



# Digitise your warehouse

Real warehouse workflows to optimise fulfilment at every stage.



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## Introduction

# Why your warehouse workflow matters

Warehouses are the backbone of fulfilment – but for most retailers, they're also where inefficiencies hide. From wasted space to repeated errors, every delay adds up and the impact is bigger than you think. Over **80% of warehouses still rely on manual processes** [[meteorspace](#)], even as order volumes and customer expectations climb.

The result? Slower fulfilment, rising costs, lost customer loyalty, and operational bottlenecks that make scaling harder than it should be. As order volumes grow, these inefficiencies scale with you, slowing fulfilment when it matters most.

This guide is built to help you stay ahead. **We'll break down two practical approaches:**

1. For newer businesses or those expanding to a dedicated warehouse: How to set up a warehouse for scalability, avoiding costly mistakes from the start with a solid foundation.
2. For growing, multi-channel businesses: How to optimise more complex operations with workflows and tech that keep efficiency high and orders moving.

# The hidden cost of manual processes

Inefficiencies in the warehouse often start small, but they quickly snowball into lost time, rising costs, and missed delivery promises. These problems only get worse as your business grows, adding more pressure to your operations.

## Here are some hidden costs of manual warehouse processes:

- **Space constraints:** Growing order volumes can push physical space to its limits. Without efficient planning, bottlenecks and wasted travel time become inevitable.
- **Order picking inefficiency:** [ResearchGate](#) found that **picking accounts for 90% of total warehousing time, and 55% of operating costs**. This comes down to the manual effort involved in locating items, walking between zones, and handling repetitive tasks.
- **Inventory management complexity:** Juggling stock across multiple sales channels makes accuracy hard to maintain. Manual systems amplify the risk of miscounts, compliance errors, and stockouts.
- **Packaging challenges:** Guessing box sizes or using a one-size-fits-all approach leads to wasted space, higher shipping costs, and even surcharges. Manual decisions also slow packing, and because staff don't see the cost impact, mistakes often go unchecked.

Each of these issues adds labour hours, drives up shipping costs, and reduces your ability to scale profitably – unless you tackle them early with efficient workflows and the right technology.



## The building blocks of a digitised warehouse

# Start strong: Setting up a scalable warehouse

Small doesn't always mean simple. The right layout reduces wasted steps, cuts errors, and makes scaling easier as order volumes grow, saving you time and protecting margins.

### Layout & zoning

Group similar and seasonal products together, keeping high-demand SKUs close to the packing area. A logical pick path, wide enough for forklifts, reduces wasted steps.

### Packaging & dispatch

Position packing materials and printers within arm's reach, and speed up pickups by setting up staging areas for packed orders, grouped by carrier or dispatch time.



### Accuracy & validation

Eliminate errors with quick checks. Use a mobile app to scan items before label printing – validating orders on the spot to prevent mis-picks, reduce returns, and save on support costs.

### Pick & pack workflow

Keep your flow simple, mobile, and fast. Use a mobile pick & pack app to batch orders, scan items on the go, and print labels from anywhere.

Small warehouses don't always feel complex, but **inefficiencies multiply as order volumes grow**. Building scalable processes early saves time now and prevents costly fixes later. It may sound obvious but start with the basics: **clear zones for storage, picking, and packing**. Keeping fast moving SKUs near the packing bench and grouping similar items together reduces walking and speeds up fulfilment.

#### A structured pick and pack flow matters too

– organise pick and pack stations with packing materials, scanners, and printers in easy reach and use batching to process multiple orders efficiently. **Accuracy is non-negotiable**: Scan product barcodes to validate picks before printing – reducing errors, returns, and support tickets while keeping customers happy. Finally, track simple performance metrics such as orders processed per hour and dispatch times. These habits **make operations predictable and lay the groundwork for future growth**.

### Expert top tip

"It's about being ahead of the game and keeping the customer in mind – trying to keep like-for-like products together and in a flow that allows you to pick your orders efficiently."



**David Sloan,**  
Operations Manager  
at Evolve Outdoors  
Group - Hunters  
Element & Desolve



# Small retailer checklist:

## Best practices from order to dispatch

Running a small warehouse doesn't leave much room for wasted steps – or wasted space. This checklist highlights best practices from the moment stock arrives to when it leaves your door, helping you build a workflow that's fast, accurate, and easy to scale.

### 1 Receiving

Use a spreadsheet or inventory app to track incoming stock.

Perform quick visual inspections of your incoming stock to catch defects early and avoid restocking issues.

Designate a small, organised receiving area in your warehouse to simplify unloading and logging.

### 2 Storage

Group high-demand SKUs near the packing area to reduce picking time.

Use shelving with clear labels (e.g., printed stickers) for easy item location.

Maximise space with stackable bins or wall-mounted racks for small warehouses.

### 3 Picking

Batch pick multiple orders at once to save time in small spaces.

Use a [pick and pack mobile app](#) to scan and verify that items belong in an order during picking.

Create a logical pick path to minimise walking in compact storage areas.

### 4 Packing

Use cost-effective, right-sized boxes or mailers to lower shipping costs.

