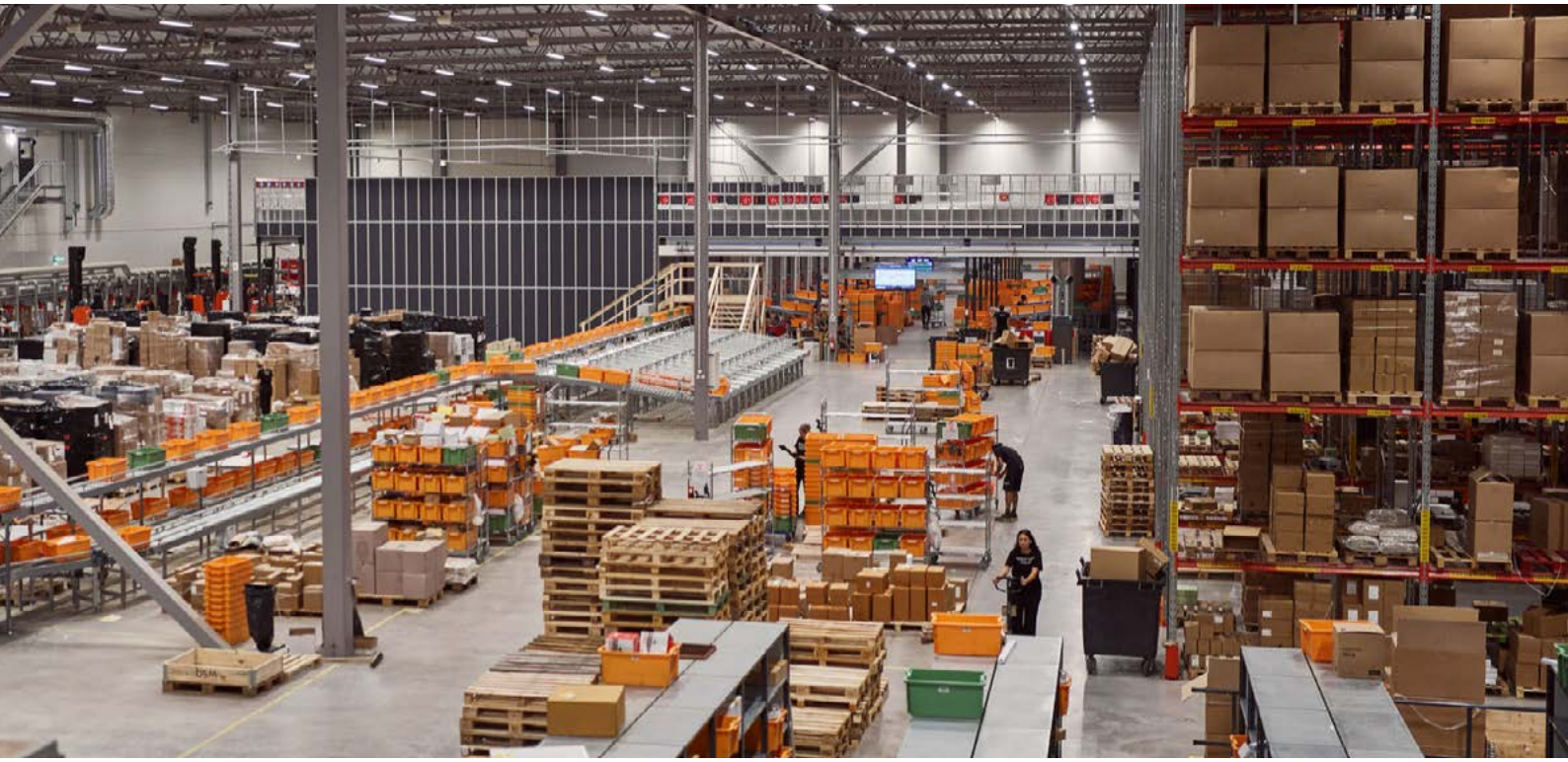
"We held off automation for as long as we could," says Johan Torudd, Operations Development Lead at Nordic Nest. "We pushed manual workflows to the maximum. But scaling just by adding people wasn't sustainable anymore."

> *We pushed manual workflows to the maximum. But scaling just by adding people wasn't sustainable anymore.*

A Scalable Solution That Grows with the Business

The turning point came when Nordic Nest decided to rethink its logistics setup in 2022. “Element Logic delivered an AutoStore solution that we could grow with,” says Torudd.

“Unlike many other automation systems that require detailed upfront decisions about size, layout, and long-term capacity, AutoStore gave us flexibility. While our initial setup included a substantial number of bins and robots, the modular system allowed us to scale gradually – adding components as needed rather than making one large, upfront investment. That freedom to adapt was critical for our evolving needs,” he explains. The implementation quickly proved its value. Not just as a technical upgrade, but as a tool that enabled Nordic Nest to plan more efficiently, deliver faster, and continue to grow – also during peak season.



Automation Does not Automatically Fix Everything

Even though automation was a game-changer for Nordic Nest, the team noticed signs of strain in its system during Black Week in 2023.

