

Tracking Your Fasteners

by:

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Why Use a Wireless Warehouse?

Many people feel that a wireless warehouse is too sophisticated or too expensive for them, and they shy away from using one. The truth is that the system will enable a company to increase customer satisfaction by eliminating errors and reducing order fulfillment time. While achieving these benefits, it will also result in better inventory management and cost savings in the warehouse operation.

System Components

Ideally, the wireless warehouse system should be fully integrated into the ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system of the company. There are several components that make up the system:

- Bar code technology.
- Wireless networking.
- Hand-held wireless scanners with keyboards and screens.
- Wireless printers.
- Wireless warehouse software.

All these work together to reduce costs and improve productivity. Complete integration into your ERP system means that the users know the up-to-the-second status of the inventory balances and order picking function.

Many Types of Bar Codes

The system can support many types of bar codes. The accuracy of warehouse operations will be increased regardless of the type of bar codes used.

There can be multiple scanning options for product verification including the following:

- **UPC code for verification**, which includes UPC-A, UPC-E, and prefixes for multiple quantities.
- **Tag Bar Code**, which identifies the product, quantity, location, lot number, PO number and weight of a particular quantity of a product.
- **Combined Tag Bar Code**, which assigns the same Combined Tag Bar Code to multiple packages. It includes the package quantity of each of the packages that are marked with it.
- **Product Bar Code**, which identifies product only, not the lot/location or quantity.

Many Ways to Pick Orders

The system can include a multitude of ways to pick-and-pack orders—each order can go through ANY of these methods—you decide on an order-by-order basis.

Pick on an order-by-order basis is used when multiple products are placed into a combined shipping container. The picker is led through the warehouse in an efficient route.

Pick order on a carton basis is used for products with pre-packaged master cartons that are ready for shipping. Users will pick a group of cartons and put order labels on them. When the order

is brought into the shipping area, it is scanned to create a packing slip.

Pick for truck shipment is used when there is a need to consolidate products on a skid for a customer. The warehouse system allows the picker to go through the warehouse gathering full skids and then back through the warehouse to collate the partial skids.

Packing verification allows verification that the correct product is shipping at a packing station.

Wave picking in warehouse sequence without regard to orders allows you to have products picked in the most efficient way, with labels printed as the product is picked. Wave picking can be done using a combination of a list with bar codes and scanners for verification. At the shipping area, the orders are staged and shipped. This method requires adequate space at shipping/receiving to stage the orders.

Orders that are picked in the warehouse can be allocated in real time in the ERP system.

Many Additional Capabilities

Wireless portable label printers allow a variety of labels to be printed in the warehouse on a printer carried by the order picker. This on-demand printing greatly increases efficiency.

Location system shows immediately where the product is stocked.

Wireless physical inventory system allows a company to quickly and easily perform physical inventories and cycle counts on small sections of the inventory without the need for a complete warehouse shutdown.

Pick replenishment system prompts the warehouse to fill pick locations from overstock locations when the pick locations fall below minimum quantities.

Put away screens tell users what zone locations the product should be put away into, helping keep the high-velocity inventory in easily accessible locations, while lower-turnover inventory is kept in more remote locations. For products that have multiple overstock locations, the system can also tell the user if the current inventory should be put in an overstock or a pick location.

Directed put away can be accomplished by simply printing the location on the package label to tell the user what location to put the product into based on the carton size, empty locations, zone of the product and current stock already in the warehouse.

Wireless Warehouse Spells Efficiency

If all the functions of the wireless warehouse are native and integral to the host system, the company can begin a process from a full sized screen and pick it up mid-way with a wireless device. Alternatively, if something is being handled by the wireless system and it needs to be finished with a PC, there is no problem at all.

Flexible put away, picking and packing enable the handling of both regular and “rush” orders with ease. Moving items in inventory or adjusting quantities are all done with wireless scanners.

Having full control of everything that happens in the warehouse in real time can revolutionize your level of efficiency. It can be a very wise move. 



Wireless warehouse boosts efficiency.

Dennis R. Cowhey, CEO – Started **Computer Insights** in 1981. He served for many years on the **Illinois CPA Society Computer Information Systems Committee**. He is a frequent author of articles for industry trade magazines. Before starting Computer Insights, he served as Central District Manager for a division of **Litton Industries** (now part of **Rockwell**), that offered inven-

tory control systems to retailers. Prior to that, he was a Credit and Financial Analyst for National Credit Office division of **Dun & Bradstreet, Inc.** Cowhey received his education at **Chicago City College** and **DePaul University**.

Computer Insights provides the fastener industry with The **BUSINESS EDGE 2.0** software for efficient tracking of fasteners.