



How to Choose the Best **Warehouse Management System** for **E-commerce Fulfillment**



As direct-to-consumer (D2C) companies outgrow the basic inventory management capabilities in their current system, they need advanced warehouse technology to gain end-to-end visibility, improve order accuracy and inventory management, reduce operational costs, and increase warehouse space utilization.

But what should you be looking for in a warehouse management system (WMS) for your e-commerce business?





Taking the First Step

Congratulations! You've grown your online business to the point where you need to take your fulfillment operation to the next level. You need a WMS to help you manage more inventory and streamline order picking and packing, to keep costs in check and meet your customer service-level agreements (SLAs).

But where should you start?

According to Gartner, ease of use, simplicity, time to value and lower cost of ownership continue to be compelling needs for midsize enterprises (MSE). Another important criteria to consider is when the WMS was built and who it was built for. A lot of WMS vendors are selling products that were developed for distributors, prior to the e-commerce boom. That means they lack the functionality and nuance that D2C e-commerce fulfillment requires.

If you are contemplating or ready to take your retail operations to the next level, here are seven key characteristics you should look for in an e-commerce WMS solution.

EASE OF USE

SIMPLICITY

TIME TO VALUE

COST OF OWNERSHIP

1.

Less complexity, more simplicity

Your warehouse is typically not complex or intricate. You need a simple solution to take your business to the next level, without overwhelming your operations. The core processes such as receiving, putaway, inventory management, cycle counting, picking, replenishment, packing and shipping are what you should look to start off with first.

2.

Low cost, low risk

Affordability and low risk are critical. You most likely don't have the budget for large software systems nor would you have an extensive IT team to manage and mitigate risk. A proven and affordable solution with low risk to your business is what will bring you peace of mind.

3.

Vendor industry experience and track record

Working with a vendor that understands your industry and the associated nuances is what D2C should look for. You need a vendor with proven success both in complex supply chain solutions and e-commerce fulfillment. Find a WMS provider who not only knows and understands the D2C industry based on their experience and track record of success, but has solutions built specifically for omnichannel.

4.

Less worry with more security

Cloud-based solutions provide less management of hardware and added security and accessibility. Organizations are increasingly choosing cloud-based solutions for the security it provides. Moving forward and as you grow, it is important for your business to have the ability to access large amounts of data over secure online connections. Cloud-based solutions provide disaster recovery, loss prevention and easy automatic upgrades. Not to mention, sustainability and less worry!

5.

Rapid implementation, out of the box

D2Cs need to have a competitive edge and customer satisfaction is paramount. Most likely you don't have the bandwidth to dedicate time and resources to a large and time-consuming implementation. Select a WMS that offers fast deployment – days, not months – with out-of-the-box functionality to ensure you can quickly get back to fulfilling orders and providing optimal service to your customers.

6.

Intuitive software

Picture this – your warehouse workers, up and running on a brand-new system in minutes, not hours? That's what a midmarket WMS should offer. A system that's easy to learn and easy to use. Not just for your full-time workers, but a solution that also eases the burden of training temporary workers.

7.

Scalable and open to new possibilities

To facilitate growth, D2Cs are looking for more innovative ways to stay ahead of competitors like Amazon. We hear the words 'digital transformation' often. And the reality is, all midmarket organizations are transforming daily. You need a system that can adopt and integrate to new technology such as automated systems and robots to give you that competitive edge.

Take Your Operations from Good to Great

Growth is an exciting time for any business. Don't let the whole process of deciding which WMS to use and how to justify the investment stress you out. Find a midmarket WMS with these seven fundamental capabilities. Always scalable, always supporting business growth and profitability. Then watch your supply chain operations thrive.

Speak to a WMS and retail expert at Tecsys

