



INNOVATIVE TRAINING TECHNOLOGY

Training forklift drivers in virtual reality

Authentic training that does not disrupt operations – DB Schenker uses virtual reality technology to train forklift drivers. The application enables users to practice operating the forklift in digital representations of real locations, helping them gain a better sense for safety in the process. DB Schenker developed the prototype of the VR training system in collaboration with the Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML in the EnterpriseLab for Logistics and Digitalization.

The simulator consists of a reconstructed forklift control system and VR glasses through which users can dive into and navigate through a virtual storage environment. Driving through rows of shelves, storing and reloading goods, interacting with relevant items – users train the same processes as they would in a physical warehouse. Unlike at a real location, however, the application can also simulate exceptional and hazardous situations, enabling users to train under special circumstances that would otherwise be difficult to practice in the real world.

By implementing the innovative training system, DB Schenker actively improves safety at its locations: aspiring forklift drivers can familiarize themselves with the actual storage environment in advance and practice relevant safety measures. And forklift drivers that are already working at the locations can use the system to refresh their training, promoting responsible behavior and reducing the risk of forklift accidents. Furthermore, virtual forklift training is another step towards digitizing the world of work. This is something employees enjoy as a survey conducted among those who have completed a VR forklift training has shown.

DB Schenker first launched the simulator as a pilot project in 2019 at the Tilburg Logistics Center in the Netherlands, where it was used to train forklift drivers. Since then, the system has also been used in Cairo. Further roll-outs within other DB Schenker locations worldwide are planned.