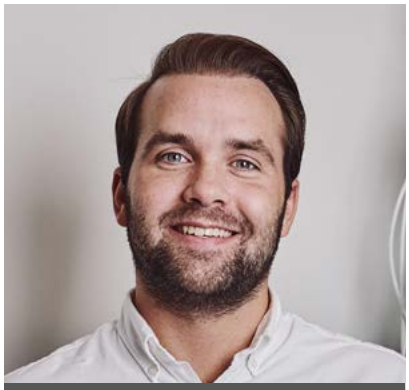
“There was too much delay in the system,” Torudd says. “We could not quite figure out why, but we knew we had to fix it before the 2024 peak.”

Nordic Nest scheduled an optimization workshop with Element Logic to dive into data and identify hidden bottlenecks. As a result, the team implemented forecasting to improve task availability. And with a few more system tweaks, the delay was fixed. “We felt more prepared and had more control. The first wave of the peak in 2024 did not hit us as hard as it usually does, which made it easier to get into a good rhythm,” says Torudd.

Peak Performance Depends on Preparation

Everyone knows that during Black Week, there is no room for error. To stay ahead, Nordic Nest ensures their system is fully serviced ahead of Q4 and keeps a technician from Element Logic on standby.

"We have rarely had issues with our AutoStore solution, but when a third of the year's revenue comes during November, you do not take risks, Torudd says.



Johan Torudd
Operations Development Lead
Nordic Nest

With the last Black Week still fresh in mind, he has already started preparing for the next one. But that does not mean everything else is on pause.

"Of course, we are already thinking about the next peak," Torudd says. "But we cannot let that overshadow the rest of the year. Those nine other months matter just as much – and the better we plan and prepare by continuously optimizing warehouse and related workflows, the smoother each peak will be. **Ultimately, it's about never settling and fostering a mindset where there's always room for improvement, no matter how well things are going."**



Technical Information

Bins: 60,000
Robots: 136 R5
Carousel ports: 14
Conveyor ports: 10
Location: Kalmar, Sweden

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What if your AutoStore Solution Could Run **10-20% More Efficiently?**

– before peak season even starts?

While preparing for peak seasons like Black Friday, even well-run warehouses can experience trouble. To help customers uncover hidden bottlenecks, missed opportunities and prepare their systems for high-pressure periods, Element Logic offers a tailored Optimization Workshop.

It is a hands-on process that gives you a detailed look at how your AutoStore solution is really performing – and where there is room to improve.

It begins with data. Using real logs from AutoStore, eManager and other systems, Element Logic's team analyzes key metrics from previous peak seasons like picking speed, bin wait times, robot utilization, and queue performance.

The Queue Strategy is Paramount for a Successful Peak Season

A big focus during the workshop is placed on queue strategy. How many orders should be sent to AutoStore at once? Too few, and pickers end up waiting. Too many, and the system can get overloaded. The workshop calculates the right balance, using factors like average order lines, grid preparation, and port capacity.

The Pareto principle – 80% of results come from 20% of the effort – is also a key part of the analysis. In an AutoStore system, this translates into identifying which products account for the majority of picks and where they are physically located in the grid. The workshop team calculates the dig depth to see if it can be optimized. Items located at a shallower dig depth are easier and faster for the robots to access, which directly boosts picking efficiency.

Robot and port capacity are also closely examined. Are robots distributed in the smartest way? Are ports set up for optimal flow? These insights are combined with findings from on-site observations to form a report tailored to your warehouse. The report includes both observations and practical suggestions – many of which can be implemented right away.



The Result?

A better understanding of how your system performs under pressure, and a clear plan for how to improve it before the busiest weeks of the year.



Smart Growth in Peak Season

For SportFits, growing fast in a fiercely competitive e-commerce market requires more than just great products – it demands operational excellence.

German outdoor and sportswear retailer SportFits has carved out a challenger position by working smarter, not just harder. Nowhere is this strategy more tested than during peak season.

