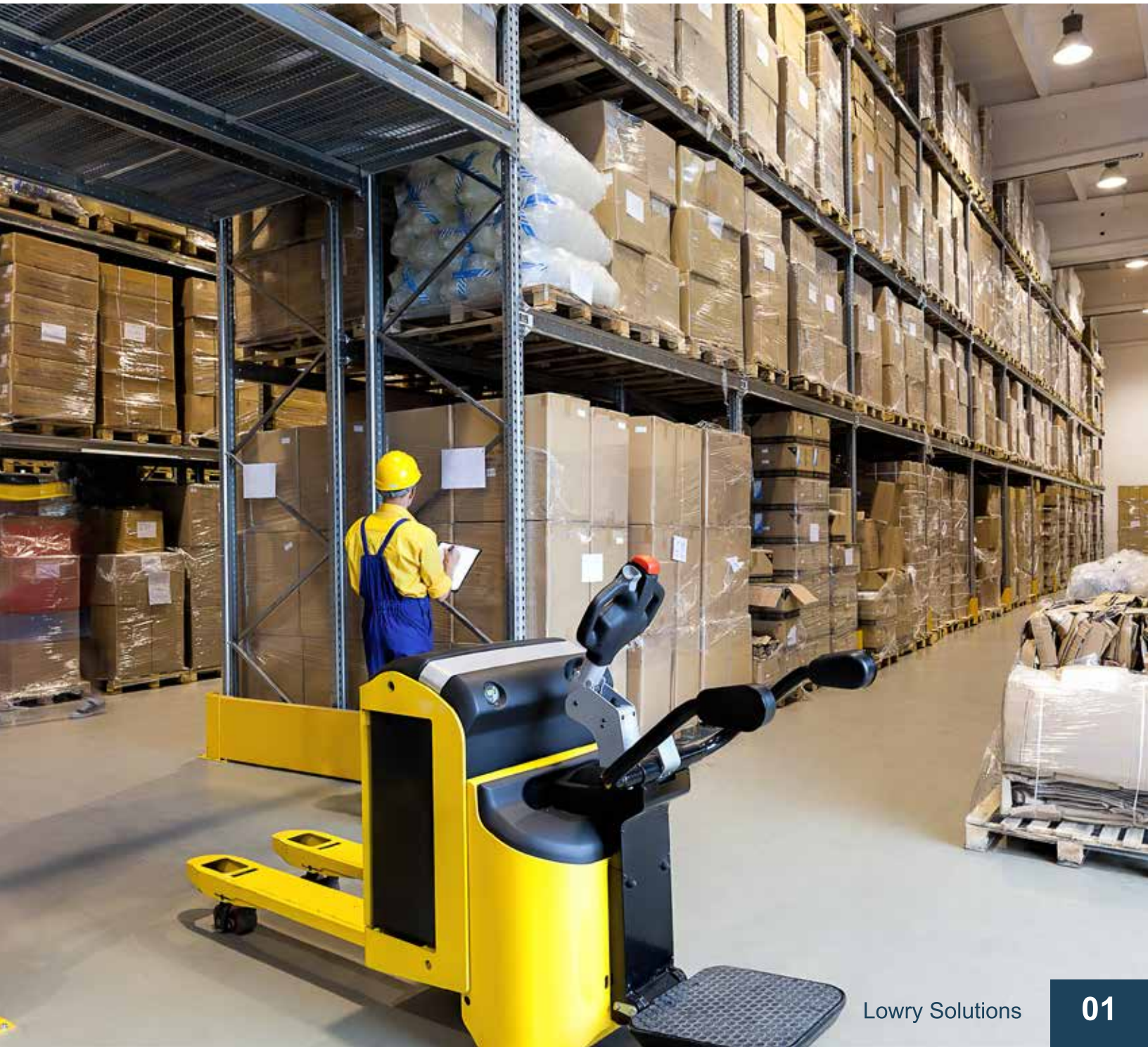


7 Signs You Need A Warehouse Management System

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Changing your warehouse management methods can be hard – especially when you’re just doing things “the way they’ve always been done.” But sticking to outdated processes could be costing your company significant efficiency and profitability. While you might be leery of the up-front costs associated with a warehouse management system (WMS) – there are numerous reasons a WMS integration just makes sense.



