

M A D E 4 N E T

WAREHOUSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
BUYER'S GUIDE

The Ultimate WMS Checklist





Start your WMS Search Here!

WMS selection requires time, research, and diligent planning, it is not an easy task. Make the right choice and you are the company's hero, but choose the wrong solution and you may be out of a job.

Our Ask the Experts White Paper: **Tips to Getting the WMS Selection Right** is available to walk you through the selection process, step by step. Here is a condensed version to use as you begin your search, with a few key milestones you might want to keep in mind:

1. Create an internal resource plan

An internal resource plan ensures the monumental task of implementing a new WMS is staffed accordingly. It's also your opportunity to collect valuable insight from all concerned parties including the warehouse team, the IT group, and executive leadership.

2. Build a business case

A solid business case allows you to establish key metrics for measuring results, determine the requisite budget, and calculate a cost/benefit ratio for the entire project.

3. Define specific requirements

Creating an RFX that outlines and matches both your short and long-term goals. This means defining all functional requirements, including all traditional WMS functions from inside the warehouse, plus activities related to yard management, dock scheduling, labor reporting, different picking activities, shipment processing activities, etc.

4. Create a short list of vendors

Begin your search with some general research on 5-8 vendors. Read on for our tips for identifying these vendors!

5. Dive into the selection process

Narrow down the field to 3 to 5 vendors and engage with them. Share your RFX, invite vendors for site visits, request demos and visit reference sites to gauge the right fit for your operations.



Creating a Short List of Vendors

With hundreds of vendors on the market, we are often asked about the best way to create a short list of vendors. Do you look at the most recent Gartner Magic Quadrant for the top ranked providers? Poll your contacts on LinkedIn for references? Revisit providers that have served you well in the past? Consider new and upcoming innovators? The answer to all of these questions should be yes! Here are a few options to get you started:

1. Review the Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Warehouse Management Systems

According to Gartner® “The 2023 Magic Quadrant™ for Warehouse Management Systems focuses on holistic WMS suites and global offerings. To be included in this research, a vendor must have a credible WMS product that fundamentally supports core WMS capabilities and supports some extended capabilities. The vendor must also exhibit a vision for WMSs in at least moderately complex warehouse environments. In addition to the other criteria, a vendor must demonstrate a modest global presence by generating at least 10% of its revenue and customers outside of its home geography. This research focuses on independent WMS offerings, so a vendor must routinely sell and implement its WMS separate from other non-software-related services or products that it offers. Furthermore, a vendor can qualify if it has a demonstrably differentiated and unique focus and market position in a specific vertical industry.”

2. Research the WMS Vendor’s Customer Base

Working with a WMS vendor with a background in your industry will yield a higher quality experience. An industry specific WMS vendor will have a deep understanding of the unique challenges, processes, and requirements of your industry. They will be familiar with the terminology, regulations and best practices relevant to your business, which will streamline implementation and configuration processes.

3. Explore Configurability and Scalability

Not all WMS solutions are flexible to adapt as your business changes. A configurable WMS enables you to adapt workflows, rules and interfaces to suit your operations without the need for custom development, reducing time and cost. And scalability ensures that your system can handle increasing volumes and data, so you can remain efficient during peak periods or as your business grows.

8 Tips for Vendor Discussions

As you create a shortlist, here are some tips...

1. Look for a vendor with a background in your specific industry; this will yield a higher quality experience for you.
2. Confirm the solution handles core WMS functions as well as any advanced features required in your operations, such as cartonization, task interleaving, optimized scheduling, labor management, cycle counting and more.
3. About two-thirds of new WMS implementations are cloud-based solution deployments. Confirm if a vendor offers a cloud or on-premise solution (or both).
4. Your WMS needs to be interoperable with your ERP. One way to ensure ease of integration is to determine whether or not a WMS is built around an open architecture.
5. Question the average implementation time frame and the average number of modifications required during an implementation.
6. Discuss the level of service and support post-purchase.
7. The average lifespan of a WMS is 8-10 years. Research a vendor's solvency to ensure they'll remain in business well into the future.
8. Be prepared to discuss any unique challenges to your business, and keep in mind future growth and expansion plans. Is the vendor's solution adaptable and scalable to evolve as your business changes over time?

Implementation Tips: Selecting the Right WMS is Just the Beginning!

As experts who have implemented software and automation in hundreds of warehouses, we have a few tips on what to do to ensure WMS success..

- 1. Project Planning:** Detailed and comprehensive project planning is essential for success. This includes clearly outlining tasks for the software vendor, system integrator, and your team. There will be multiple threads of tasks from the start to the end, but all threads should trace a path from beginning to end. Every task should have resources assigned, and every task in each thread should link to a preceding task – there should be no tasks hanging alone.
- 2. Alignment Between Operations & IT:** Early alignment between operations and IT is vital to prevent missteps, delays, and conflicts later on. Creating a clear and detailed solution design with defined roles and responsibilities among the client, software vendor, implementation partner and your team is crucial. It's also important to ensure that the project team includes resources with deep implementation experience and sufficient bandwidth.

3. **Demonstrable Buy-in from Leadership:** Securing strong buy-in from leadership demonstrates the significance of the project and ensures organizational support. Assigning an executive sponsor from the start and involving top leadership throughout the project journey is essential. Continuing to involve leadership and maintaining momentum through activities like naming the project and driving excitement with t-shirts, signage, countdowns, pocket guides and more should be considered.
4. **Training:** Training should start at the beginning of the project (before any software is implemented) and continue throughout. All activities, from initial vendor software orientation and design discussions, to configuration, conference room pilots, the development of standard operating procedures, and more, should be considered opportunities to learn. Knowledge transfer on how to configure and use new software does not happen quickly, so be sure to think through who can benefit from each activity and plan and schedule accordingly.
5. **Change Management Preparation:** Change management is integral to managing resistance and ensuring smooth transitions. This goes beyond training and involves addressing concerns about job security, changes in processes, and impacts on various stakeholders. Recognizing the need for change management early in the project and understanding its importance will enable you to manage human resources-related challenges that can impact user adoption and overall project success.

Looking for More Detailed Information?

Our Ask the Experts White Paper: What are the Top Mistakes You See in Supply Chain Solution Implementations? offers a lot more advice on potential missteps to avoid, so be sure to check it out! Our experts are also here to provide guidance.

About Made4net

Made4net is a leading global provider of best-in-class, cloud-based supply chain execution and warehouse management solutions for organizations of all sizes to improve the speed and efficiency of their supply chain. The company's end-to-end SCExpert™ platform offers a robust WMS solution that enables real-time inventory visibility, labor management, and equipment productivity with performance analytics that drive faster, more accurate order fulfillment and improved supply chain efficiency.

In addition to the best-of-breed WMS, the platform offers integrated yard management, dynamic route management, proof of delivery and warehouse automation solutions that deliver a true supply chain convergence. Made4net is proud to be recognized by industry experts as a global leader in warehouse management software, including the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Warehouse Management Systems for 8 consecutive years.

**For more information,
visit www.made4net.com**

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