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# Four Ways RFID Can Help Improve Warehouse Management Efficiencies

*Ed. Note: This post originally appeared at the blog of RFID Journal LIVE!, the world's largest conference and exhibition focused on RFID and related technologies.*

Warehouse operations remain notoriously difficult to manage and fine-tune. During normal times, everything may seem to run smoothly but there's so much information to keep up with that when workloads increase, it's easy to slip up. Information flows through the facility from the upstairs office to the warehouse floor every few minutes and responding effectively is something managers struggle with throughout their careers.

In the past, technology did little to help ease the burden on warehouse managers. The latest connectivity solutions such as RFID now allow companies to reinvent their entire warehouse operations and respond effectively to changes in upstream information. Using RFID in warehouse management systems always had the potential to redefine how you operate and control your facilities, but cost and complexity held many back from adopting the technology. With investment from major players who've deployed the tech successfully in their operations, it matured and now any size warehouse can implement the same RFID solutions for greater efficiency.



## **How RFID Improves Warehouse Management Efficiencies**

When your daily meetings start having topics on the agenda like lowering the margin of error or what's the average cost of another resource regularly, it's time to start thinking of RFID. In warehouses, time is everything. The only way to improve operations that already took years to refine, is adopting new technologies that reduce labor costs while improving accuracy. Eliminating mis-picking, securing stock for greater inventory accuracy, and having real-time insights into upstream processes are all possible with RFID systems. RFID helps warehouse operations:

### **Increase Warehouse Productivity**

With millions of items moving through warehouses and distribution centers every day, capturing all information quickly isn't easy with legacy systems. You may have a batch code that "should" contain a list of specific items, but how can you verify that without scanning each barcode? Accuracy in these situations doesn't just save time today but also removes downstream issues from possibly interrupting daily operations. RFID allows you to scan a batch of items in bulk and verify the stock at the receiving point. Once you move or place your stock from the receiving bay, you can record the area in the warehouse and start planning how to stage items for the next distribution cycle. Once you have your RFID system in place, you can opt to combine additional technologies that further drive your daily productivity. You can enable warehouse supervisors and managers to track all upstream changes and downstream developments from a mobile device anywhere in the facility.

### **Reduce Labor Costs**

While RFID isn't new, there are plenty of new applications available to help reduce the number of labor-intensive tasks in warehouses. Walmart was an early adopter of RFID and became the world's largest retailer by mastering all of their supply chains. One area that could benefit from RFID immediately is receiving velocity. More suppliers and manufacturers are now

willing to implement RFID tagging in their processes, allowing you to connect your supply chains to your receiving operations and track every item leaving the facility in real time. By quickly scanning batches of items coming in or going out, you can reduce the labor costs while speeding up all related processes.

### **Improve Accuracy and Inventory Control**

Eliminating user error is already a major benefit for warehouse operations, but there are newer RFID applications that can take accuracy and control to the next level. With immediate, accurate updates for all received items, distribution schedules, and shipping releases, the entire company can use real-time information to improve productivity. Additional automation allows you to increase your productivity over time, from identifying shelves and the items they contain, to registering any damage with RFID impact sensors. New applications continue to hit the market that can help control your inventory from source to final destination.

### **Enable Integration of New Technologies**

Today's supply chain management and inventory control systems are much more efficient, giving you mobile access to real-time information from a cloud platform. If you're thinking of updating your legacy systems with one of these solutions, RFID is a technology that can integrate your physical and digital asset management processes. Although you may start your initial RFID implementation to solve your pain points, once it's in place, you can extend your capabilities and integrate with modern supply chain solutions. With a connected environment, eliminating bottlenecks and gaining real-time insights become possible. The new information can inform all your planning processes and help you refine your projections but also enables you to adapt to changes quickly.

### **Systematic Improvements for Warehouse Management Using RFID**

Although every element in your current processes could benefit

from RFID systems, improving your warehouse management systemically remains the best option available. Wherever you are having difficulty gaining oversight or tracking items would be the best place to start. Applications for warehouse RFID systems are as wide and varied as your unique company processes. Standardizing on an RFID system and using incremental updates to streamline your processes one by one (ideally using the experience from your subject matter experts) will provide the best results. RFID is a quick and efficient way to connect your physical processes with your digital information systems. With companies continuing to innovate new systems by combining RFID with IoT and other information management solutions, you can find a system that drastically improves your warehouse management efficiency and productivity.

*Material-handling RFID applications at RFID Journal LIVE! 2021. The world's largest conference dedicated to RFID happens every year in September. Here, you can find a variety of applications and innovative solutions that will enable you to improve your warehouse efficiencies. RFID Journal LIVE! is currently in its 20th year and scheduled for the end of September 2021. In May, we're hosting a digital summit that covers all things IoT and RFID that rely on network connectivity. If you're looking for a way to improve your daily efficiencies and need the technology that enables productivity, make sure to join us for all our upcoming events this year. Before our next scheduled face-to-face event, you can go see our upcoming online events.*



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