7 ways a WMS builds competitive edge

Competitive advantage today depends on connected data. To keep up, distributors and manufacturers must bridge the gap between warehouse operations and the broader enterprise.

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Choosing the right WMS

A modern, connected Warehouse Management System (WMS) will integrate inventory with order entry, production and shipping data in Microsoft Dynamics® GP to provide employees across the organization with the information they need to work smarter and faster. With accurate and timely information, distribution and manufacturing operations accelerate the accuracy and response times that drive customer satisfaction. By eliminating paperwork and manual key entries, productivity soars and all employees gain confidence in inventory accuracy.

In this eBook, we'll examine how the right WMS system will help you build competitive edge. We'll explain how the functionality of WMS can put information in the hands of every employee to improve customer experiences and empower decision-making. As you look to take your Dynamics GP supply chain management to the next level, we'll help you ask the critical questions and make the right choice in a WMS.

7 ways a WMS builds competitive edge

1. Provides employees real-time insights into inventory

When customer-facing employees have instant insight into actual inventory, they can provide immediate answers...and take it a step further. Your WMS should bridge the silos that separate the warehouse and the front office so employees can look for opportunities to build sales and enhance customer relationships.

Fully integrated WMS and financial management systems allow you to better support the web-based sales and service that customers expect. Support better customer experiences with:

- Full visibility into inventory availability so salespeople can confirm availability on the spot

- Service reps who can recommend additional in-stock products to enhance the customer experience

- Integrated inventory data to support real-time availability for online sales

With complete information, field sales teams can build deeper relationships with customers. Insight into inventory through their mobile device allows salespeople to:

- Guarantee availability and delivery times that customers can bank on

- Check availability of stock in closest warehouse

- Update customers on status of orders in progress

With real-time, accurate materials data integrated directly into Dynamics GP, manufacturing employees have full visibility into inventory across production.

Support manufacturing teams with:

- Visibility into raw materials, WIP and parts across multiple warehouses and shop floors

- Accurate inventory data that enables effective MRP (Materials Requirements Planning)

- Clear tracking of inventory, materials and WIP throughout production

2. Accelerates shipping times with faster picking

As the complexity of your product lines grows, it becomes impossible to manage warehouse picking efficiently without machine-based algorithms. An automated WMS should optimize picking based on the unique requirements of your business, including first expired, first out (FEFO), first in, first out (FIFO), zone-based picking, wave picking, or guided picking logic with serpentine pick paths.

An automated, data-driven WMS balances physical and transactional inventory factors to deliver the fast order turnaround that today's customers expect with:

- Guided put-away functions to ensure items are located in the correct bin locations from the start
- Zone-based picking to accelerate order fulfillment of fast-moving items
- Accurate inventory location data to eliminate time spent "looking around" for materials

To reduce waste, your organization needs to tightly manage time-sensitive inventory with:

- Optimized placement and fulfillment based on expiration or received dates
- Centralized information that tracks time-sensitive inventory across multiple warehouse locations
- Enforced FEFO/FIFO guidance for warehouse staff pull (picking) to ensure no product expires or goes obsolete

The system you use to manage your warehouses needs to be flexible enough to handle the inevitable problems that will arise in the course of operations. Your WMS should:

- View real-time customer order information reflecting on-the-fly changes and adjustments to orders from Dynamics GP to the warehouse floor
- Support wave picking to eliminate repeat visits to bins containing items common to multiple customer orders
- Guide pickers to alternate locations when an item is missing/damaged or there is not sufficient quantity for the order be completed

3. Respond to recalls quickly with lot & serial traceability

In the event of a recall, your organization should be able to respond without requiring an all-hands-on-deck effort. Through the integration of a robust WMS and your Dynamic GP system, you can ensure material and product traceability that reduces the business interruption. With integrated systems designed to unify data and direct the flow of materials, automated tracking and documentation provide instant traceability.

With integration between Dynamic GP and a WMS, you get end-to-end visibility of materials and inventory to:

- Enable warehouse and manufacturing workers to quickly identify and isolate recalled items
- Track quarantined items and materials that are kept in separate locations and/or bins

- Support FDA requirements by linking components to parent and tracking the individual components used to create finished products

For manufacturers, your WMS should provide the accurate real-time inventory data that allows you to manage a recall without shutting down operations. Reduce the impact of a recall with:

- Lot or serial traceability that saves time identifying recall items from the warehouse through production
- Specific location identification to guide personnel to all impacted WIP and finished goods
- Data collection directly connected to Dynamics GP to provide full visibility and quick reporting on isolation of recalled materials

4. Increases manufacturing efficiency with connected data

Optimized manufacturing operations based on connected systems that drive efficient workflows builds competitive edge. With a WMS that enhances the manufacturing functionality of Dynamics GP, you enable more efficient manufacturing and warehouse operations to maintain a competitive edge. By maximizing efficiency and reducing labor costs, you can price products competitively and fulfill promises to customers.