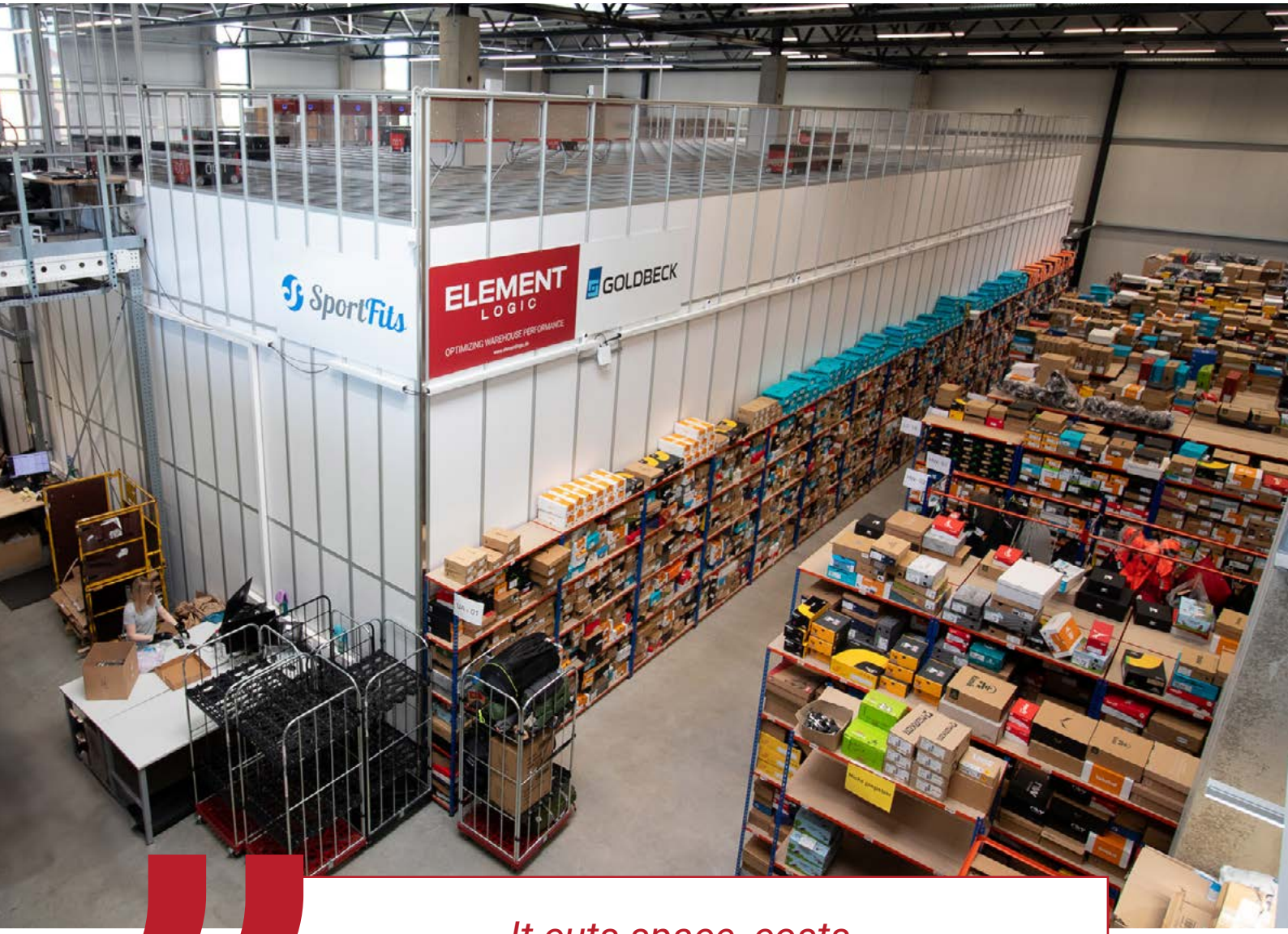
Winter is always busy for SportFits with steady demand from ski holidays and cold-weather shopping. In November, December and January, order volume surges to an impressive 80% above the yearly average – and on the busiest days, it skyrockets by as much as 300 to 400%.

While December is their strongest month, it is Black Friday and Black Week that really push operations to the limit. “That is when everything happens at once,” says Dennis Latz, Project Manager at SportFits. “A huge spike in orders, all compressed into a few days.”

He remembers Black Week 2023, when it collided with the season’s first snowfall. “Everyone wanted winter sports gear at the same time. Total chaos,” he recalls. “Shipping companies could not keep up, the backlog grew, and we had to work Sundays just to stay afloat. Even office staff were packing boxes.”

A Challenger's Strategy

SportFits is not yet a giant in its category – but it acts like one, thanks to a logistics setup built for flexibility, speed, and control. They run a hybrid stock model: only top-selling products are stored on-site for fast 1–3-day delivery, while the rest ship directly from suppliers. "That cuts space, costs – and most importantly, risk. Overstocking is what kills companies our size," says Latz.



> *It cuts space, costs – and most importantly, risk. Overstocking is what kills companies our size*

Working Smarter, Not Just Faster

To keep up with peak season volume without hiring an army, SportFits uses automation where it counts. At the heart of their warehouse is an AutoStore system installed by Element Logic – handling dense storage, fast bin retrieval, and feeding directly into a streamlined assembly line and packaging machine.

Once an item is picked by a robot and sent to a port, it is automatically bagged, labeled, and routed for dispatch via a packaging machine. “About 60 to 70% of all orders go straight through the machine,” says Latz. “It saves a massive amount of time. And it is consistent, shift after shift.”

This is what enables SportFits to keep one of their most important customer promises: shipping every order within 12 hours, even during peak season. “Last Black Week, we stayed on track. Only two days did we fall slightly behind – but we caught up immediately. That would have been impossible without automation.”

Every night during peak season, the team runs pre-pick routines, generating robot pick lists based on order forecasts. The AutoStore robots reorganize the grid while the team rests, moving high-demand bins to the top so the morning shift can hit the ground running. From October through the winter season, the warehouse runs two shifts – early teams handle outbound orders, while late teams manage incoming goods and replenishment. It is a setup that balances automation, smart planning, and solid teamwork.

Growing Against the Odds

Despite wider market stagnation in the sports and outdoor segment, SportFits grew 27% in 2024. “We do not have a massive headcount. We have systems,” Latz explains. “Where others have one person per brand, we have two people managing 10 to 20 brands. This enables us to grow fast and sustainably.”

