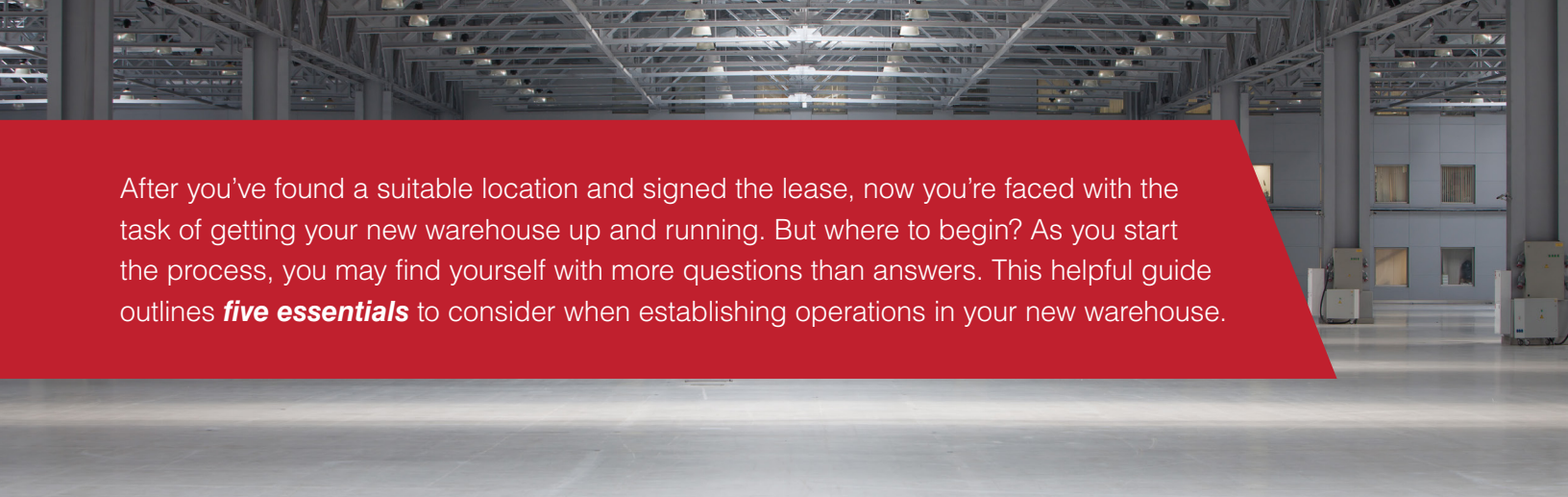


5

Essential Tools That Every New Warehouse Needs





After you've found a suitable location and signed the lease, now you're faced with the task of getting your new warehouse up and running. But where to begin? As you start the process, you may find yourself with more questions than answers. This helpful guide outlines **five essentials** to consider when establishing operations in your new warehouse.

1. Creating an Enterprise-Class Wireless Network

Connectivity is a must-have these days, and building a robust wireless network is the first step to getting your warehouse operations off the ground.

While it may be tempting to buy a few off-the-shelf consumer-grade wireless routers and call it a day, it's important that you deploy a network designed specifically to handle the requirements of an enterprise environment — from bandwidth and security to reliability and management.

Bandwidth

In your new warehouse you'll likely be using a number of data-intensive applications, sending and receiving large files and even using video. Your wireless network needs to support a number of employees simultaneously using tablets, smartphones, rugged handhelds and more. To support this kind of volume, you'll need to deploy several specially configured enterprise-class access points.

Security

By selecting an enterprise-grade WLAN, you're signing up for a platform that can protect the data you're transmitting over your network and keep potential hackers away from your valuable corporate assets via intrusion alerts. Wi-Fi designed for business usage includes features such as password protection, client access control, dynamic encryption keys, and data encryption.

Reliability

As your employees roam the floor of your new warehouse, they'll need consistent, reliable coverage, and nothing's more frustrating than a dropped signal. Enterprise-grade Wi-Fi offers seamless connectivity and continuous client device authentication as workers move from one access point to another, ensuring minimal disruption to their productivity.

Management

If you're deploying multiple access points, you'll need a controller that can centrally configure and manage each device. Enterprise WLAN usually includes management software with user-friendly dashboards to simplify operations for your IT staff.



2. Choosing the Right Facility Labels

You need to keep your thousands and thousands of new warehouse square footage organized, and selecting easy-to-read facility labels is a simple way to accomplish that goal. Whether you require a custom solution or off-the-shelf products, there are options for every need.



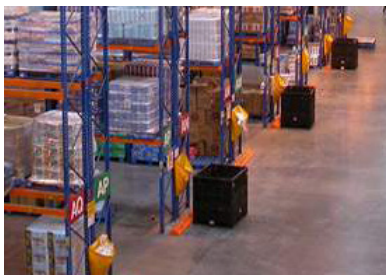
Labels for Bins and Racks

Having clearly marked bins and racks makes it easy for staff to quickly locate products for picking and packing in your new warehouse. Well designed labels use graphics and colors to aid visual identification, and you can even include information for multi-level shelves all on one label so workers don't have to scan labels from long distances. Bin labels can be custom designed and preprinted, or ordered blank to be filled in later to your specifications. They're available in a range of colors, sizes and materials to fit your particular totes and bins.



