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"SUITX by Ottobock" sets new standards in exoskeleton technology



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New back-support exoskeleton for logistics, new business unit, new umbrella brand

On 9 October 2023, "SUITX by Ottobock" will launch the IX BACK AIR exoskeleton. The new back-support exoskeleton combines the power of rigid systems with the comfort of soft models. This makes it THE exoskeleton to be used across the board in the logistics industry.

With the IX BACK AIR, the new "SUITX by Ottobock" business unit will also present itself for the first time under the corresponding umbrella brand. "We are combining the innovative strength of both companies, both structurally and in terms of our brand, in order to further expand our market leadership," explains Martin Böhm, Chief Experience Officer at Ottobock. "With this step, we are strengthening our exoskeleton business worldwide, especially in the core market of the USA. More than 2,000 customers are already using the solutions from "SUITX by Ottobock", including leading automotive manufacturers such as Toyota North America and logistics service providers such as DB Schenker. We will actively shape the working environment of the future and provide sustainable relief for people with physically demanding jobs."

Exoskeletons for more health-oriented and efficient logistics

In the logistics industry, employees are exposed to particularly high levels of physical stress, such as lifting and carrying bulky or heavy loads. This stress often leads to musculoskeletal disorders such as back problems, sick leave and high costs. In the logistics sector in Germany, illness-related incapacity to work causes approximately 25 days of absence per year for every employee.[1] Exoskeletons are a key to overcoming these challenges: They significantly relieve the physical strain during heavy work, boost motivation and reduce costs by increasing the number of productive days.

"The new IX BACK AIR is a groundbreaking technology for the widespread use of exoskeletons in logistics," says David Duwe, Vice President of "SUITX by Ottobock" Europe. "Some companies in the industry are already using exoskeletons, but most are still in the testing phase. The daily application under changing working conditions still poses a challenge for many companies, but now we have come up with a suitable solution in cooperation with our stakeholders."

A significant relief for the lower back

In cooperation with logistics partners, "SUITX by Ottobock" has further developed the successful BackX exoskeleton. The successor model IX BACK AIR is more effective, more comfortable and lighter. It reduces the load on the lower back by up to 56 % without compressing the spine, as studies with the BackX have shown.[2]

The back-support exoskeleton is specifically designed for people involved in dynamic work processes in the logistics industry who have to move loads manually while operating industrial trucks, for example. A built-in mode automatically detects when the wearer needs support and when they need freedom of movement. Due to its reduced and ergonomic design, the IX BACK AIR is also ideally suited for working in confined spaces, for example inside a container.

Powerful and comfortable

Weighing just under three kilograms, the new back-support exoskeleton is particularly light and comfortable. Its innovative technology redistributes forces in the body, storing and releasing them as needed. By using the body's own energy, the exoskeleton can be worn all day without the need for batteries.

The IX BACK AIR can be put on and taken off in less than 20 seconds. It can be easily adapted to different user heights ("one size fits all") and is particularly comfortable. The exoskeleton has intuitive closures and removable pads as well as reflectors for improved user visibility. Thanks to its slim and body-hugging design, the IX BACK AIR can also be worn under safety vests.

The new exoskeleton for the logistics industry will be commercially available worldwide from 9 October 2023. The IX BACK AIR can be tested in the working environment as part of the Experience package (from EUR 2,900 or USD 2,990). Ergonomics experts from SUITX by Ottobock will accompany the test phase from training to evaluation.

[1] BKK Health Report 2021, 1.4. Incapacity for work in the working environment, [Link](#)

[2] Kazerooni, H., Tung, W., & Pillai, M. (2019). Evaluation of Trunk-Supporting Exoskeleton. Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting, 63(1), 1080–1083. [Link](#)

About "SUITX by Ottobock"

Since 2012, SUITX has been developing body-worn support structures, so-called "wearables", to facilitate the everyday work of people performing physical labor. SUITX originated from the Robotics and Human Engineering Laboratory at the University of California, Berkeley. The founding team included Dr. Hoymoon Kazerooni, Professor for Mechanical Engineering and exoskeleton visionary.

At the end of 2021, Ottobock and SUITX joined forces to develop groundbreaking exoskeletons under the name "SUITX by Ottobock". These exoskeletons are highly efficient and very light, preventing musculoskeletal disorders caused by heavy physical work.

Ottobock has more than 100 years of experience in orthopaedic technology and brings invaluable expertise in biomechanics to the table. With over 9,000 employees worldwide, the health technology company empowers people in 135 countries to live their lives to the fullest. Ottobock offers solutions and services in the fields of prosthetics, orthotics, neuromobility and patient care.

Gesa Liss

Public Relations Manager
Corporate Communications

Ottobock SE & Co. KGaA
Prenzlauer Allee 242 | 10405 Berlin | Germany
M +49 151 4416 1837
gesa.liss@ottobock.com
www.ottobock.com

Medieninhalte



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