

5 Main Benefits of Deploying Cobots

Collaborative robots ('cobots'), represent a rapidly growing segment of industrial robotics and automation solutions that has seen continuous development since the term was first coined in the mid-1990s. Cobots are, in both name and design, engineered to work in tandem (collaborate) with the human workforce, fulfilling various roles that generally fall into one or more of the following categories; dull, dirty or dangerous.

At WMH Robotics, a fellow member of DEXIS Europe, we are dedicated to bringing the benefits of collaborative robotics to as many businesses as possible, facilitated by the Hayley Group branch network. We work in partnership with the largest cobot ecosystem manufacturers in the world. In this article, I wanted to introduce a selection of the main reasons why you should consider investing in cobots and deploying them as part of your operation.



An operator using a Universal Robots cobot

1. Alleviate the dull, dirty and dangerous

A collaborative robot is designed to work together with existing personnel in your workplace. A major benefit of this is a cobots' ability to alleviate dull, dirty and dangerous tasks from human employees. Dull, repetitive tasks can cause employees to become disengaged and even put them at risk of suffering repetitive strain injuries (RSI). Carrying-out the same manual duties, such as picking and placing and palletising, for the duration of a shift or day, can quickly become boring. Cobots can be programmed to repeatedly carry-out identical tasks over and over, without compromising on the accuracy of the job or affecting their wellbeing. Laborious, high-precision tasks can also be completed in a shorter time than a human worker and without the impacts of stress that these responsibilities sometimes cause.

Cobots can also be deployed and programmed to carry-out tasks that are considered dirty or dangerous. By doing this, hazardous or unhygienic duties are routed away from staff, helping to protect their comfort and safety.

2. Fast payback

We find that our customers typically achieve full payback on their initial investment in just three to twelve months. A lot here depends upon the application, palletiser cobots provide a payback in the six-to-twelve-month window, whereas machine tending cobots can achieve this much sooner (sometimes within a couple of months!). Increased productivity and a reduced strain on human resource, recruitment needs and working hours brought about by cobots, all mean that financial benefits can be felt relatively soon after deployment.

There is also a range of finance packages available to Hayley Group customers, including hire purchase, to help give them total payment flexibility. Simply enquire at the time of purchase to choose the best option for you.

3. Availability

WMH supplies Hayley Group customers with cobots built using 'off-the-shelf' components, including tooling, stands and tracks. Every component used are all approved by manufacturers. There is no requirement for bespoke designs and manufacturing, causing delays to deployment, instead solutions are sold as a package backed up by a healthy stock of spare parts at WMH's headquarters in Tamworth. This means that lead times on WMH-supplied cobots are extremely short, meaning you can spend more time producing.

4. Quick to deploy

Part of the package when purchasing a cobot from Hayley Group is the technical support made available to customers by specialist personnel within WMH's robotics division. Our aim is for customers to feel fully supported when they make the decision to invest in cobots, and that is the reason why we offer a three-step training and support programme which provides a walkthrough of the deployment stages. One of the many benefits of our cobots is that self-deployment is usually a very real possibility, as they require a relatively basic level of understanding to successfully complete set-up.

5. Easy to program

No prior programming experience is required with our cobots. In fact, we've found that an untrained operator can usually program a simple 'pick and place' operation in less than an hour! Should your requirements be more complex, our

team can support you. In addition to this, one of our leading manufacturing partners, Universal Robots, offers free e-learning and resources such as video tutorials & interactive training materials. As a fully-accredited 'Universal Robots (UR) Training Partner' and with our very own academy in Tamworth, WMH give businesses the opportunity to upskill their workforce and get the most out of their new investment.

6. Flexibility

Modern cobots are designed to integrate as seamlessly as possible into your current workplace environment. With smaller overall footprints than their predecessors and their industrial robot cousins, cobots can be deployed in all manner of relatively tight spaces and often with no additional bulky guarding required (following a successful risk assessment). Rather than being constrained by robots dedicated to a sole purpose, cobots allow you to reprogramme them to carry-out different tasks across different applications without needing major alterations to your production layout.

Moving the cobot to new processes is fast and easy, giving you the ability to automate almost any manual task, including those with small batches or fast change-overs. Cobots can evolve with the ever-changing needs of your business and its workforce, providing you with the ultimate flexible automation solution.

WMH Robotics are dedicated to simplifying robotic deployment by working with world-leading manufacturing partners such as Universal Robots, Vention, OnRobot and PALLY, to provide best-in-class and cost-effective solutions that deliver value for customers operating across a broad spectrum of industries. For more information, contact your local Hayley Group branch.

Find their details online by using our Branch Finder tool: www.hayley-group.co.uk/branch-finder.

