fiftify

Warehouse management system for multichannel sellers

TOOLKIT · WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS

The WMS buyer's toolkit

A practical evaluation kit for growing ecommerce and distribution businesses.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 12-point readiness self-assessment
- Feature checklist: must-have, nice-to-have, advanced
- Vendor scoring matrix you can fill in
- Total cost of ownership worksheet
- Red flags and vendor interview questions
- 90-day implementation roadmap

Contents

This toolkit gives you a practical, end-to-end framework for choosing a warehouse management system. Print it, share it with your team or fill it in as you compare vendors. Each section stands on its own, so skip to the parts that match your stage.

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HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

Most decisions in this guide benefit from input from both operations leaders and floor staff. The scoring matrix and the cost worksheet work best when you fill them in side by side for two to four shortlisted vendors.

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1 Executive summary

The five things that decide WMS success

Most WMS purchases go wrong not because the software is bad, but because the buying process focused on the wrong things. Teams compare feature lists, watch generic product tours and pick the vendor with the most polished pitch. Six months later they find that the tool does not match how their warehouse runs.

This toolkit is built to prevent that. It is deliberately practical: every section produces a concrete output you can put in front of a vendor or a budget owner.

The five decisions that matter most

1. **Operational fit before feature count.** A WMS with 200 features is worse than one with 40 that match your daily flow. Map how stock arrives, gets stored, picked, packed and shipped first, then evaluate.
2. **Integration depth, not integration count.** "100+ integrations" means little if the one you need is shallow. Test your real store, marketplace, ERP and carrier connections with actual orders during the trial.
3. **Total cost across three years.** The subscription is often the smaller part of the real cost. Implementation, integrations, hardware and change requests can add as much again.
4. **Adoption beats sophistication.** A picker who will not use the scanner costs more than any missing feature. Always try the system with line staff, not just management.
5. **Vendor support is half the product.** Response times, onboarding help and release pace matter as much as the software. Ask references how the vendor handled their worst incident.

QUICK WIN

If you do nothing else from this toolkit, run the 12-point self-assessment on page 3 with your operations lead. Many teams find their real bottleneck is not the one they expected.

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2 Do you need a WMS right now?

A 12-point self-assessment for operations leaders

Check every statement that is true for your operation today. Then use the scoring guide below to decide whether a WMS is urgent, warranted or premature.

SELF-ASSESSMENT: CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

- [ ] We ship more than 100 orders a day across at least one channel.
- [ ] Our SKU count has grown by 30% or more in the last 12 months.
- [ ] We use spreadsheets, paper or a basic tool to track stock on the floor.
- [ ] Stockouts or overselling have cost us at least one customer in the last quarter.
- [ ] Picking errors and short shipments keep coming back (more than 2% of orders).
- [ ] We sell on two or more channels and they do not share stock in real time.
- [ ] Cycle counts need a full or partial warehouse shutdown.
- [ ] A new picker needs more than a week to reach normal output.
- [ ] We cannot tell, right now, how many open orders are late.
- [ ] Returns wait more than 48 hours before they are back on the shelf.
- [ ] We plan to open a new warehouse or sales channel in the next 12 months.
- [ ] Our finance team gets stock numbers from us that do not match what they expected.

Score	Verdict	What it means and what to do
0-3 boxes	**Premature**	A WMS may create more friction than it solves for now. Tighten your spreadsheet workflow and SKU naming first.
4-7 boxes	**Warranted**	A lightweight WMS is likely to pay for itself. Put ease of adoption ahead of advanced features.
8-12 boxes	**Urgent**	Errors already cost you real money. Move quickly, but use the scoring matrix on page 6 to avoid a rushed choice.

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3 WMS features checklist

Sorted by priority and business stage

Use this checklist to screen vendor product sheets. Most teams need every **must-have** item, most **nice-to-have** items and only the **advanced** items that match their industry or scale.

