



ASK THE EXPERTS

8 Reasons Hiring a WMS Consultant Makes Sense

MEET THE EXPERTS

Chris Dahm, Director at
Brecham Group

Tyler Linderman, Vice President, Strategy
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M A D E 4 N E T

The average lifespan of a Warehouse Management System (WMS) is 10+ years, which means that selecting the right solution can make a tremendous impact on your company's long-term success. But with hundreds of vendors claiming to offer the right solution for you, the task of identifying the best option can quickly get overwhelming. This is where the expertise of a WMS consultant becomes invaluable.

To get a better understanding of the value WMS consultants bring to the table, we recently sat down with experts from the **Brecham Group**, **Bricz**, **enVista**, and **Made4net**. We spoke in detail about how a WMS consultant can help you define your unique business requirements, introduce you to best practices, mitigate pitfalls in the selection process, facilitate communication between stakeholders and vendors, and more.

1. EXPERTISE

A WMS consultant brings specialized knowledge and experience to the table, providing valuable insights during the WMS selection process. They look beyond the technology and provide an understanding of process improvements that supply chain managers may not consider. By focusing on the big picture and considering industry best practices, WMS consultants can make recommendations that improve overall operations.

When it comes to industry expertise, Chris Dahm, Director at the [Brecham Group](#), highlights the unique vantage point a consultant brings to a WMS project. "It comes down to breadth and depth. We spend a lot of time in various industries, we see different company sizes, different ways of working, and different systems. We see a lot of things that most people don't. And, we're able to take lessons from all the industries we engage with and apply them to others."

Amit Kirpalani, Vice President, Supply Chain Solutions at [enVista](#), agrees. "Having done this many, many times, several times a year, we've built the methodology and the accelerators that allow us to do a deep dive into a client's unique business requirements to help evaluate and select a solution that best fits the client's long-term needs. We review the current state, adjust for opportunities and best practices, define the future state, and much more."

An experienced WMS consultant has the necessary knowledge to reduce the total cost of WMS ownership by eliminating potential hiccups along the way. Dahm goes on to say, "We do this every day. A lot of clients go through one or two WMS implementations in their career, three if they're busy and bouncing around, but it's our job day in and day out. For some clients, it's a massive disruption, but for us, it's just another Tuesday."



2. INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

A WMS consultant can help define your unique business requirements, ensuring you evaluate a system's capabilities against your specific needs. They can also review operations with an objective lens, and provide insight into how industry best practices can foster business growth.

Tyler Linderman, Vice President, Strategy & Growth at [Bricz](#), explains that consultants possess deep knowledge of how specific WMS features address particular industry requirements, which may not be immediately obvious. "First and foremost, understanding the breadth of the industry is the most important factor to consider when identifying business requirements. Having experience with multiple examples of different retailers or brands or companies in your industry can help us deep dive into industry-specific business requirements and get to a level of detail that may not have been there previously."

Knowing an industry inside and out enables a WMS consultant to quickly identify what matters most to your business and can help prevent over or underbuying during the selection process. Additionally, consultants have insights into which vendors are strong in which industries. As Linderman specifies, a WMS consultant will help with "Defining the requirements of what may be an industry standard, things that we pick out that could be really specific to your brand or your company, and how you do things. It could be image capture, lot control, temperature control, etc. We take all that into account to make sure you set yourself up for success before you ever engage in a WMS selection."

3. AVOID PITFALLS



The selection process is a complicated one, and there is plenty of room for error. A consultant can help you avoid common pitfalls. According to Kirpalani, some of the biggest errors occur at the start of the process, with RFPs. “One of the pitfalls that we commonly see are incomplete RFPs. I’ve seen many selections where the client ended up putting an RFP together and it’s just not detailed enough. It doesn’t get the vendors to respond in a way that allows the client to differentiate between vendors objectively and understand if they’re going to be the right solution for their unique business needs. This is where WMS consultant experience counts. Our approach to putting an RFP together is exhaustive. We take a holistic approach and look at functional needs, technical requirements, cultural fit and more. All considerations that are important to help select the right solution.”