And they are not slowing down. Plans are in place to further improve their processes, and to double the AutoStore system by 2026. Latz is quick to share what has worked for them:
“Automate wherever you can. Plan your shifts tight. And have a team that helps each other – no matter what.”

Technical Information

Bins: 12.000

Robots: 12

Carousel ports: 3

Location: Passau, Germany

ELEMENT LOGIC



From Burnout to Balance

“We Do not Dread Peak Season Anymore”

Helly Hansen is known for making high-performance gear that keeps professionals and outdoor enthusiasts protected in the harshest conditions. But behind the scenes, the company’s North American warehouse team used to face their own storm every year: peak season.

With a retail push in early fall and an e-commerce surge leading into Black Friday and the holidays, the pressure came in waves. Long hours, constant motion, and physical exhaustion were just part of the job. The turning point came in 2022, when Helly Hansen became the first company in North America to automate with AutoStore empowered by Element Logic, following the establishment of our operations there earlier that year.

“It took us from 1970 to 2030 overnight. It is one of the smartest investments we have ever done,” says Quality Compliance Manager, Andrew Aldworth.

A Heavy Load Lifted

Before automation, peak season meant walking countless miles each day just to keep up with orders. “I am honestly surprised the warehouse workers kept coming back year after year,” Aldworth says about the warehouse crew. “It was so physically intense.”

Now, robots handle the heavy lifting. “The energy is totally different. People are relaxed.” The workload is more sustainable – not just physically, but mentally too.

And the improvement is not limited to the warehouse floor. “We used to plan feverishly for months,” says Aldworth. “Now we go into peak season calmly. We trust the system.”

Saving More Than Time

The switch to automation cut down temp worker costs for the Helly Hansen warehouse. With fewer people running through aisles and robots managing the bins, the safety benefits have also been clear.

It also eased the stress in the office. “Less back-and-forth with agencies, fewer people leaving mid-season – it is a smoother operation all around.”



Growing Without the Growing Pains

In 2024, the warehouse processed over hundreds of thousands of e-commerce orders between November 24th and December 17th – up double digit from the year before. But just a few years ago, things looked very different. “Before COVID, we got maybe 100 online orders a day,” says Aldworth. “Then everything shifted. E-commerce shot through the roof, and it has not slowed down since.”

With that kind of growth continuing, Helly Hansen is already planning an expansion of its AutoStore system ahead of the 2025 peak season.

“We hit our capacity in 2024, so we are adding more robots and ports this year,” Aldworth says. “We are also looking to implement forecasting and smarter tools from Element Logic, like pick waves, to spread out the workload while keeping a world class service level to our customers.” Aldworth and his team are using last year’s data to size the expansion right – and to avoid future bottlenecks.

The Cleanest AutoStore solution

To make the transition from manual to automatic warehouse operations as smooth as possible, Aldworth spent a lot of time testing the system before implementation. “Do not just install it and hope,” Aldworth advises. “Test it like crazy. Try to break it. That is what made our transition from a manual warehouse, to an automated one, so smooth.”

Thanks to a lot of preparation from Aldworth and his team, they just needed a week to train the warehouse staff when it was time to launch.
“After training the people, it is all about taking care of the system and keeping it clean.

We are told we have the cleanest AutoStore in the world – and that’s no coincidence. Maintenance matters.” Thanks to their proactive efforts, the Helly Hansen system has consistently achieved 99.98% uptime. For Helly Hansen, automation has not just improved efficiency. It has made work better for everyone. “Peak season is still busy, of course,” says Aldworth. “But the difference now? We are ready for it.”

Aldworth and his team are using last year’s data to size the expansion right – and to avoid future bottlenecks.

