A New Year Brings New Warehouse Strategies

As we say goodbye to 2011 and start 2012 organizations are reviewing current processes and asking "how can we do this better?". To stay competitive in these tough economic times companies are looking for solutions that will positively impact the bottom line. Implementing new strategies for warehousing and distribution will not only improve your current process, but they can give you a competitive edge over your competition. Here are a few warehouse strategies that can kick start 2012.

Bring the work to the worker to increase efficiencies. The principal is simple- the less time a worker spends walking and searching, the more time the worker spends picking. Using a pedometer or charting the amount of time a worker spends walking and searching instead of picking can provide organizations an eye opening assessment of picking productivity. Keeping workers in their assigned work stations doing value added work can increase warehouse efficiencies.

Automated storage and retrieval systems are designed to reduce the amount of time spent walking and searching and increase the amount of time a worker spends picking. All systems deliver the product to the worker at an ergonomic height allowing the worker to quickly pick the product and return to their work. Using automated storage and retrieval systems can increase productivity by up to 2/3.

Utilize space to improve warehouse efficiencies. There aren't many companies right now that are building new warehouse facilities. Instead organizations are ensuring every inch of space in the facility is utilized efficiently. Integrating automated storage and retrieval systems from Kardex Remstar into the warehouse can save up to 85% of floor space. If you're not sure if your warehouse space is being used efficiently, look up. Many companies are not efficiently using their space from floor to ceiling. Kardex Remstar systems come in various heights to fit your needs and make use of currently unused, wasted overhead space.

Integrate software to improve warehouse efficiencies. Software Integration is a very hot topic right now in warehouse operations. Many organizations spend time managing processes in multiple systems; it's time consuming and prone to errors. By integrating an existing WMS or ERP system into warehouse operations, organizations can save time and reduce errors. Software integration can create efficiencies not just in the warehouse, but also across other departments that are responsible for reporting and financial tracking.

Software integration can also provide inventory traceability and tracking. This is a full time job when done manually. Easy to implement FastPic Inventory Management Software provides real time inventory tracking and traceability. FastPic5 can also send automated reorder notifications when inventory reaches a certain level increasing inventory accuracy and preventing shortages.

Go green to increase warehouse efficiencies. Going green is a catch phrase that's gaining more attention in the warehouse environment. From paperless picking to implementing energy saving technology, warehouses are jumping on the green bandwagon.

Automated storage technologies can not only reduce the amount of space that requires heating and lighting, but the units themselves have become more energy efficient in recent years. The new Megamat RS Vertical Carousel provides a 40% savings in energy costs through a customized performance drive motor and a frequency inverter; reducing energy costs during operation.

Better accuracy can improve warehouse efficiencies. Incorrectly picked parts can add up to hundreds of thousands of dollars for an organization. Determining the cost of a mispick and then multiplying that by the number of mispicked parts per week or month can have a big impact on the bottom line. Proven pick-to-light technology can be implemented into most existing storage systems including shelving, vertical carousels, horizontal carousels and vertical lift modules. Light directed pick and put technology directs the worker to the exact location to pick or put the part, increasing accuracy by over 99.9%.

Adding a barcode scanner to your automated storage systems is another way to improve the efficiency and accuracy of your picking system. Having the ability to scan inventory based on the UPC is a quick and easy way to ensure that you are picking the right item every time.

Out with the old and in with the new, kick off 2012 on the right foot by using these strategies to improve your warehouse efficiencies.
Kardex Remstar, LLC, a company of the Kardex Group is a leading provider of automated storage and retrieval systems for manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, offices and institutions. For information on automated storage and retrieval systems, call 800-639-5805 or visit http://www.kardexremstar.com/ [1].

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