



# New talent drives Wincanton forward

Written by **Wincanton**

**Supply chain partner Wincanton has found an innovative way to discover and nurture innovation! Its W<sup>2</sup> (“double-u squared”) Labs programme is a way of partnering with new talent to discover disruptive ideas to make sure Wincanton and its customers keep doing business better.**

Even big businesses need to work hard to find emerging talent and technology to stay relevant and competitive. This is even more important for industries which are sometimes seen as more traditional, like supply chain and logistics.

Leading supply chain partner Wincanton, who run logistics operations for big names like Primark, New Look, Sephora, Sainsbury’s, Nestle Purina, B&Q, EDF and many more, has found a creative and inspiring way of searching for the next emerging technology and the talented people they need to help deliver it.

To address the supply chain challenges of today and to anticipate the challenges of tomorrow, Wincanton has set up W<sup>2</sup> Labs. W<sup>2</sup> Labs is a programme to scour the globe in the search for emerging talent and new ideas to find the brightest minds with an innovative approach to problem solving.

*“Through our collaborative approach, the start-ups gain from our industry knowledge, providing valuable real-world perspectives which can help them refine and improve their products.”* Claire Charlton, Head of Wincanton’s W<sup>2</sup> Labs.

Start-up businesses can apply to W<sup>2</sup> Labs and may be invited to share their vision (Dragon’s Den-style) with the Wincanton experts. Only a handful of lucky innovators are chosen to trial their solution in a live environment with one (or more) of Wincanton’s customers. They receive over 50 hours of mentoring from the experts, which means they get lots of support and advice on how to improve their technology. Sometimes Wincanton will invest in the product and roll it out across the business.

Since 2017, W<sup>2</sup> Labs has driven collaboration with 26 early-stage businesses. These technologies include wearable technology which helps

workers reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injuries; autonomous mobile robots to help with eCommerce; online recruitment assessment tools; and innovative approaches to utilising spare transport and warehouse capacity. To put it in perspective for 2022:

- 98 start ups applied to W<sup>2</sup> Labs
- 15 were invited to pitch
- 5 made it through to the Lab
- 234 hours of mentoring from 34 Wincanton experts

Testing and learning new technology is vital to help Wincanton deliver excellence and efficiency for its customers, so this year the team have selected three pressing issues to solve:

- Robotics to drive flexibility, increase capacity and improve efficiency in the warehouse – and to ultimately achieve a smoother customer experience
- Digital transport solutions to improve decision-making and foster cost savings and sustainability, streamlining customer experiences
- Security and resilience to protect the safety of people, operations and the security of assets

*“I’m really excited to work with the start-ups to help take an idea and develop it into an industry ready proposition.”* Scott Merrick, Wincanton’s product director for robotics and automation

One successful outcome from the W<sup>2</sup> Labs programme is Recruiter; Wincanton’s intelligent digital solution which improves and speeds up the recruitment process. Find out more about how Wincanton partnered with this start up innovator to make a big difference: [Wincanton’s intelligent digital solution to the labour crisis](#)



Source: Adobe Stock



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What ever direction your career takes when you leave school whether it is university, apprenticeships, or employment, remember that your career will change and grow. It will take different directions, building your skill sets and opening doors to opportunities. You may decide one day that you want to start up on your own, have your own ideas and create your own business. A company like Wincanton can be there to support you, opening doors to success and paving the way to a fulfilling future.

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## Suggested further reading:

Find out more about W<sup>2</sup> Labs and how Wincanton partners with exciting new talent: [W<sup>2</sup> Labs | Wincanton plc](#)

Explore the many careers opportunities at Wincanton: <https://www.wincanton.co.uk/careers/>

[Wincanton career pathways](#)

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