Tips for Optimizing Productivity and Reducing Cost in the Warehouse
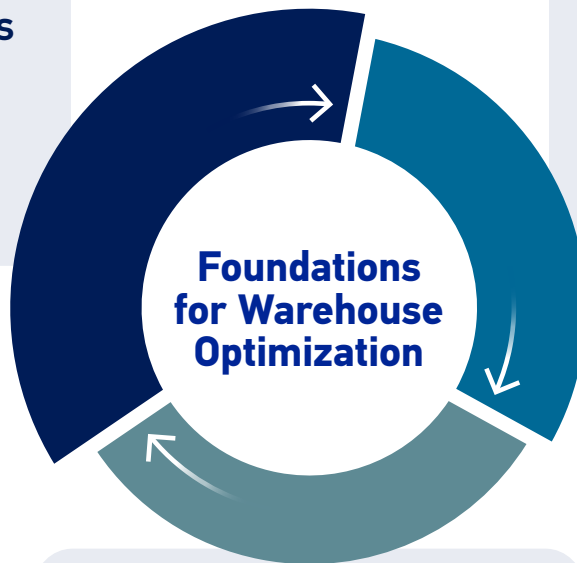
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Automation, AI, and machine learning are the latest buzzwords surrounding how warehouses can increase productivity and reduce operating costs. Investing in these technologies is a top priority for supply chain leaders everywhere. However, this kind of technology only gives warehouses a competitive edge when they have policies and procedures in place that form a solid foundation for streamlined operations. Before diving into full automation, consider these three foundations for optimization and the **warehouse technology** that supports them.

Standardize Processes

- Organize inventory
- Standardize operating procedures
- Prepare for variability

Set and Measure KPIs

- Determine goals
- Which KPIs apply?
- Audit performance regularly

Foundations for Warehouse Optimization

Provide Ongoing Training

- Regular staff training
- Post policies and processes
- Retrain after each audit

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Foundations for Warehouse Optimization

>>> Standardize Processes

To be truly optimized, warehouses need standardization. This involves organizing warehouse inventory, mapping out all standard operating procedures, and preparing damage control measures for every possible situation. Documentation is another important aspect of standardization, maintaining clear visibility from receiving product orders to final delivery.

The benefits include greater accuracy and efficiency because processes are clearly outlined, steps are documented, and the floor space is optimized for streamlined workflow. Workers know what to do, when it should be done, and where to find the supplies they need to complete the task or fill the order.

>>> Set and Measure KPIs

KPIs are an essential part of evaluating progress toward, maintaining, and improving an optimized warehouse. Measure KPIs continuously to increase productivity and accuracy, reduce costs, and improve customer and employee retention.

The first step in setting your KPIs is determining which are most crucial to your operations and goals. Not all types of KPIs will be helpful to measure for all warehouses, but speed, accuracy, and cost are a major focus for categories including inventory, receiving, putaway, picking, distribution, storage, safety, and more.

>>> Provide Ongoing Training

Effective and thorough training is part of the cyclical process of warehouse optimization. Standardizing processes requires up front training to ensure everyone knows exactly what to do and when, as well as how to mitigate variances. Since one goal of KPI measurement is finding room for improvement, processes will inevitably need to be adjusted, requiring additional training.

Policies and processes should be clearly posted where possible, pathways clearly marked, and workers should always have access to resources to refresh their knowledge. Regular retrainings may also be necessary depending on the complexity of tasks required.

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Powerful Technology That Builds a Bridge to Automation

While some warehouse and logistics operations may be completely **prepared to automate** with all the bells and whistles, the majority are at varying levels of readiness. With room for growth, and technology advancing at a rapid pace, this may be the place of greatest opportunity.

Barcode Scanners

- Track and identify products with a high degree of accuracy
- Integrate data into warehouse management systems (WMS)
- Eliminate manual data entry

WMS

- Track inventory
- Layout planning
- Labor management
- Order processing
- Analytics
- Documentation

Mobile Computers

- Can serve dual purpose of scanning and computing
- Real-time communication between workers and managers
- Complete work at the point of task

>>> Deploy or Update Track and Trace Technology

Updated **barcode scanning technology** can improve processes for warehouses that rely on manual tasks or utilize outdated devices. Collect and integrate data from receiving, inventory, picking, packing, and shipping with scanning solutions that deliver accurate, crystal clear visibility in real time.

PowerScan™ 9600 Series

- Traceability and real-time visibility for all warehouse processes
- Ultra rugged and durable
- Up to 20% more productivity when compared to other scanners in the same category
- System upgrade ready
- Wireless charging
- Embedded industrial connectivity
- Smart read feedback

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>>> Implement a Warehouse Management System

Warehouse Management Systems have evolved from stand-alone, proprietary software, to all-inclusive solutions that integrate with automated machines like laser-guided vehicles and automated storage and retrieval systems. Combined with barcode scanning solutions, warehouses can use their WMS to design workflow, generate packing lists, send bills of lading, manage labor, automate reordering, and more.

>>> Deploy Mobile Computers

Mobile computers help connect warehouse processes and facilitate communication between departments. Most **mobile computers designed for use in the warehouse** feature a rugged design, and they also include scanning capabilities to maximize efficiency. Mobile computers with cellular connectivity can be used to extend visibility to the field, allowing for on-site inventory updates and immediate proof of delivery.

Skorpio™ X5

- **The most advanced key-based mobile computer**
- **Extra long range scanning**
- **Largest and brightest display for comfortable operation in any lighting**
- **Wireless charging, hot-swappable battery**
- **User-friendly mobile experience**
- **Multiple keypad and scan key configurations**

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Focus on the Fundamentals to Give Your Warehouse a Competitive Advantage

Supply chain leaders everywhere have technology implementation at the top of mind for improvements to their operations over the next few years. Automating more processes eliminates human error, optimizes productivity, and reduces costs. However, warehouses that do not have the fundamentals in place are ill-prepared for the future of warehousing and logistics.

Assessing current operations and implementing fundamental improvements with advanced supporting technology delivers tangible results and builds a bridge toward the next steps in automation. Make sure your warehouse has a strategic edge among supply chain leaders with standardized processes, clear KPIs and performance measurements, well-trained staff, and the technology to support streamlined operations.

Contact us today, to discover the power of our advanced scanning and computing devices for warehouse productivity and efficiency.

About Datalogic

Global technology leader in the automatic data capture and factory automation markets since 1972, specialized in the designing and production of barcode readers, mobile computers, sensors for detection, measurement and safety, machine vision and laser marking systems.

Datalogic S.p.A. is listed in the Euronext STAR Milan segment of the Italian Stock Exchange since 2001 as DAL.MI. Visit www.datalogic.com

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