



# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO WAREHOUSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS



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Every business wants to sell more, sell faster, and grow their customer base through excellent customer service. No matter the size of the business, Warehouse Management is essential to making sure all of these things happen.

Whether you are managing a warehouse or a 3rd party logistics (3PL) company, a WMS with flexibility is essential. There are various obstacles to establishing and maintaining an organized warehouse, distribution center or 3rd Party Logistics (3PL) Business. Things such as lost inventory, increased error rates, decreased efficiency, or the need to pay high expediting fees can complicate workflow and order fulfillment. The good news is that there is a solution to automate and streamline workflow to ensure you always have a handle on even the most complex fulfillment jobs. Customers today expect fast and flawless order fulfillment and a Warehouse Management System will do just that.

Warehouse or Distribution Center Management has evolved over the years from manual tracking techniques documented on paper, to the new automated software systems of today. There is no doubt that having an automated system relieves stress from warehouse managers, decreases processing errors, and increases overall efficiency. It is important to find the right Warehouse Management System (WMS) for your business, to ensure the greatest return on investment possible. This guide will walk you through the key things to look for when purchasing a Warehouse Management System.



### Best Practice

A WMS that cycle counts inventory ensures you can always get an accurate read on your inventory at any point in time.



“Increased productivity in combination with real-time inventory readings means your customers get exactly what they ordered even faster.”

## Inventory Management

A good WMS will help track, direct, and manage inventory. Even the smallest warehouse or distribution centers need to understand what products they have in stock, how many of each unit is available at any given point in time, and where they are located. Being able to get a real time reading on inventory is essential to keeping your business alive. Inventory isn't always as simple as counting all items that come in an initial shipment. Returns, damaged goods, replenishments, and other events all create an opportunity for inventory to be updated incorrectly.

Many businesses are accustomed to doing inventory to measure things like shrink by hiring a third party company to come in and count units one at a time. This will often lead to decreased efficiency due to added bodies in the warehouse, having to move items to count them, and inaccuracies due to human error. Cutting edge Warehouse Management System products will cycle count inventory throughout the year. This saves time, money, and results in the most accurate inventory count possible at all times.

## Order Fulfillment

Order fulfillment is best done when warehouse employees pick items in the most efficient way possible resulting in not only more orders filled that day, but also increased order accuracy. The best way to make sure this happens is to find a warehouse management system that maps out where each item is in your warehouse and provides the most logical picking sequences. Increased productivity in combination with real-time inventory readings means your customers get exactly what they ordered even faster.

Government and supply chain regulations are a reality of running a warehouse. Find a Warehouse Management System that allows your business to always meet your customer's needs. Compliance isn't an option, it's a necessity. A WMS that can ensure you can always provide proof that you are meeting requirements is the best way to remain competitive in the fulfillment center landscape.

## Receiving Stock

Receiving stock can sometimes be complicated if procedures aren't in place to prevent things like shipments sitting for a long time before they are entered into your inventory system, missing or misplaced items during the receiving process, or even running out of room. Making sure your receiving dock has an efficient and easy process to follow increases overall throughput and minimizes errors such as lost or damaged units while unloading. What may be the most important part about receiving stock however is having clear procedures that keep your warehouse employees safe; a WMS can help with this too.

Look for a WMS that provides a set of procedures based on years of warehouse management knowledge with the flexibility you need for your specific Business Rules. Purchasing a product that works to maintain your employee's safety, and increase their efficiency at the same time doesn't have to be expensive, and is well worth the investment. Also a product that manages physical warehouse space so you don't run out of room will mean your business won't prematurely outgrow your current location. An industry leading WMS will maximize the space you have, and help you place items in the most logical pattern for picking.



## Easy Implementation & Growth Potential

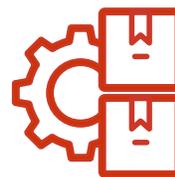
Implementation is often times an obstacle that prevents businesses from utilizing an automated WMS. The benefits of having a warehouse management system far outweigh the sometimes difficult task of finding the right product and going through the implementation process. Depending on the product you choose, implementation can take anywhere from 1-2 weeks, to several months. It is important to seek out a WMS produced by a company with a staff of professionals who are established in the field. Not only will it speed up the implementation process, but will also provide insight into how to overcome any challenges you may be facing with your current business systems, policies, and procedures.

As your company grows, you may migrate to different accounting or order management software. To make the implementation process as simple as possible, look for a product that will integrate with your current business management systems. Keep in mind that WMS products that support integration into a number of different software solutions increase the likelihood that your WMS will have the flexibility to grow with you.

Warehouse management systems with flexibility are essential to ensuring the best possible output from your fulfillment or distribution center. They can provide a range of functionality beyond inventory management and can make life at the warehouse easier for everyone. Equally important to keeping customers happy by getting their order right every time, is keeping your employees happy by reducing chaos in the workplace. A great WMS does both of these things and quickly shows you a return on your investment.

### Best Practice

Look for a WMS that supports a variety of integrations.



Finding a product that integrates with multiple order entry and accounting systems means your WMS can grow with you.