Here is our countdown to the seven most important reasons you should consider a WMS:

▶ 7. Your warehouse is too full

If your warehouse is overflowing, you may need to re-think your storage and picking strategies. Integrating a WMS will offer real-time visibility into your operations so you'll know when and if reorganization is needed and where problems areas lie. It also helps you identify opportunities to consolidate products – thus freeing up much needed space for your current high-demand items.

Perhaps your business is growing rapidly, and your current management processes aren't keeping up. A WMS will adapt to your changing needs. For example, if you have a slotting strategy in place, it will enable you to slot your inventory in such a way that your processes will be streamlined and your order fulfillment will be faster. This could be as simple as the strategic storing of high and low-demand inventory. This way, you can accommodate evolving customer demands without compromising customer satisfaction.

▶ 6. Your receiving area is backed up

Docks in today's warehouses must be more flexible as well as support a variety of receipts that come in fast and frequent. If your workers can't keep up, inventory will just get stuck. Besides not being able to see the receiving area floor, a disorganized receiving dock incurs hidden costs:

- Lost or misplaced goods when workers are rushed
- Incomplete receiving transactions
- Materials being moved when they shouldn't be
- High risk of injury when items obstruct aisles

This all can end up in errors and a state of confusion.

But a WMS can help accomplish tasks like sorting receipts for putaway and determine their most efficient travel path, to keep your inventory moving.

▶ 5. Inventory processes take way too long

In a culture where customers demand speed and accuracy, there is no room for slow manual processes. With a WMS, your workers can do significantly more work, with fewer mistakes, in less time. Here's why:

- Employees do not have to constantly look at paperwork. Workers can avoid manually recording their counts, picks, packs, ships, moves, receipts etc., which leaves too much room for data entry errors.
- Picking accuracy is improved with automatic, straight-forward feedback due to bar coded products and directions to specific bins they are located in, eliminating errors from pick-lists or manual paperwork.
- It eliminates shipping mistakes as well as the extra time and costs associated with fixing the problems after they happen.
- The picking pace is increased because a WMS significantly decreases completion time by slotting products based on ergonomics, demand and velocity.
- A WMS can speed up fill rates that could lead to aisle congestion and picking obstruction, making the process even slower.

▶ 4. Too many “touchpoints” for goods within your own warehouse

Does your warehouse have redundant processes? If your answer is yes, you're not alone. It's common for warehouse workers to pass documentation through multiple hands.

For example, the picker will pass an item to the checker, who passes it to the stager, who then passes it to the loader, etc. That's why so many of today's warehouses integrate an automated WMS and associated barcoding systems — because these technologies eliminate the amount of “touches” along the pipeline of a shipment.

A WMS can also help you prioritize replenishment tasks, avoid fit problems, and employ the correct replenishment model by zone —whether it's in real-time, allocation-based, or scheduled.



▶ 3. Little or no visibility into operations

Are you still using “old school” management methods like spreadsheets or worse yet – pencil and paper? While these tactics work, they don’t work well, opening up room for costly user errors. Then your reports may – or may not – accurately reflect inventory counts. That’s a problem you don’t want to have.

In addition, when your current system doesn’t provide sufficient insight into inventory location, pickers take longer to find the items to ship, in turn slowing down the loading process and creating a backup in labor allocation and dock-door scheduling.