> *Peak season is still busy. But now we are ready for it.*

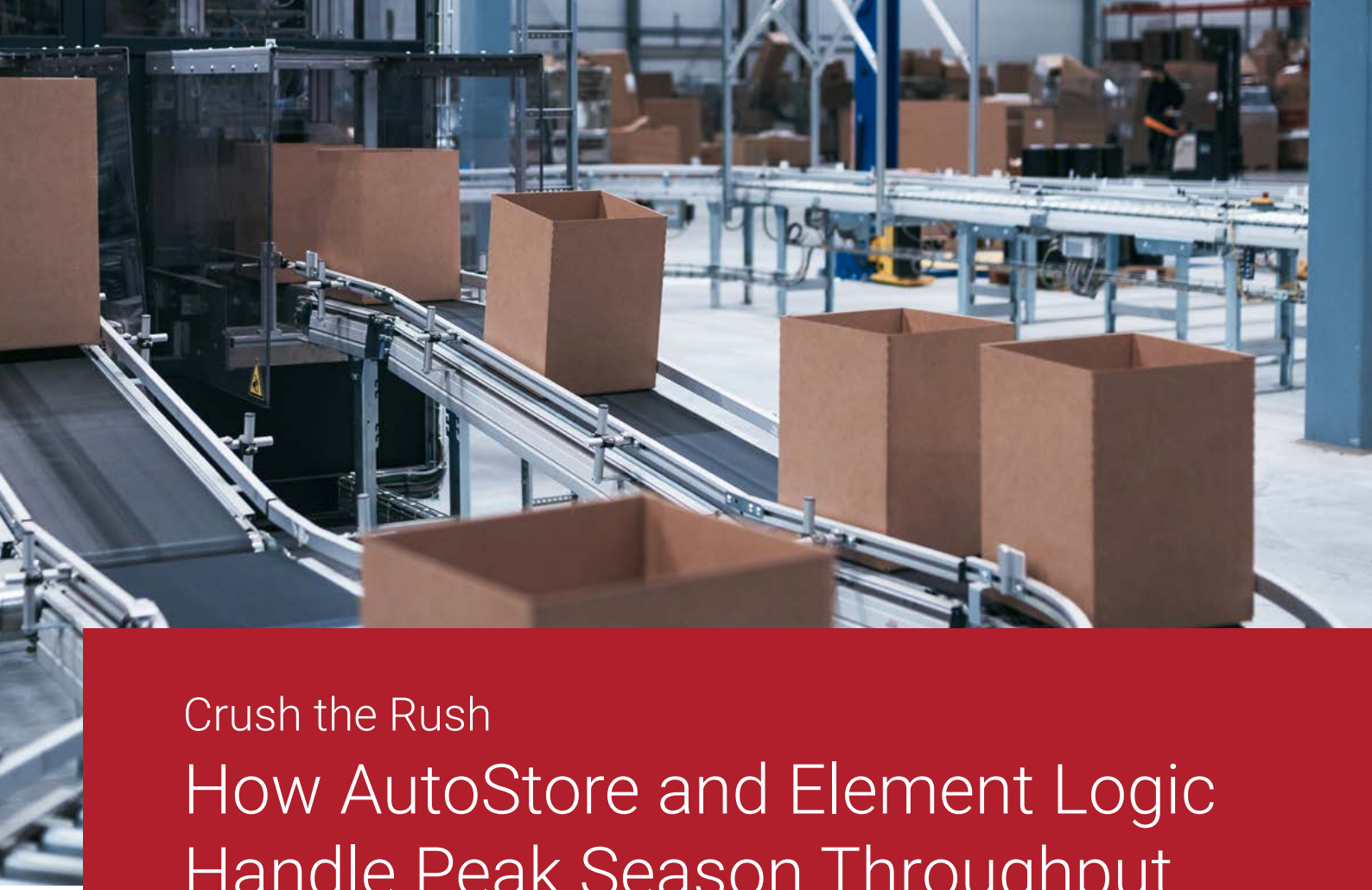
Technical Information

Bins: 50,000

Robots: 36

Carousel ports: 10

Location: Sumner, Washington, USA



Crush the Rush

How AutoStore and Element Logic Handle Peak Season Throughput at Scale

Order volumes explode. Cutoff times shrink. Peak season is not business as usual – it is a test of your warehouse's limits. A single SKU (Stock Keeping Unit) can go from idle to urgent in minutes. For large operations, especially in fast fashion, e-commerce, or mass-market retail, high throughput is not optional, it is survival.

Historically, AutoStore was not the obvious choice for high-throughput operations. The cube-based system was known for storage density and precision, but many believed it could not move fast enough – especially in large, complex warehouses with aggressive performance targets.

