Purchasing an Automated Guided Vehicle?

What to ask the Supplier.

One of the first things to remember is that you are not buying an Automated Guided Vehicle, a product, but a system that includes programming, installation, etc., a solution. We mention this because a supplier may be a match for one buyer, but not another, and vice versa.

There are some questions that you may need to ask for your own internal qualifications, and some of those queries may be the same or similar to the ones listed below. The list below is meant as a minimum of what to ask about.

- How long have you been in the Automatic Guided Vehicle industry?
- Are you ANSI B56.5 compliant (the only formalized standards for Automated Guided Vehicles in the United States)? Do you follow any other standards?
- What types of navigation do you offer?
- Do you have traffic management software in your systems? How does it communicate to the vehicles?
- What type of operating system does your off-board controller run on?
- What is your typical warranty period on the system? Can it be lengthened?
- What type of support do you offer (Phone, online, 24/7, etc.)? Do you offer service contracts?
- What is your plan of action for parts that become obsolete?
- If in the future, you were to go out of business, how would we be supported? Do you have a plan in place, or have another current company that could take over? (Suppliers may not give out the specific company, as they may be a competitor)
- Do you have a similar vehicle system installed for other customers? If so, can we visit or call? (Be aware, due to NDA's, the supplier may need to say "no" to the second part of the question, in which case ask for pictures of the vehicles.)

These questions should start to weed out the suppliers that you may not want to do business with, or at the least temper your expectations about them. Obviously, this is just the start of your information gathering. You still need to find the right solution for your company.

For more information you can contact us here.