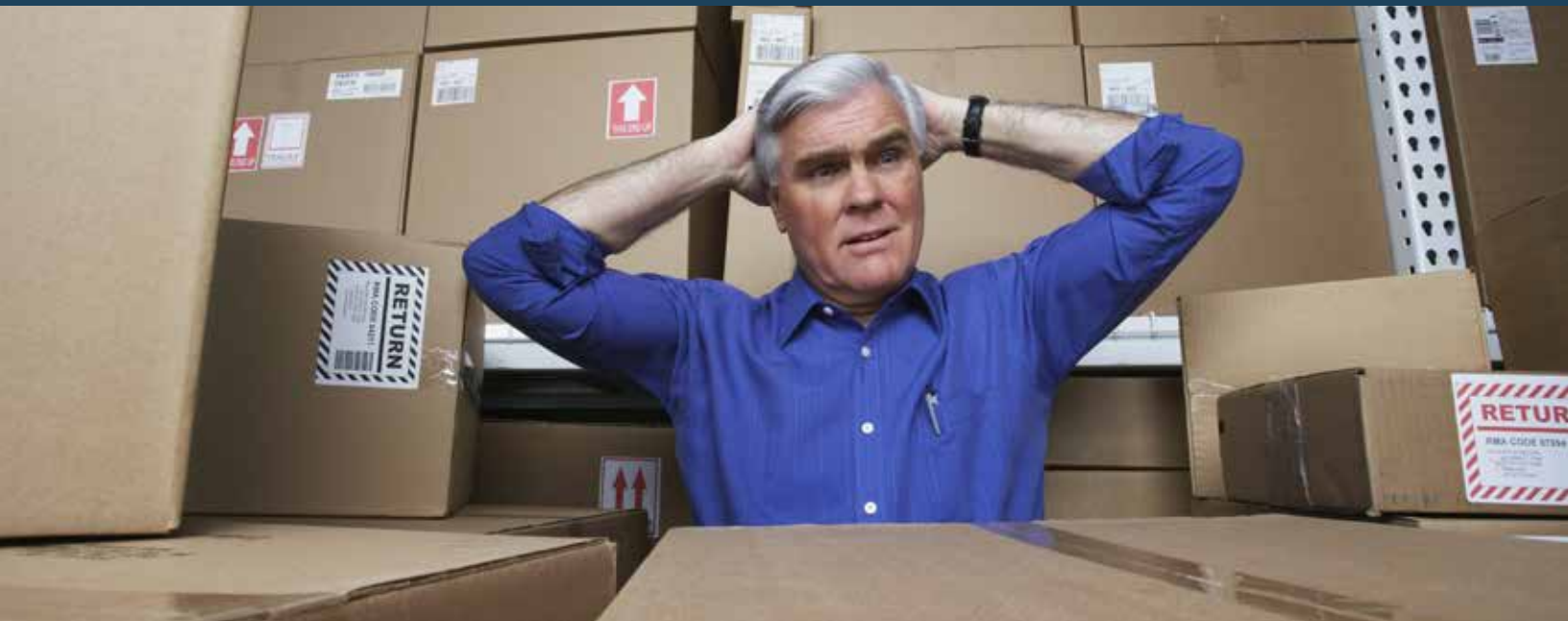
A WMS empowers management, operations, customer service and customers to receive real-time inventory and shipping information, so you operate more efficiently due to improved visibility.

▶ 2. It will outperform your current system

Have an ERP system? Sure, they offer tables and reports — and some even have add-on WMS modules. But face it; ERP systems are much more suited for purchasing and sales. Your company needs a solution that is specialized to the unique needs of the distribution industry, including:

- Accurate inventory control to account for inventory (an ERP system won’t perform cycle counts!)
- Features that facilitate scalable and flexible growth, meeting business and customer demands

A dedicated WMS is specifically designed for the world of receiving, storing and shipping items and providing the robust functionalities vital to the life of your warehouse.



► 1. To your company WMS stands for “Where’s My Stuff”

Yep. We went there. The combination of the challenges above is recipe for a disaster area – in your warehouse. And it could leave you scratching your head when inventory counts just don’t add up.

Problems like these cause lost or misplaced inventory, backed up processes in every facet of your operations, not to mention costly errors that impact profitability. With the number of comprehensive WMS solutions available today, you have no excuse for running a disorganized, inefficient warehouse. Know that your company has many options available for improving productivity and gaining better control of your operations. So, yes, you’ll know where your “stuff” is!

In today’s market it’s more important than ever to become more efficient and productive from sales to delivery. Take steps today toward a more agile supply chain so you can stay ahead of the competition. At Lowry Solutions, we want you to know where your stuff is, how much you need at any given time and get it where it needs to be in a timely manner! More efficient warehouse management is closer than you think. Let us guide you to the WMS solution that is the perfect fit for your business.

▶ About Lowry

Since 1974, Lowry Solutions, Inc. (formerly Lowry Computer Products) has helped its customers make informed business decisions and become more competitive in the marketplace. The company provides the most innovative barcode, RFID, biometrics, enterprise mobility, asset management and inventory control solutions that reduce operational costs, heighten productivity, and improve process efficiency in an array of vertical markets. Its enterprise mobility solutions empower the mobile worker through real-time communication and data access solutions. See more at www.lowrysolutions.com



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