Double-check orders manually or with a barcode scanner (or mobile app) to ensure accuracy.

Keep packing materials and tools (e.g., tape, boxes, scales) within reach to speed up the process.

### 5 Dispatch

Use a platform like Starshipit to compare carrier rates and automate the process of [printing shipping labels](#).

Group shipments by carrier in a small staging area for efficient pickups.

Email customers [branded tracking links](#) to reduce support inquiries.

# Think big: Advanced workflows for growing operations

As your warehouse grows, so does complexity. Advanced workflows, smart zoning, and integrated technology keep speed, accuracy, and cost control on track – even when you're processing thousands of orders daily.

## Layout & zoning

Create defined zones for bulk storage, replenishment, and returns. Clear pick paths reduce congestion and keep fulfilment flowing during peak periods.

## Pick & pack workflow

Use batch picking with totes and switch to digital pick lists for a paperless workflow. Scan totes at the pack bench to confirm accuracy and speed up sorting.



## Packaging & dispatch

Pre-assign packaging by SKU or use automated packaging dimension-based rules to ensure every order fits the right box – eliminating guesswork and avoiding costly surcharges.

## Accuracy & validation

Use scan-to-pack validation so labels only print after every item is checked. Print SKUs on labels and leverage mobile scanning to ensure order accuracy, even across bulk picks.

As warehouses grow, complexity can quickly outpace control. Success at this stage relies on connected systems and structured workflows that remove friction. **Integrating your sales channels, carriers and inventory into a Warehouse Management System (WMS) - and connecting that WMS to a shipping automation platform like Starshipit** – keeps order data flowing in real time, eliminating delays and manual errors.

**From there, automation does the heavy lifting:** shipping rules select the best carriers, packing validation ensures accuracy, and batch picking with totes keeps your team moving efficiently. Use **digital pick lists** instead of using printed slips to save time, reduce waste, and improve accuracy. And with **automated tracking updates keeping customers informed**, you'll reduce support requests and protect loyalty. When order volumes surge, these efficiencies keep fulfilment moving **so you maintain delivery speed and protect profit margins.**

### Expert top tip

"Using shipping automation has cut our dispatch time for web orders by 60% – so someone's doubled their output in a day – even during peak when we've got more web and store orders to churn through."



**David Sloan,**  
Operations Manager  
at Evolve Outdoors  
Group - Hunters  
Element & Desolve



# Large retailer checklist: Best practices from order to dispatch

As warehouses grow, small inefficiencies turn into major bottlenecks. This checklist highlights the best practices for large retailers that keep complex operations running smoothly.

## 1 Receiving

Update inventory in real-time to prevent stock discrepancies.

Conduct quality checks before products move into storage.

## 2 Storage

Use a WMS to assign optimal storage locations for high-demand SKUs.

Implement clear labelling and barcoding for easy retrieval.

Optimise space with vertical storage to maximise capacity.

## 3 Picking

Use tote picking to collect multiple orders in a single trip to reduce travel time.

Switch to paperless workflows with digital pick lists and scanning for accuracy.

## 4 Packing

Use recommended packaging to auto-suggest the right package types and reduce costs and waste.

Check each product belongs in an order by using packing validation, reducing errors and returns.

## 5 Dispatch

Use a shipping platform like Starshipit to access multiple carriers for flexible shipping options.

Use automated label printers for accurate tracking info.

Provide customers with real-time tracking updates via branded order notifications.

## Next steps

# Turn warehouse chaos into control

Manual processes slow you down, increase costs, and limit growth – **but every improvement you make compounds.** Whether you're running a small warehouse or a multi-site operation, the principles are the same: **reduce decision points, standardise workflows, and integrate your systems.**

### Expert top tip

"The biggest shift we see in growing retailers is the move from **reactive to proactive fulfilment.** When systems aren't connected, every decision (what box to use, which courier to choose) happens at the pack bench. By integrating your sales channels, WMS, and shipping automation platform, you eliminate those manual touchpoints. The result is **predictable workflows, fewer mistakes, and more time to focus on growth.** It's about removing friction, so fulfilment becomes an advantage, not a bottleneck."



**Georgia Kirkham,**  
Account Executive  
Sales at Starshipit

**Start by reviewing your current process** for wasted steps and manual touchpoints. Are orders flowing seamlessly from your sales channels to your warehouse? Are staff still using paper pick lists or copying and pasting between carrier platforms? **These are the inefficiencies to look out for.**

The sooner you replace manual tasks with connected workflows, **the faster you'll gain accuracy, speed, and simplified scalability.**





# Starshipit

Starshipit streamlines every step of the fulfilment process, reducing handling time, minimising human error and improving the customer delivery experience. Get up and running with Starshipit from day one with free onboarding, training and support for every customer, regardless of size.

## Book a call

Want to chat to a shipping expert? [Book a call](#) now and we'll work with you to get your fulfilment set up for success.

## Start a free trial

Ready to deliver better shipping? Get started with no credit card required. [Try Starshipit free for 30 days.](#)



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Deliver great shipping experiences