



TAUBER INSTITUTE FOR  
**GLOBAL OPERATIONS**  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

## An Assessment & Recommendations for Automation Opportunities in MillerKnoll's Warehousing Operations



In the summer of 2023, the Tauber student team of Rachael White (MBA '24) and Won Young Kang (EGL BSE/MSE-IOE '24) began their 14-week team project: An Assessment & Recommendations for Automation Opportunities in MillerKnoll's Warehousing Operations.

### MillerKnoll

The Tauber student team investigated and identified process improvements and automation opportunities in MillerKnoll's warehousing operations to shorten lead times and decrease costs. After piloting several ideas, the team proposed recommendations for the implementation of creative, high-value solutions to improve processes using automation to increase the standardization and efficiency of MillerKnoll's distribution facilities.

"Our goal was to look at the warehousing and distribution facility and start to roadmap what their technology ecosystem should be," said White. "We looked at not just automation opportunities but also process improvements."

The student team found themselves successful in their project, leaving an impression on both the industry and their project sponsor Beau Seaver, Vice President of Operations Services at Herman Miller.

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"Hands down, [they] fully exceeded my expectations. Both Rachael and Won were dedicated, focused, and actively involved in the entire project.

Sponsoring this project allowed for focused energy around a 'nagging' theme. Having the capacity for Rachael and Won to direct traffic on this project proved highly valuable."

***Beau Seaver***

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**Ray Muscat**  
*College of Engineering*



**Eric Svaan**  
*Ross School of Business*

# An Assessment & Recommendations for Automation Opportunities in MillerKnoll's Warehousing Operations

"I think the thing that I enjoy the most, and which I think is the most surprising coming from an industry job prior and now being back in school, was the culture of MillerKnoll," said Rachael White during the 2023 SPOTLIGHT! Competition. "It's a very people-centric culture, and they live and breathe it. Not just in terms of people chit-chatting when you get into work, but they want to hear from all of the people regardless of what level you're at, and that's really how they derive a lot of their innovation and cool opportunities. That's honestly why I think our project was so successful. It was very much a team effort with a lot of people working together to make it work."

"It was exciting," added White. "Every day was different. It's always nice to kind of have someone who has a different perspective and comes from a different background. We also worked with a team at MillerKnoll that was very cross-functional. We got safety, engineering, and operation perspectives. It allowed us to look at a problem from multiple perspectives and make sure we're considering different risks that we might come into contact with, and in turn, coming up with innovative ideas."

Rachael reflected on her experience during both her time at the Tauber Institute and the summer project.

"I think just really take advantage of every opportunity," answered White. "The internship goes pretty fast, but don't be shy to ask for things and set expectations. One of the things that I did is I asked my sponsor to have different professional development conversations with me so that I could grow and learn as a leader, not just about the project. And that was a great opportunity."



## Student Team:

Rachael White – Master of Business Administration

Won Young Kang – EGL (BSE Mechanical Engineering/MSE Industrial and Operations Engineering)

## Project Sponsors:

Richard Scott – Chief Manufacturing and Operations Officer, Global Operations

Beau Seaver – Vice President, Operations Services

## Faculty Advisors:

Eric Svaan – Ross School of Business

Ray Muscat – College of Engineering

## About Tauber Student Team Projects

Tauber Team Projects are 12-week multidisciplinary, collaborative internships where University of Michigan Ross School of Business and College of Engineering graduate students work on operations/supply chain challenges with significant measurable impact for sponsoring companies. In these custom consulting opportunities, students work with industry partners to address critical needs by driving organizational improvements and realizing substantial cost savings and/or operational efficiencies. Additional benefits to sponsoring companies include fostering relationships with top-tier engineering and business students, elevating the company's University of Michigan presence, strengthening recruiting ties with graduates, exploring fresh operational ideas and collaborating with renowned Tauber Institute and University of Michigan faculty.

To learn more about the Tauber Institute for Global Operations, visit [tauber.umich.edu](http://tauber.umich.edu) or contact us at 734.647.1333