

EDX 2016 – Opinion

How a WMS can help with eCommerce order despatch

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The despatch bench is your last line of defence for stopping any order going out incorrectly. If this does happen, you open yourself up to a wealth of problems, the worst of all being a disgruntled customer. To reduce the number of errors made during despatch, you will want to use a warehouse management system (WMS) that is designed for eCommerce, and here's why:

1. Error-Checks at Despatch

The despatch bench is the last place to spot an error with any order, such as the wrong colour, size, or quantity. Without a WMS, you can only rely on your despatch team's ability to correctly identify a product which can get difficult for inaccuracies such as wrong size or colour. With a warehouse management system that is made for eCommerce, however, these kinds of errors should be flagged up at the picking stage when the item is scanned.

If it isn't, the item being scanned again at the despatch bench is another opportunity for the system to notify the user of an error that might be missed by the human eye.

2. Manual Address Entry

If you are manually entering addresses then you are relying on the accuracy of humans which is simply not efficient for a competing eCommerce business. Not only are operators likely to make mistakes when manually entering addresses, it also takes an unnecessary amount of time.

With warehouse management software, all customer addresses are stored on the system with the order details. When the items arrive at the despatch bench and the order is scanned, the despatch label will print automatically with the correct details, saving time and reducing errors.

3. Despatch Notes Printed Manually

The more that your operators have to do manually, the longer every process is going to take. If you need to go into the back-end of your website every time, create a PDF, confirm the settings, and then press print it is either going to be rushed and done wrong, or it will slow the entire despatch down, causing a bottleneck of orders. With a WMS, the despatch notes for every order will be printed automatically, as explained above, with the address label.

4. Visibility on Despatched Orders

If you can't track which orders have been despatched in a day then you can't monitor or report on performance. This is incredibly important for identifying what targets your operators are currently meeting and how you can improve.

By using a WMS, every order has a status assigned to it, whether it has been received, allocated to a picker, or despatched. As the order moves through each stage, the status is updated in the system so, when the carriers have all left the warehouse at the end of the day, you will have full visibility on exactly how many orders were despatched.

5. Order Status Not Updated Fast Enough

When an action is completed against an order, the status is changed and this change can be used to trigger communication with the customer. Without a WMS, this order status update has to be done manually by confirming it in your website admin panel which can be slow and inaccurate. If the status is not updated fast enough, it leaves your customers wondering where their order is and when it will be on their doorstep.

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