



A real home run

You may know that the origins of logistics lie in the military sector. Already in the ninth century, the Byzantine Emperor Leo VI tried to supply his soldiers at the front as efficiently as possible. These endeavours primarily served for defending or attacking purposes, of course. Today, many of those military inventions are still employed in the private and business sector - such as the computer or the internet - and we would not want to live without them.

In the meantime, military logistics has developed in such a manner that tactical aircrafts, for example, are connected online to the ground station. This ensures that the ammunition used on deployment can be reordered directly and will, therefore, be delivered just-in-time. It is the same procedure as we experience it every day at the cash desk of our supermarket - Efficient Consumer Response (ECR) - only that it is used in airplanes.

The efficient use of resources is a fundamental objective of logistics. It was as much in the past as it is today. Let me give you an example: In the course of operation "Desert Storm", half of the 40,000 containers shipped to the Persian Gulf returned unused. Some contained spare parts with a value of 2.7 billion USD. Here, this objective was clearly not achieved.

We don't even need to look that far. Just think of your time in the military service. Especially, if you served as a driver. I remember that there were lots of vehicles that were hardly ever used and that we had to perform so-called exercise drives, which never had any destination.

You may have seen one or the other TV report, which the Austrian television ORF broadcasted in the course of its focus on the climate change in the last weeks. With all due respect for highly developed approaches such as "ECR in planes", it would certainly also be very worthwhile to consider quite simple and obvious things such as minimising or, even better, eliminating unnecessary transports or runs. This would certainly be a real home run – at least for our environment.

Yours,
Alexander Kieslinger

Alexander Kieslinger is consultant at x|vise innovative logistics GmbH in Lauterach.