MUST-HAVE: BASELINE FOR ANY GROWING OPERATION
☐ Real-time stock visibility by SKU, bin and location
☐ Barcode scanning at every step stock moves: arrival, storage, pick, pack and ship
☐ Multichannel order and stock sync (for example Shopify, Amazon, eBay, Etsy)
☐ Cycle counts that do not need a warehouse shutdown
☐ User roles and permissions by warehouse function
☐ Mobile app for warehouse staff (Android, iOS or both)
☐ Integration with at least one major shipping carrier
☐ Returns processing that puts sellable items back into stock

NICE-TO-HAVE: ADD AS YOU SCALE
☐ Wave, batch and zone picking
☐ Slotting suggestions based on how fast items sell
☐ Labor productivity reports (picks per hour, orders per shift)
☐ Lot, serial and expiry tracking
☐ ERP connector (for example NetSuite, SAP Business One, Microsoft Dynamics, Odoo)
☐ Carrier rate shopping at the pack station
☐ Pick paths and bin logic you can set to your warehouse layout
☐ Inbound ASN (advance shipping notice) support

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Advanced features

These features rarely matter for businesses with one or two warehouses and a few thousand orders a month. Treat them as differentiators, not requirements.

ADVANCED: ENTERPRISE AND SPECIALIZED
☐ Stock rebalancing and transfers between several sites
☐ Client billing and per-client access for businesses that store stock for others
☐ Demand forecasting and replenishment planning
☐ Voice-directed picking
☐ Links to warehouse automation (conveyors, storage robots, mobile robots)
☐ Compliance reporting (for example FDA, GMP, ISO, where relevant)
☐ Custom workflow builder with no-code or low-code rules
☐ EDI for retail and big-box customers

Quick view: which features matter at your stage

Stage	Orders a day	Priority features
Starter	Under 100	Stock visibility, bins, barcode scanning, multichannel sync, mobile app
Growth	100-1,000	Batch picking, returns flow, labor reports, ERP connector, slotting
Scale	1,000-5,000	Several sites, ASN support, carrier rate shopping, lot and expiry tracking
Enterprise	Over 5,000	Automation links, EDI, forecasting, custom workflow builder

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4 Vendor scoring matrix

A weighted template for an objective comparison

Score each vendor from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) on every criterion, then multiply by the weight. The weights below suit a typical growing ecommerce operation. Adjust them to your priorities before you score.

Criterion	Weight	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Vendor 3	Vendor 4
Operational fit to our daily flow	x 3.0				
Integration depth (store, marketplace, ERP, carrier)	x 2.5				
Ease of adoption for floor staff	x 2.5				
Total 3-year cost (lower is better)	x 2.0				
Support quality and response time	x 2.0				
Scalability (sites, SKUs, channels)	x 1.5				
Reporting depth	x 1.5				
Implementation time and complexity	x 1.0				
Weighted total	**16.0**				

HOW TO READ THE SCORE

The weights add up to 16, so the maximum score is 80 (16 x 5). A vendor under 50 is unlikely to work in your environment whatever its features. Aim for your top vendor to score at least 60.

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5 Integration readiness checklist

Audit your data before you talk to vendors

Bad data ruins WMS projects more often than bad software. Go through this checklist before your first vendor trial: every "no" is a project risk to resolve first.

INTEGRATION AND DATA READINESS
☐ Every SKU has a unique, stable, scannable code
☐ Units of measure are the same in the catalog, the ERP and the warehouse
☐ Bin and location names follow one documented scheme
☐ Barcode labels are present and scannable on at least 95% of stock
☐ Open orders, backorders and on-hand counts agree across systems within 5%
☐ Our ERP or accounting tool exposes the data we need through an API or scheduled exports
☐ Our store and marketplace channels can send orders through an API or webhooks
☐ We have decided which system owns stock (the source of truth) after go-live
☐ We know our shipping volumes and current rates for our main carriers
☐ We have today's pick, pack and ship times to compare after go-live
☐ One internal owner has at least half their time free for the project
☐ Floor staff know a WMS is coming and were asked about their main pain points

DON'T SKIP THIS

Teams that clean their data before choosing a vendor go live faster, and their trials are more useful because vendors can show real flows with real data.

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6 Total cost of ownership worksheet

The numbers vendor pricing pages rarely add up for you

The subscription can be less than half of the real three-year cost. Fill in one copy of this worksheet for each shortlisted vendor: the cheapest subscription can become the most expensive total. Spread one-time costs over three years.