Automating outdated processes instead of exploring new methods is another common pitfall, but a WMS consultant can identify areas needing change and prevent attempts to fit old ways into new systems. Dahm explains, “Clients have

a strong desire to repeat processes that have made them successful today. They’ve got processes that work and they want to take those processes and automate them. But today, with cloud-based tools, constant updates, and nonstop R&D, you’re able to mold operations to systems in a much more efficient manner than we could 20 years ago when we were building custom systems all the time.” A WMS consultant will help highlight what areas of the operation need to change entirely, rather than trying to make a new system work around old approaches. They will never try to put a square peg into a round hole.

4. INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

Staying up-to-date on the latest trends, technologies, and best practices is a key part of a WMS consultant’s role. Consultants travel to numerous tradeshows and user conferences every year. Dahm says this is important because, “Shows and vendor user conferences bring thousands of the top supply chain minds together under one roof. You get to see all the new technology, all the advances, catch up with folks you’ve worked with in the past, and share information, like unique approaches or functionality you’ve seen in recent projects.”

Consultants also build knowledge by engaging in projects that span beyond the WMS space. From supply chain strategy development to the selection and implementation of complementary systems like ERP and TMS solutions, they are well versed at enhancing efficiency, reducing costs, and improving overall supply chain performance. As Dahm points out, “Most of us aren’t just doing WMS projects. We’re doing overall supply chain strategies, network strategies, and other IT transformations. We learn how all those things interact with the distribution center and incorporate our experiences from bigger picture projects to drive WMS strategy.”

5. FACILITATING COMMUNICATION

A WMS consultant helps facilitate communication between your company's stakeholders and WMS vendors, ensuring alignment and understanding throughout the selection process. Linderman explains, "Our role as consultants is really to be that liaison between the vendors and the company itself that's going through the process. It's a unique role that is both understanding the business requirements of the customer, but also understanding the functionality of the vendor, and being able to liaise between the two."

Dan Waters, Vice President of Sales for **Made4net**, provides insight on how a WMS consultant can align stakeholders from the software vendor perspective. "The key thing with a project like this is to create the scope, define the deliverables, and tie these things to a timeline and a budget. I enjoy it when there is a consultant involved because they have a level set of what they're looking for. They've educated the customer on what they're going to need and have provoked thoughts about how to improve what they are doing today." When everyone is on the same page and speaking the same language, mistakes can be avoided down the line.

6. COST SAVINGS

Hiring a WMS consultant can save you money by helping you make informed decisions and avoiding costly mistakes. Kirpalani emphasizes, "This is an important decision that's going to impact operations for 10-plus years. The last thing a client wants to do is end up with a WMS that they're going to either outgrow or have to replace in the next few years. Hiring WMS consultants to get the value and do the due diligence is going to pay for itself in cost avoidance. It also helps with negotiation because vendors generally give better pricing when you have a WMS consultant in play, as well as having a complete RFP that ensures that you have the right solution that won't require costly customizations and extensions in the future."

Informed decisions will also help you avoid the risks of a failed implementation, which can lead to additional costs from rework, lost productivity, extra training, data migration, testing, and more. And, operational disruptions that cause fulfillment errors and/or customer dissatisfaction can be even more damaging than direct financial losses. According to Linderman, "Taking the time to do it right and do it up front, and using a consultant who's lived and breathed WMS selection and implementation day in and day out, reduces the risk on the project. It gives you and your leadership team some peace of mind that all options were explored and all alternatives were investigated. There's confidence in the decision being brought to the board for purchasing or upgrading a WMS."



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7. STRUCTURED METHODOLOGY



From initial assessment to selection and contract signing with the WMS vendor, a WMS consultant brings a structured methodology to the task of selecting a WMS. Linderman explains that a WMS consultant's methodology involves a set of key steps including requirements gathering, operational and technical discovery, and building the RFP. They examine both on-premise and cloud solutions and examine what security standards look like for each vendor to determine if they match with the customer's needs. Custom demos are also a big part of the process. "We want to see how the system works for the specific business, not just for the general industry as a whole."

Dahm agrees that the demo process is a vital component of identifying whether a vendor is the right fit, and having a consultant lead the process can ensure you solicit all the details necessary to make an informed decision. Dahm's process integrates time for long-form questions at the start of the demo process. This provides a good sense of cultural fit and a chance to dig deeper. "You get a lot out of the way up front so that when you get down to the end of the demo, you're already pointing in the right direction and you've seen a lot more than you would typically see." He also emphasizes that, "Requirements drive the overall selection process." And is always sure to spend a lot of time there understanding the nuances of how a client distributes, what channels they use, what geographies they are in and more. "Getting all that information up front drives your client's vendor selection."

8. IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

After selecting a WMS, the implementation process begins, which typically includes system configuration, integration with existing systems, data migration, staff training, testing, and finally, going live. From there, post-implementation support and continuous optimization ensure the system operates smoothly and effectively meets business needs. A WMS consultant can lead the successful implementation of your chosen WMS, ensuring your investment pays off. Linderman shares, "A consultant serves as a partner that you can lean on day in and day out, both today and five years from now. You've got someone that you can turn to, that you trust, most importantly, to come back with answers that you can implement."

A consultant will have a tried and true process for executing every phase of an implementation to ensure nothing falls through the cracks. Waters adds, "Consultants offer guidance to make sure that the right tasks are happening when they need to happen. There's a lot of data collection that needs to take place, there's a lot of process mapping that needs to take place, and there's change management on the floor." With a consultant leading the charge, your team can stay focused on running daily operations and delivering customer service so your operations don't miss a beat during the transition period.

▸ In Summary

Selecting the right WMS is a pivotal decision that can define your company's success for the next decade or more. Given the complexity of such a choice, partnering with a seasoned WMS consultant becomes invaluable. As you start the WMS selection process, remember that the right WMS consultant has the tools and expertise to turn a daunting task into a strategic advantage.

SUCCESS STORIES

Here's how WMS consultants have helped companies optimize their warehouse operations and improve efficiency through the implementation of the right WMS.

SPOTLIGHT 1

TRANSFORMING E-COMMERCE OPERATIONS FOR A FASHION RETAILER

Bricz recently partnered with a fashion retailer to help them expand their warehouse capabilities and bring their e-commerce operations in-house. Historically, this retailer had outsourced their e-commerce processes to a third-party logistics provider (3PL). However, they sought to internalize these processes to achieve better quality assurance, increased efficiency, and cost savings.

Bricz helped the retailer expand the use of the WMS they had previously selected and implemented. Their approach involved several strategic steps:

1. **Operational Process Design:** Bricz collaborated closely with the retailer to design streamlined operational processes tailored to their unique needs.
2. **Technical Process Design:** The Bricz team configured the technical aspects within the Warehouse Management System (WMS) to support the new in-house operations.
3. **Efficiency Enhancements:** To boost efficiency, Bricz integrated a new put wall into their workflow, optimizing the sorting and handling of goods.
4. **Channel Integration:** Bricz successfully added a new e-commerce channel to their existing distribution system, enabling seamless integration with their traditional retail operations.

The results have been impressive. During a recent conversation with the retailer, they shared that they have already moved nearly 50% of their e-commerce volume in-house. This transition has uncovered numerous efficiencies previously hidden when the 3PL managed their e-commerce business. The retailer now enjoys greater control, improved quality assurance, and substantial cost savings.

SPOTLIGHT 2 PHASED APPROACH FOR A DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Brecham Group recently assisted a client that was struggling with outdated systems that hindered their ability to scale. The executive team wanted to adopt cutting-edge automation tools to stay competitive and improve efficiency but were unsure where to start.

Brecham Group developed a measured, phased approach to automation and technology adoption, advising against jumping straight to advanced material handling technologies without a structured plan. They proposed a step-by-step implementation strategy, starting with a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) to pilot new functions and processes. The focus is now on ensuring that existing physical operations align with new high end technology. This approach is enabling Brecham's client to successfully navigate a full digital transformation journey.

About Made4net

With over 800 customers in 30 countries and solutions in 20+ languages, Made4net is a leading global provider of warehouse management systems and supply chain execution solutions that help organizations of all sizes improve the speed and efficiency of their supply chain. The company's end-to-end SCExpert platform is adaptable, configurable and scalable to provide maximum Speed-to-Pivot™ for ever-changing supply chains. Made4net solutions provide real-time inventory visibility, labor management, and equipment productivity with performance analytics that drive faster, more accurate order fulfillment and improved throughput.

For more information, visit www.made4net.com.