That Thinking is Outdated

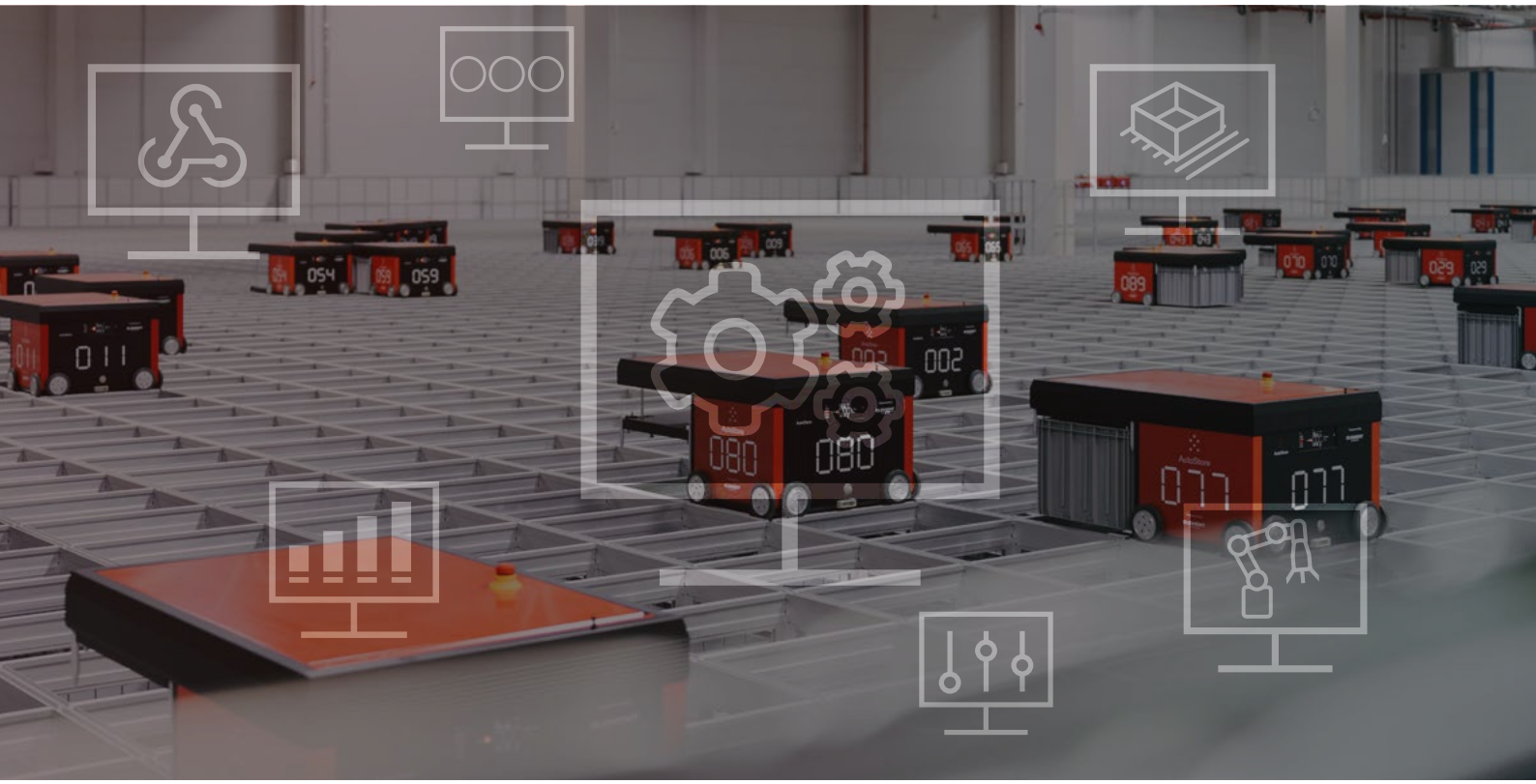
Today, AutoStore empowered by Element Logic is not only holding its own in the high-throughput segment, it is setting new benchmarks. The results speak for themselves:
Boozt, a leading Nordic fashion and lifestyle e-commerce company, operates one of the world's largest AutoStore installations, processing up to 200,000 items daily. Norwegian sporting goods retailer XXL achieves an impressive 800 picks per hour per picker.

So, What Changed?

Element Logic's secret weapon is eManager – a purpose-built software layer that turns the top of the AutoStore grid into a dynamic, high-speed pick face. When SKU demand spikes, eManager automatically pushes the right bins to the top, ready for instant picking. No digging. No delay. Just consistent, high-speed flow across every port.

Meanwhile, AutoStore's hardware has leveled up too. The R5Pro robot enables multi-shift performance with minimal charging time. RelayPort workstations handle 650+ bins per hour. And Router software ensures every robot moves with optimized precision, even when volumes peak.

AutoStore is no longer just about dense storage – it is a powerful engine for high-throughput operations. As technology has advanced, and pioneers have dared to question its limits, it is consistently outperformed expectations. Paired with Element Logic's optimization, it now delivers the speed, scale, and reliability needed to master peak season. Again, and again.





From Peak to Precision

Learn from the Experts

No matter where you are in the world, the pressure on Black Friday is the same: deliver faster, smarter, and without fail. Luckily, peak season chaos is not inevitable. With the right preparation, it can be your biggest opportunity to gain new and loyal customers.

We asked three warehouse automation experts from across Element Logic's global operations what advice they would give to warehouses heading into another Black Friday. Despite the distance, their answers echo the same message: success starts with planning.

#1 Analyze the past to prepare for the future



Marcus Rasmusson
Customer Success Director
Element Logic Sweden

According to Rasmusson, the best place to start when preparing for peak season is by looking back. "Every peak season gives you data. The smart move is to analyze what happened – where the bottlenecks were, when things slowed down, and why." By reviewing performance metrics from last Black Friday, you can make targeted improvements before the next.

But even the best preparation cannot prevent the unexpected. "Unforeseen situations can always arrive. That is why Element Logic offers 24/7 support throughout peak season. If something goes wrong, we are just a phone call away – and if you are prepared, even surprises are manageable."

