

## The Economic Recession's Impact on Warehouse Productivity

The economic recession has hit distributors hard. With the economy moving in a more positive direction, businesses are now turning to technology to improve the productivity within their supply chain operations.

Distributors have found themselves in an interesting place over the last couple of years. With the economic recession hitting businesses hard, companies have spent the better part of the last two years finding ways to save money in order to survive the slowdown that has affected the global economy. Resources were reduced as cost savings became the focus of every business. With a glimmer of light now peaking at the end of the economic recession, distributors are shooting for a new goal — one that involves utilizing these reduced resources to their full potential by maximizing their productivity.

Increasing productivity and efficiency has always been a goal of any business. However, the effect and importance of this metric is much clearer now as businesses seek to get more results with less overhead costs. In a warehouse environment, technology can play a key role in enhancing worker efficiency.

Here's a quick look at three technologies that can increase employee productivity and lower operating expenses:

### **Warehouse Management Systems**

Warehouse Management Systems are software applications that manage all of your warehouse operations, from inventory to shipping and receiving. Capabilities such as directed putaway, cycle counting, and master scheduling allow users to track and control everything happening in a warehouse using information that is available in real time. Without delays caused by data gathering and inventory counting, employees are free to work on the activities that make your business more profitable.

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## **Voice-Enabled Technology**

Over the last few years, voice-enabled devices have made many warehouse activities much more effective and efficient. These devices allow employees to interact with a software application through a small microphone and/or headphones. The picking process is made easier as users are directed to pick items for an order, with location, quantities, and other useful information relayed to them via headphones. This technology provides employees with a hands-free work environment that makes their job much easier.

## **Labor Management Software**

Labor management software gives you the ability to track the productivity of your employees. These applications allow you to compare the time it takes an employee to complete a task to a set of pre-defined standards. Management can view reports to determine which activities are taking the longest to complete and potentially avoid bottlenecks in the order fulfillment process before they occur. With visibility of these statistics, decision-making as it relates to labor becomes more effective and more accurate.

With advancements in technology occurring every day, distributors are finding more available solutions that can help improve their operations. As you move forward with a goal of making your business run more efficiently, remember that throughout time some of the world's largest companies grew exponentially during economic slowdowns simply by focusing on productivity and process innovation.