Software	USD a year
Subscription per user, site or order volume	$
Add-on modules (advanced reporting, automation and similar)	$
Expected yearly price increase	$

Implementation and setup	USD a year
Implementation services (one-time, divided by 3)	$
Data migration and cleanup (one-time, divided by 3)	$
Custom integration work (one-time, divided by 3)	$
Training (online and on site, one-time, divided by 3)	$

Hardware and infrastructure	USD a year
Mobile scanners, handhelds or phones	$
Label printers and consumables	$
Wi-Fi coverage on the warehouse floor	$

Ongoing and hidden	USD a year
Support tier upgrade (if needed)	$
Change requests and custom workflow edits	$
Internal staff time on the project (divided by 3)	$
Connector or marketplace transaction fees	$
Yearly cost (sum of all rows)	**$**
Three-year total cost of ownership (yearly cost x 3)	**$**

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7 Red flags and vendor interview questions

Spot trouble before it becomes a six-month rebuild

Red flags during evaluation

- **The product tour uses sample data only.** If a vendor cannot show the system with your SKU list and order patterns, it probably cannot be set up for them either.
- **"Yes, we can do that" without specifics.** Every yes should say whether it is a standard feature, a setting or paid custom work. Get it in writing.
- **A timeline that sounds too short for your setup.** Ask what has to be true for that timeline, especially for data cleanup and training.
- **Pricing that depends only on user count.** Real cost grows with orders, integrations and sites. Ask what happens to the price as you grow.
- **No references like you.** Ask for references in your category and at a similar volume.
- **Release notes hidden or rare.** Ask to see what changed in the last six months.

Questions to ask every vendor on the shortlist

- What does a typical day-two problem look like for your customers, and how do you handle it?
- Tell us about a rollout that went badly. What went wrong, and what changed?
- What order volume do your typical customers ship? Where do we fit?
- If we need a workflow change after launch, who builds it, and what does it cost?
- What is your support response time on our plan?
- What happens to our data if we cancel? Format, timeline, cost.
- Can we try the system with our own products and orders before we commit?

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8 90-day implementation roadmap

A realistic schedule for a growing operation

Many WMS rollouts for growing businesses take two to four months. This roadmap sits in the middle of that range, with the usual milestones and the tasks that move the timeline.

PHASE 1
Days 0-21

- Data audit and SKU cleanup
- Team kick-off
- Bin and location mapping
- Channel and carrier access

PHASE 2
Days 22-45

- System setup
- Integration build and test
- Test order flows
- Train the trainers

PHASE 3
Days 46-70

- Pilot with one zone or channel
- Daily issue review
- Adjust pick paths and rules
- Refine reports

PHASE 4
Days 71-90

- Full warehouse rollout
- Retire legacy tools
- Post-go-live KPI review
- Improvement plan

PILOT FIRST, NOT ALL AT ONCE

Roll out to one product category, channel or warehouse zone first. Two weeks of real work in a pilot catches more issues than weeks of testing on sample data.

KPIs to measure before and after

- Order cycle time from payment to shipment
- Pick rate per labor hour and mis-pick rate
- On-time ship rate
- Inventory accuracy (system count against shelf count)
- Cost per order

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9 About Fiftify

A warehouse management system built for multichannel sellers

Fiftify is a warehouse management system built for multichannel sellers. Inventory, orders and warehouse work run in one simple system across Shopify, Amazon, eBay, Etsy, retail stores and other sales channels. Every channel draws from one stock pool, so a unit sold in one place is counted everywhere.

One stock pool for every channel

Real-time stock sync across your sales channels helps prevent overselling. Listing quantities update once per packed shipment, so a store never shows half-picked counts.

Bins and storage locations

Every unit has a place. The team sees what is on the shelf and where it is.

Barcode scanning

Scans at picking and packing catch the wrong item before the parcel leaves.

Pick, pack and ship

Paid orders turn into pick tasks, then packing and shipping with tracking sent back to the channel.

Mobile app on Android and iOS

Warehouse staff pick and pack with a phone instead of a desktop.

Every plan includes

Unlimited SKUs, sales channels, warehouses and suppliers. Starter is free for up to 100 orders a month.

Receiving and purchase orders are on the roadmap. Fiftify does not run 3PL operations.

Try Fiftify on your own orders

Start on the free Starter plan or take the 7-day full trial, no credit card needed. Support is by chat, and guided onboarding can be booked after sign-up.

Start free app.fiftify.com

More guides for warehouse operations and multichannel selling: fiftify.com/blog

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