#2 Plan your people, and let the robots do the rest



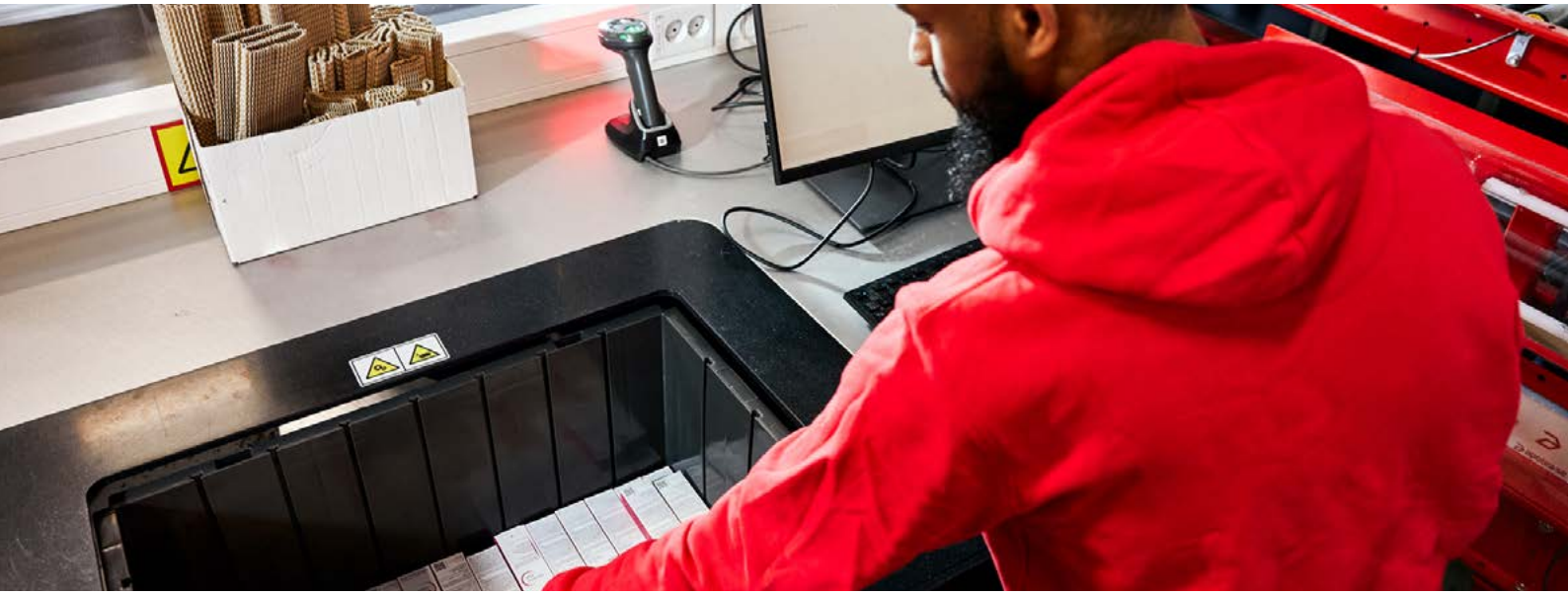
Joachim Kieninger
Director of Strategic Business Development, Element Logic Germany

"Staffing is one of the biggest challenges during peak periods," says Kieninger. "You need more shifts, but so does everyone else." His advice: plan your schedules and secure staff early.

Automation gives warehouses a major advantage here. "Robots do not need breaks, and they do not require overtime pay," he says. They can run 24/7 with minimal charging time.

And when it comes to onboarding temporary staff, usability becomes key. "Element Logic's eManager software is designed to be intuitive, so new employees can learn it in minutes.

Kieninger also shares a practical reminder: "Have essential spare parts ready. It is a simple but critical way to avoid unnecessary downtime."



#3 Maintenance now, not mid-peak



Krish Nathan
CEO
Element Logic Americas

"Do not wait until peak season to uncover a problem," says Nathan. "Schedule system maintenance ahead of time."

If you already have a maintenance check planned, his advice is simple: move it forward. "Carrying out preventive maintenance before the pressure hits can be essential for identifying and addressing weak points in the system," he says.

When your warehouse is running at full capacity, even a small issue can escalate into a major disruption. "During peak, there is no room for downtime," he adds. "Making sure your system is operating 100% gives you the stability and confidence to handle high volumes."

That is why many operations now rely on tools like the eLogiq proactive maintenance module to stay ahead of potential issues.

The module continuously monitors performance indicators, helping teams detect and resolve problems before they impact operations.

The impact of staying ahead of problems is clear: Helly Hansen has reported 99.98% uptime over the past 90 days.
It is also about giving your team one less thing to worry about. “A well-maintained system lets everyone focus on performance instead of problem-solving,” says Nathan. “That is how you stay efficient when every second counts.”



#4 An extra advice for peak performance

To take peak handling one step further, many warehouses are now adding robotic piece picking with eOperator from Element Logic. It is a robotic arm that works seamlessly with AutoStore to pick items automatically – especially useful when staffing is limited, or order volumes are unusually high.



Your Peak Season Readiness Checklist

No matter where you operate or how advanced your setup is, one truth holds: the best-performing warehouses do not react to peak season – they prepare for it.

Throughout this white paper, you have heard from warehouses and experts who have mastered navigating the busiest periods of the year. Their advice all points in the same direction, that success starts long before the first order rolls in.

To help you turn insights into actions, we have gathered the most important steps into a practical checklist:

- ☑ Analyze past performance and tweak your system accordingly
- ☑ Stock your inventory before peak season
- ☑ Schedule preventive maintenance
- ☑ Optimize warehouse layout and tune your processes
- ☑ Stock essential spare parts
- ☑ Plan staffing needs early – how many shifts and temp workers do you need?
- ☑ Make the last shift do pre-pick routines to ease the workload for the morning shift
- ☑ Prepare for returns processing
- ☑ Book a 24/7 standby technician

Ready to Turn Peak Season into a Growth Opportunity?

