



5 Features Food & Beverage Companies Should Look for in a WMS

Food and beverage companies are under constant inventory stress, much more than other industries. You're looking at strict control and safety requirements, limited shelf lives, increased regulatory scrutiny, and much more to move your products safely, efficiently and quickly.

Today, there are food and beverage WMS solutions that are tailored to your industry and requirements, simplifying your production, fulfillment, delivery and reporting needs.

To help you select the right WMS, we've taken a look at five essential considerations for food and beverage companies looking to optimize their distribution processes.

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Food Safety & Freshness

Food and beverage inventory controls are essential to protect your business. Features that companies like yours should look for include traceability and tracking to manage expiration dates and unique requirements at every location in your operation, including organic product and allergen management. Sophisticated inventory control through lot, batch, FIFO/LIFO, expiration date, and best before date, along with real-time information enabling you to respond to changes or issues can help you avoid spoilage, expiration, and other conditions that ruin products or generate hazardous situations.

Your food and beverage WMS should monitor and record all of your products based on their specific needs, showing that items have remained in safe conditions throughout your production, supply chain, and delivery to the final customer. For example, the system should ensure that non-organic products are not picked and stored on top of organic products, and that storage rules take allergen codes into account. Advanced sensors are often used to track the condition of goods, and your WMS should integrate seamlessly to access real-time data from the devices. The food industry is one of the first industries that can truly utilize the new world of IOT, or the “Internet of Things.” Tracking temperature data from the dock to the cooler and then out the door onto refer trucks is necessary to keep your products, customers, and reputation safe. Your system should provide for automated actions like reports and alerts when something is outside of defined parameters. Immediate notifications of temperature rise for a crate or pallet ensures a safe lifecycle for your operations and can help you maintain compliance.

In the digital world, many partners also request this data, so your food and beverage WMS should use EDI and other data technologies to make sensor information capture and sharing simple in the new IOT world.

Complex & Dynamic Customer Service Level Agreements

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Food and beverage customers are a demanding lot, with specific requirements for product freshness, safety, packaging, delivery timeframes, traceability and real-time visibility into data. Many retailers require specific offerings and shipments, such as custom packaging or kitting that combines multiple products, while others may want different shipment sizes or quantities for distinct locations.

Tracking such requirements across each customer location and managing them manually introduces significant chances for errors. And, in these cases, mistakes can mean returned products and shipments, delays in fulfillment, and angry customers. A WMS tailored to food and beverage company needs will include retail automation tools that are flexible to adapt to each customer’s needs and dynamic to respond to the problems or challenges that can arise each day, including the tools necessary to develop and track unique SKUs and product combinations without missing an inventory beat.

We’ll help you track and protect all of your goods with sensor and other data support, and then move you a step further with all of your retail compliance needs such as labeling, documentation, GS1, and more.



3 Traceability and Regulatory Compliance

Food facilities, including many warehouses, are required to have systems that keep products safe. The FDA breaks down these requirements along categories such as hazard analysis, corrective and preventative actions, and many conditional elements that point to specific hazards around food, its processing, and storage.

Your Food and beverage WMS should provide end-to-end tracking and accountability for regulatory compliance and recalls. The system should include tools for industry compliance in labeling, documentation, PTI, GSI and EDI requirements and overall support for your HACCP programs. The FDA looks for evidence that can be contained in reports, which should be easy to generate and review. And real-time supply chain visibility can support your QA activities, especially for inventory management, shipping, FIFO, and overall recordkeeping.

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Integrated Solutions Across Your Supply Chain

Your inventory and distribution needs expand well beyond the warehouse, and your WMS needs to integrate and communicate seamlessly with those solutions. Even better is to find a provider that offers those complementary solutions, such as Labor, Transportation, Route Planning, Yard Management, Warehouse Control and Delivery Management on one platform. Fully integrated solutions will make it easy for you gain control of your supply chain from end-to-end, and to have real-time information and the ability to act quickly on that data to mobilize employees and inventory at a moment's notice.



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Flexible, Adaptable and Scalable Solution to Support Your Changing Business

When one of your competitors fails to deliver on time, you want customers to turn to you to pick up the slack and help that retailer avoid empty shelves. Being flexible to your customers' needs and partner demands can help you maintain a reputation as a reliable partner who can fill gaps that unexpectedly arise. Your WMS should have robust inventory management capabilities to ensure you are restocking with plenty of lead time, allowing you to scale up and reduce stockout concerns.

Your WMS should be adaptable and scalable to flex as your business changes and grows, and as your customers' demands change. From supporting changes in seasonal and promotional workflow activities, to customizing kits, to adding new customers, changing ship times and beyond, your WMS should provide you with the data and reporting to spot trends and create "what if" scenarios and also to easily configure your solution to meet changing needs without relying on your WMS vendor for expensive customizations.

Your business deserves a complete food and beverage WMS that gives you some of the most powerful tools available while keeping dashboards and reporting easy for everyone to see and understand. Make the most of your inventory and be the best partner in your supply chain by finding a WMS designed to meet the needs of food and beverage companies, like yours. As we have seen throughout 2020, Change is imminent... are you ready?

M A D E 4 N E T is a leading global provider of best-in-class cloud-based supply chain execution and warehouse management software for organizations of all sizes to improve the speed and efficiency of their supply chain. The company's end-to-end SCExpert platform offers a robust WMS software that enables real-time inventory visibility, labor management, and equipment productivity with performance analytics that drive faster, more accurate order fulfillment and improved supply chain efficiency. In addition to the best-of-breed WMS, the platform offers integrated yard management, dynamic route management, proof of delivery and warehouse automation software solutions that deliver a true supply chain convergence. For more information, visit www.made4net.com.