Enhanced manufacturing support systems should provide resource optimization:

- Real-time inventory by scanning raw material to work orders and increase finished good amounts against manufacturing orders

- WIP sequence tracking to improve visibility of WIP materials throughout the manufacturing process

- Automated data collection (ADC) and barcoding to eliminate data entry and reduce errors

When you provide information to manufacturing customers proactively, you alleviate concerns and become a trusted trading partner. With real-time visibility into people and inventory, you can:

- Provide communication on order status with proactive updates on delivery dates

- Shorten cycle times with more efficient operations

- Build first class reputation with higher product quality

5. Improves customer satisfaction with fewer picking errors

Customers today expect fast, accurate order fulfillment...every time. Missing and incorrect items will quickly drive customers—whether they are consumers or businesses—to more consistent providers. To improve accuracy, you need an integrated system that unifies data across orders in Dynamics GP and the warehouse.

Your business customers are keeping track of your order fulfillment history through vendor scorecards. To ensure that you meet the expectations of those customers, your WMS should be tightly integrated with Dynamics GP to:

- Barcode and scan products to eliminate human error in the fulfillment process

- Simplify the fulfillment process with workflows that automatically generate picking and packing notes, tracking labels, and invoices

- Identify and isolate inventory for customers with negotiated availability agreements

- Accelerate order fulfillment with wave picking, bulk picking, or zone picking

Your WMS system should optimize role-based work direction for efficient order fulfillment with:

- Support for best and most durable barcode scanning technology

- Easy-to-learn, easy-to-use software interface to quickly ramp up productivity of warehouse workers

- Dynamic order allocation to ensure newly available inventory is allocated to the correct order based on a variety of configurable rules

6. Control costs with efficient Warehouse Management

In today's competitive environment, warehouse workers must be efficient and productive at all times. Searching for lost items, waiting for paperwork and entering data all add to costs that could be controlled with the right systems. Through an integrated systems linking Dynamics GP to a WMS, your organization can quickly increase efficiency in product put away, movement, and fulfillment.

By implementing directed, optimized tasks within your warehouse, you can maximize efficiency and drastically reduce operational costs with:

• Automated order packing using barcode scanning and workstations that print invoices, packing slips,and package labels

• Optimized picking paths with grouped orders, fractional orders, and simultaneous pallet building

• Real-time product locations to eliminate wasted steps for workers

A modern WMS should increase utilization of your warehouse space while reducing spoiled and lost stock with:

• Flexibility to use either assigned bins or dynamic bin location sequences based on available warehouse space

• Guidance for received item placement based on preset rules for one or multiple warehouses

• Centralized information that tracks time-sensitive inventory across multiple warehouse locations

In addition, your WMS should support efficient, comprehensive shipping operations to deliver end-to-end supply chain efficiencies with:

• Seamless integration to outbound order processing

• Digital order fulfillment workflows to avoid manual errors and drive efficiency

• Accurate shipping compliance and a multi-carrier rating engine to maximize cost savings and increase customer satisfaction

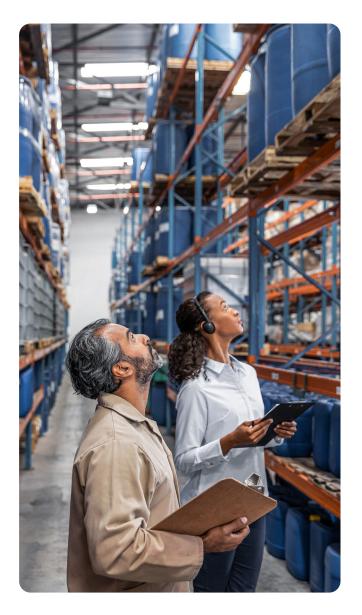# 7. Empowers warehouse managers with actionable metrics

To manage the complexity of a growing organization, your managers need to have immediate insight into key performance indicators (KPIs) that drive your daily operations. Real-time dashboards should deliver role-relevant information to empower proactive decision making.

Provide the key metrics that managers need to respond to challenges and manage costs with:

- Real-time updates to all inventory and manufacturing transactions in Dynamics GP

- Reporting and data visualization that simplifies decisions for staff assignments, inventory placement and shipment management

- Capture of actual costing through handheld labor and machine time

For managers to track information spanning the operations of your business, they need purpose-built, real-time dashboards that:

- Provide clear visibility to important warehouse and employee metrics like most efficient picker/receiver, receiving/picking cycle times, picking accuracy, and much more

- Monitor receiving and put-away to maintain accurate inventory locations from the start

- Provide a single view of the truth across your operations and the end-to-end business systems that you rely on every day

Conclusion

Build competitive edge with Infios Collect for GP.
With tight resources and relentless competitive pressure, you need a technology partner with a proven track record. At Infios, our advanced, proven solutions for the warehouse, transportation and logistics ecosystem will support your supply chain for the future. We can help you take control of data to achieve greater efficiency, uncover actionable insights, and stay ahead of the competition.

Trusted professional services and support.
Our professional consultants are experts in warehouse logistics and Microsoft Dynamics® GP to help you optimize operations. Following a proven project methodology, we ensure each unique Infios Collect for GP project is installed correctly and efficiently for a smooth transition to a more streamlined, automated distribution or manufacturing operation.

Our experienced and knowledgeable support team uses state-of-the-art technology to connect with your system remotely to diagnose and correct issues should there be any. The annual maintenance contract provides unlimited telephone support, unlimited incidents, and forward compatibility for your Infios Collect for GP.

Let's talk about how we can help you build a competitive edge.

See how extending Dynamics GP into your warehouse and manufacturing facility will drive efficiency and support profitable customer relationships.

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