

Wireless charging infrastructure by PohlCon - the interview series



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Interview: Efficient use of space in logistics and production real estate - opportunities and solutions for companies in times of modernization through automation.

Introduction

Project developer and investor **Prologis** is a market leader in the development, leasing and sale of logistics properties and is considered **the world's largest asset manager**. Since 1983, Prologis has successfully served the needs of a wide variety of sectors and industries. As a driver of innovation in the logistics real estate industry, Prologis holds, among others, the first WELL certified logistics complex in Europe in its portfolio.

Philipp Feige is Vice President, Head of Capital Deployment at Prologis in Düsseldorf and has been with the company for 11 years in various positions. In this role, he leads the German Market Officer team, but is also actively involved in the acquisition and execution of projects himself.

"A contactless in-ground charging infrastructure is an exciting energy supply concept - especially in the dynamic logistics environment, where unobtrusive ground integration happens right in the workspace of robots and humans."

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Efficient use of space in the face of land shortages

1) What is the current situation regarding the availability of space for logistics and production companies and to what extent are there effects due to the Corona pandemic and the Ukraine war?

Despite high demand, the situation for logistics and production real estate has been extremely tense for several years, as the supply of available space has fallen sharply. This is due, on the one hand, to the lack of will on the part of municipalities to approve new building sites for logistics complexes and, on the other hand, to effects having a global impact. Fueled by the Corona pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the accompanying inflation, the situation on the building materials markets is so tense that speculative new construction projects have almost come to a standstill. The result is that all demand-generating use classes are **fighting equally for the remaining space**. In addition, the e-commerce sector, as a beneficiary of the Corona pandemic, experienced a strong upswing in the last 24 months, which additionally exacerbated the situation, even if this trend had recently cooled down. For our portfolio, this has led to an overall occupancy rate of 99.8% in 2022.

2) What are the implications for companies in this real estate segment ?

Companies must now rethink. The crises of recent years have shown that global supply chains are nowhere near as stable as assumed - on shoring strategies are now leading competitive factors. The run on space has long since begun. A common measure that is now being taken is a massive increase in the company's own warehousing in order to be less sensitive to fluctuations in the supply chain. The struggle for the storage space required for this also drives up rental costs even further. Not every company can keep up with this and must develop progressive solutions to optimize inventory space - project developers are also challenged here.

3) Despite the above-mentioned challenges, what opportunities do production and logistics companies have to optimize the real estate they use in order to get the maximum added value out of the available space?

One maxim for companies in the logistics and production sector is to "redensify" existing space, i.e. to utilize existing space more efficiently. Examples include higher rack structures, narrow aisle concepts in order to be able to install more rows of racks, or even the **fundamental technological modernization** of space and processes themselves. The shortage of skilled workers is also driving many companies to automate and digitize their floor space infrastructure. Autonomous robots can be used in a variety of ways in

logistics and production areas, for example, and round off the concept of a highly efficiently used area.

4) In this context, what are Prologis' approaches to addressing customer needs and providing solutions?

Our approach is to offer space to the market that is as broadly usable as possible, so that it can be used in a variety of ways. When we talk about automating our tenants, we always have to consider a sustainable energy concept. There are also parallels to e-mobility here. If the charging infrastructure only offers inadequate answers to the requirements of the target platform, it becomes difficult to leverage the full potential and you limit the use. Logistics properties must also be made fit here in order to provide the right framework conditions. Especially in existing properties, the original space planning did not include charging parks for robot fleets and energy distribution concepts designed for this purpose. Prologis offers solutions via the Essentials and Energy Teams and thus continues to drive developments in the market as part of the Innovation Groups.

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5) What criteria/objectives should be set for an optimal charging infrastructure in logistics real estate?

Basically, a charging infrastructure should be subordinate to the processes. Blocking off areas in order to load robots there should be avoided at all costs. At the same time, however, a modern charging infrastructure should also be scalable in the area without obstructing transport and walking routes as requirements grow.

Furthermore, it is of course important that an integrated charging infrastructure should not be an isolated solution for individual robots, but should be able to charge a variety of battery-powered platforms. Multiple charging infrastructures for different vehicles would not be an efficient approach but a further unnecessary consumption of space.

Finally, it is important for us, as owners of logistics real estate, that the charging infrastructure can also be easily dismantled and reintegrated at another location in order to be able to respond flexibly to the needs of the next tenant, for example.

6) How do you evaluate the concept of flush-integrated contactless charging points ("wireless charging") in logistics & production real estate?

A contactless in-ground charging infrastructure is an exciting energy supply concept - especially in the dynamic logistics environment, where unobtrusive ground integration happens directly in the working area of robots and people, without

having to give up valuable space and with high occupational safety requirements at the same time.

Outlook

7) Can you imagine interoperable contactless charging systems becoming an integral part of building planning and modernization of logistics & production real estate in the future?

As a leader in logistics real estate, Prologis has the expertise and flexibility to offer comprehensive groundbreaking solutions to its customers and set standards for buildings in the market. The approach of upgrading the warehouse floor with integrated contactless energy transfer solutions can mean huge efficiency gains for end customers in terms of area blocking, loading operations and operational safety, if properly planned.

Product Info:

PohlCon GmbH develops and sells the WCPS system, a contactless charging infrastructure product that is integrated decentrally and flush with the floor in logistics and production real estate to enable contactless charging directly in the working area of battery-powered vehicles such as robots.

WCPS is the technological counter-design to the previous old wired or plug-in contact-based charging systems to charge robots. The advantages of contactless charging points are, in particular, the elimination of restricted areas and the conversion into value-added storage space, occupational safety, operational reliability and installation close to the process, which means optimum utilization of space.

