

Uber Freight

10 Tips to improve your warehouse receiving process

Consulting solutions/
Warehouse optimization



Warehouse receiving processes can make or break a company's ability to service its customers.

Warehouse receiving operations are a critical part in maintaining the integrity of inventory systems and ensuring the availability of products for customers. Without an effective receiving system, items fall through the cracks, are not counted, are not adequately inspected, and fail to provide evidence of problems with vendors that affect profitability.



1. Create a receiving schedule

Knowing what volume and materials are coming in and when can directly impact inventory accuracy, resource allocation and financial accountability.



2. Level the schedule by labor required to unload the contents

Labor costs can eat up anywhere from 50 to 70 percent of the average company's warehousing budget. Leveling the inbound receiving schedule (and ensuring shippers adhere to it) helps warehouse managers efficiently match workload demand with workforce supply, as well as monitor and improve unload timing performance.



3. Stage trailers at the dock doors closest to the step of the receiving process

This may seem like a simple concept, but you'd be surprised to know that each year the average warehouse worker needlessly walks the distance of NYC to Chicago. Remember: if a trailer of product is going to the south side of the warehouse, that trailer needs to be staged at the south side of the warehouse!



4. Clearly label receiving lanes

Visual management presents information in an easy-to-understand way by using visual signals instead of text, so that workers can follow them easily. We've experienced countless examples when a simple visual in a warehouse made all the difference!



5. Perform time studies and document standard work

Standard work is the safest, easiest and most effective way of doing a job. As the basis for best practices and waste identification, it should be documented and continuously improved. **Pro tip:** Standard work is an opportunity for the people doing the work to have the responsibility of designing, understanding, following, and improving upon it!



6. Maintain and update receiving equipment

Staying ahead of today's warehouse technology advancements like mobile workstations and automation can ensure warehouse managers are always seeing optimal gains in worker productivity, error reduction, receiving volume, and more. By eliminating paperwork and relying on mobile carts that are equipped with a portable power system used to power WMS, laptops, barcode printers or scanners, companies can effectively boost dock-to-stock cycle time to best-in-class performance, increase receipt volume by as much as 50%, reduce labor by as much as \$10,000 per worker, reduce the number of improperly labeled products and minimize inaccurate inventories.



7. Practice 5s for maintaining a visual and standardized workplace

In lean management systems, 5S represents five disciplines for maintaining a visual and standardized workplace. These standards are foundational to continuous improvement and waste removing concepts.



8. Quarantine damaged material at the source without passing it on

When damaged material is put into inventory, it inflates inventory numbers and reduces accuracy in pick spaces. Spending five minutes "damaging out" product at inbound will save 20 minutes in picker and replenishment time down the road. It will also protect the customer from ordering un-shippable inventory, relay outages up the supply chain and improve inventory cost positions.





9. Prepare product for fast and efficient put away

Shippers across all industries are seeking ways to move receipts and shipments off their loading docks as quickly as possible. World class companies have a dock to stock time of 2 hours or better, but the industry average is more like eight hours (at best). Analyzing the process for a hand-off may uncover that multiple steps can be eliminated or minimized. Small things like label and paperwork placement, positioning products or pallets for easy pickup, and clear visual cues can reduce overall time and effort for putting product away.



10. Match information flow to material flow without a delay in reconciliation

In receiving, physical pallets or cases show up at the dock, while their corresponding information transmitted via EDI, paperwork, or some other medium. When these two streams are misaligned it can create confusion and force inbound staff to search for pallets on the dock that have already been put away and/or put into the wrong slot. It's imperative that inbound information flow aligns with physical flow to reduce unnecessary work steps and overall inefficiency.

