We are often asked "If we introduce a Warehouse Management System (WMS), what are the benefits?". We have collated some of the FAQ's that will hopefully help answer some of your questions...

Will a new system boost productivity and morale of employees?

Without a doubt, the system will enable real time information that is accurate and can be trusted, which motivates and gives operators confidence and therefore boosts productivity.

How can we support the management and warehouse staff and reduce dependency on personnel?

Manual transactions are significantly reduced or eliminated due to all relevant details being displayed on the devices and/or management screens, therefore giving information that management can trust.

You will no longer need to be as dependent on existing knowledge i.e. there will no longer be a need to remember where stock is as the stock's location is now accurately recorded, and the operator is directed around the warehouse, in location sequence, thus speeding up the process. The operator no longer needs product knowledge as the barcode is used to identify the products.

Going forward it is extremely important for us to improve our stock accuracy, how can this be achieved?

The Stock Manager will simplify and automate day to day stock management. Using real time Stock Transfers and Stock Movements alongside Stock Takes, which means stock records have never been more accurate!

We seem to be wasting money and this would be improved by us reducing stock; would a WMS support this?

Greater accuracy of stock levels result in stock being reduced, meaning it will be less likely to over-order products, especially if there is confidence in the system.

How can we reduce paperwork?

Using an automated system means paperwork is significantly reduced. All relevant information will be displayed on the handheld devices, therefore no need for paper picking notes and incorrectly produced delivery notes & invoices.
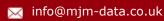
We want to optimise processes, reduce delivery lead times and order errors.

Having a complete working system/process in place means that the warehouse is more organised, therefore lead times and order errors will be reduced - reduced information lead time significantly improves customer service.

We are finding it difficult to manage the status and progression of our orders.

A Despatch Manager provides a platform to centralise and track every order from receiving confirmation to delivery. You can observe the progression of your orders in real time, check on outstanding orders or view all the completed orders. Despatch Manager will also increase efficiency in picking and decrease longevity of outstanding orders.

The warehouse are shipping orders however the customers are frequently reporting that they haven't received the goods.

A Proof of Delivery module will keep track of the order from Pick to Delivery as the order will be signed for on a signatory page to confirm receipt of goods and this information is then sent back to the ERP system. Proof of Delivery will increase traceability and reduce the risk of lost packages.

Customers often purchase our product via our website and from 3rd party companies such as Amazon; is there a way for our system to handle these orders as appose to us creating the sales orders manually?

EDI Link will automate the process, creating a sales order document ready to be authorised for download to any hand-held device. Within minutes your new orders will progress from your website into a package ready for delivery.

How can we make the best use of resources and space without wasting effort?

Better use of materials/locations can be managed, default pick locations set up (which are replenished via the replen option, meaning stock is always available and rotated) so that you are not ordering excess stock without the use for it, therefore reducing space required.

I need assurance that we are getting optimum picking accuracy.

Using barcode technology and managing your stock locations should result in a picking accuracy of 99.9%.

We sometimes purchase the same product from different suppliers due to price and lead times. How will the system identify which supplier we brought from?

The system has a Multiple Supplier Barcode module which allows products to be identified by the specific supplier's barcode when receipting the product into the warehouse which links it to the master SKU.

We are wasting valuable admin time filling out courier labels for our orders.

The Courier Module was developed for you to be able to transfer the completed sales order delivery information from the hand-held device to the server, which then uploads the delivery details directly to your required courier company. As a result of this quick process you are decreasing administration time and increasing customer satisfaction.

Our warehouse has multiple bins and locations throughout the warehouse which have the same stock codes. Is there a way that we can manage and track our stock levels for the same product in each location?

Yes, Multibin allows you to manage the location of an item of stock across multiple bins/locations. Using an automated FIFO approach it ensures stock will be rotated.

Is it possible for us to have complete visibility and access to stock?

Our Stock Lookup feature allows you to search a product code on the hand-held and the device will then display its location and how many of the items are in stock. This information is updated automatically with the Live system.

I want the ability to track and book materials & stock into the warehouse including items with unique serial/batch numbers.

Receipt & Despatch Manager will also give you a platform to centralise and track every purchase & sale receipt too. The Traceability Module then gives you the ability to allocate or track serial/batch numbers against products (suppliers and customers) as this is stored within the system to allow easy access to track the products' history.

We have orders for products that require to be assembled and/or manufactured using individual parts.

Step 1 – How do we easily find the individual parts to allocate against the product/order?

The Kitting Module automatically identifies a product by the individual parts and creates a detailed sales order listing them as separate items to be picked.

Step 2 – When we have picked parts for a job, how can we manage the manufacturing process to meet customers' expectations and lead times?

Works Order Manager allows you to follow a job's progress as it keeps track of all stages of production. Orders are added to the board and monitored by the Work's Order number, product code and operation stage throughout the manufacturing/sales process. A hand-held device scans the item or order and updates the board at each stage of its process, making the manufacturing process easy to track.

Is there a quick way to produce labels for our orders with all the relevant details included on the label?
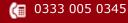
Yes, via the inbuilt label function or via the Label Manager, which links NiceLabel Automation with the Bridge to produce labels using the information from your sales orders. You are then able to produce company branded labels at the touch of a button for professional packaging.

Would I need to put Wi-Fi throughout my entire warehouse?

Wi-Fi throughout the warehouse is essential if you have our Live automated system, however with the out of the box package (Batch) you will not require Wi-Fi throughout the warehouse as the operator can walk to the required location and send the data manually.

Will our stock information be updated and maintained in real time and how will this work?

The Live software provides complete stock management via the use of a hand-held device. The combination of hand held devices and the Live software means an ERP/MRP system can be updated in real time from the warehouse floor.

Will we see an improvement in internal and external customer service?

By managing your stock levels and orders so that the system operates in "Real Time", internal contact will be reduced due to more information being displayed throughout the system. Customer service will be improved dramatically.

I am looking to reduce our labour costs, operating expenses and staff levels, will an automated process eliminate costly errors?

Yes it will. We anticipate your ROI will be within a year as well as having greater labour productivity, significantly reduced errors, reduced stock holding and improved capacity.

In summary:

Goods In

- Accurate data entry
- Rapid scanning
- Prevent cascading errors

Stock

- Instant visibility
- Reduced stock
- Reduced handwritten errors

Despatch

- Accurate picking
- Reduced returns
- Increase throughput

Benefits

- Improved customer satisfaction
- Reduced labour costs
- Increased productivity

(Note: all of the above are subject to the modules that are installed.)