Floor Labels

When rack labels aren't enough, floor labels can help to organize products that may be oversized or don't fit well in bins. Floor labeling kits are typically easy to remove, ensuring you can easily update your signage as frequently as needed. They're designed to be durable for tough, high-traffic warehouse environments.



Warehouse Magnets

Perfect as a temporary solution, warehouse magnets are useful for enterprises that continuously shift their inventory around with the goal of optimizing warehouse operations. Magnets can be preprinted with easily distinguishable text, colors and directional symbols. For an even more flexible solution, write-on magnets enable you to fill in pertinent data with a dry-erase marker and wipe them clean and rewrite as needed.



Warehouse Signage

Signs that are clearly designed and easily viewable can help to streamline operations in your new warehouse. Basic, flat signs are among the most affordable solutions; bent signs are easier for workers to read. For a truly professional appearance, choose a warehouse aisle sign with a retro-reflective or polyester label.



Long Range Retro Reflective Labels

Time is of the essence in your new warehouse and every second employees spend trying to get close enough to scan a label is money lost. Long range retro reflective labels mimic a mirror to reflect a scanner's lasers and enable the scanner to read from great distances – up to 50 feet away.

3. Barcode Labeling and Media

Most warehouses use one of two common types of labels for items that require barcoding. Direct thermal fuses ink onto the label material while the thermal transfer method prints images via wax or resin ribbons. Off-the-shelf labels come in myriad sizes, shapes and colors to serve numerous industries and applications.

Custom labeling solutions are available for companies that have very specific needs in a new warehouse. Choose from a wide array of options, from tamper-proof solutions and UV coatings and lamination to retro-reflective tags and coupon labels.

Food and beverage companies will need to consider pressure-sensitive prime labels. These items leverage flexographic and digital offset printing technologies to deliver professional, polished graphic treatments. Digital printing for prime labels enables you to adjust specifications as needed, change labels according to seasonality, print multiple SKUs, and personalize offerings according to location or client.





4. Which Mobile Terminals Are Right For You?

In your new warehouse, you'll likely need a few different types of wireless devices and computers, depending on the job function and application. Your workers will put these gadgets through the paces in the typically punishing warehouse environment, so be sure to select devices that can stand up to long-term wear and tear. The following are some of the most commonly used mobile devices and computers:

Handhelds

Handheld computers enable data collection on the move. They're available in a variety of keypad configurations to accommodate your business needs, and they support several different wireless technologies. Handhelds, manufactured by companies like Honeywell and Zebra Technologies, are commonly used for barcode scanning, RFID and more. They usually leverage the Windows CE operating system, which aids integration with your enterprise systems and software, but other operating systems are also available.

Rugged Computers

Built for the most demanding environments, rugged handhelds offer the same computing power as their less robust counterparts (mentioned above), but are built with superior protection against dust, moisture and other particulate matter. Some of these devices are designed for either cold chain applications or for use as workers move between both cold and warm environments.

Vehicle-Mount Computers

If you operate forklifts and other industrial vehicles in your new warehouse, you'll likely need to deploy vehicle-mount computers. Available as wireless computers or batch terminals, these devices usually run on Windows CE or Windows 7 and come with either half or full-size screens.

Mobile Power Carts

In addition to mobile terminals, mobile power carts are essential to building an efficient and productive warehouse. Stationary workstations hinder productivity because they require employees to walk back and forth throughout the work day. These steps add up over time; although walking can feel productive, the use of mobile power carts is the best way to ensure optimum efficiency is reached.

Mobile power carts empower employees by allowing them to access valuable warehouse data from anywhere in the facility. These workstations come with a power supply that can be swapped out when needed, providing power to printers, computers, scales, and whatever else your warehouse needs constant access to. Mobile power carts reduce downtime, minimize inefficient actions, and keep warehouse operations moving through multiple shifts.



5. Integrating Your Software

To get your warehouse operating seamlessly, you'll want to integrate your barcode printer with ERP and other relevant supply chain software. This way, you'll bypass manually printing labels, a process that usually is fraught with human error. Instead, printing straight from your ERP software aids in proofing labels, improves accuracy, and cuts the amount of time spent creating labels. You can also opt to automate some processes, such that specific actions in the ERP would trigger a label to be printed.

Setting up your new warehouse for success requires careful planning and thoughtful consideration. By ensuring you have these five essential tools in place, you can skip the pain points and start improving productivity — and profits — in your new warehouse.

Download Our Product Catalog
View our complete line of labeling, barcode, RFID, and mobility products.

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