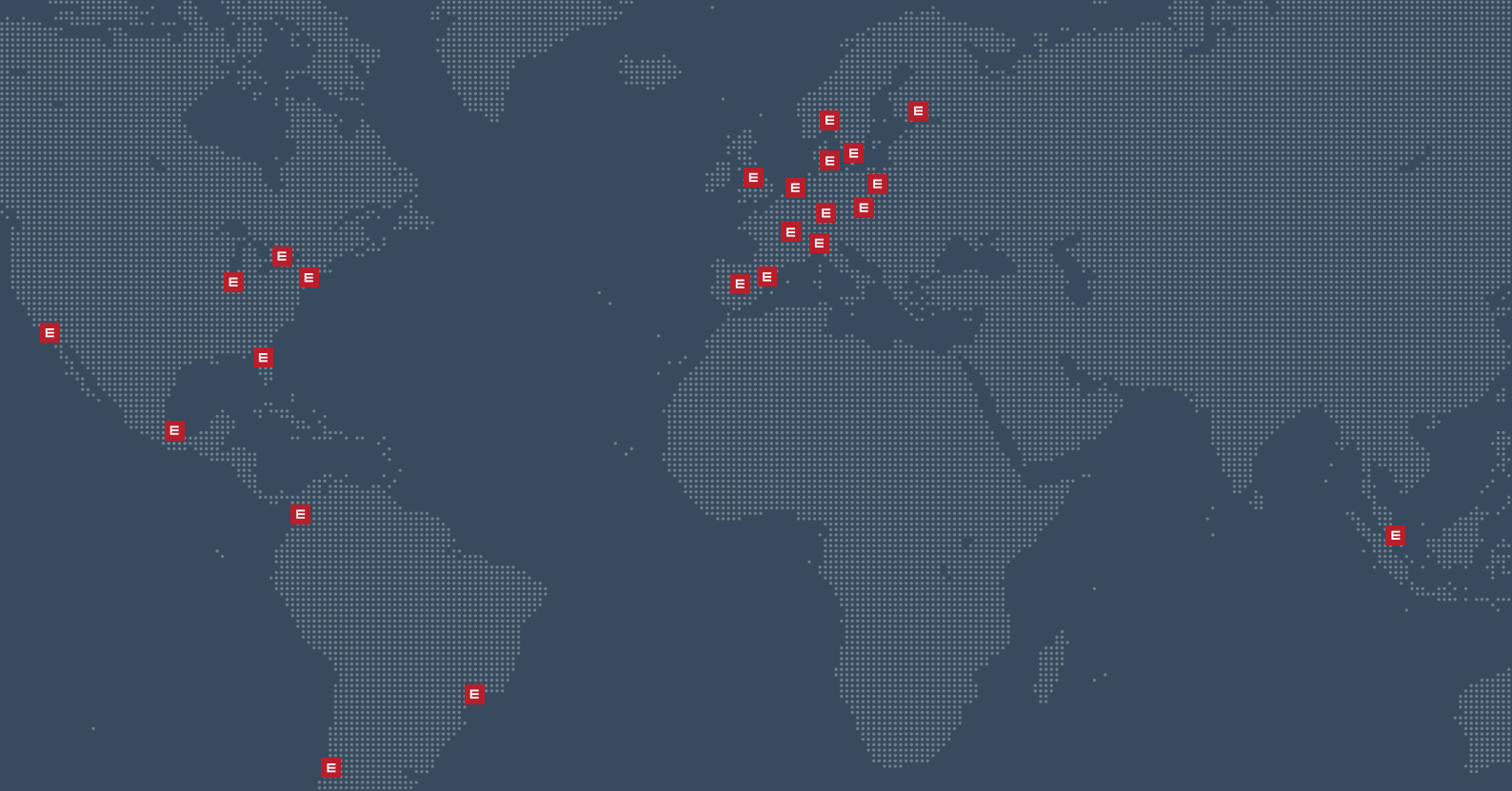
With the right preparation, software and hardware, your warehouse can do more than just cope with demand – it can outperform expectations, win new customers, and build long-term relationships. Element Logic helps businesses across the world get peak-ready with smart automation, strategic support, and solutions that scale with your ambitions.



Krish Nathan
CEO
Element Logic Americas

Get in touch with us today to make sure your next peak season becomes your most successful yet.

Contact us today



Since 1985, Element Logic™ has been optimizing warehouse performance.

Element Logic® is a global technology company specializing in intelligent warehouse automation. Since its founding in 1985, the company has grown to employ over 950 people across 30 countries and has established itself as the first—and leading—AutoStore™ partner worldwide.

Renowned for its commitment to innovation and people-centric approach, Element Logic enhances warehouse performance through a unique combination of cutting-edge technology, AI-powered software, and tailor-made solutions. This enables businesses across industries to improve efficiency, accuracy, and scalability in their logistics operations.

With a proven track record and deep expertise in intralogistics, Element Logic has become the go-to partner for organizations seeking to gain a competitive edge through automation. The company's culture is rooted in bravery, passion, and reliability—qualities that continue to drive its mission of optimizing warehouse performance.

To learn more, visit www.elementlogic.net
or follow Element Logic on LinkedIn and YouTube.

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