How to Set Up a Warehouse Checklist

Setting up a new warehouse? Follow this checklist to ensure that you're covering all the bases, from planning your layout to selecting equipment.

1. Develop Your Warehouse Strategy

☐ **Review expected product types, customer base, and suppliers.**
Explore partnerships with new suppliers and vendors if needed.

☐ **Establish a relationship with a logistics partner.**
If you don't already have a logistics partner, explore partnerships with logistics providers with the capabilities to meet your logistics needs. If you have an existing logistics partner, ensure that they can meet your needs at your new warehouse location.

☐ **Ensure sufficient space.**
Whether you're building a warehouse facility from the ground up or purchasing or leasing existing warehouse space, ensure that the facility has ample square footage for your current and forecasted needs.

2. Choosing Warehouse Equipment

☐ **Determine how inventory will be moved through the supply chain.**
Does your product mix include sizable items that can't be moved by human workers alone? Will your warehouse deal with large quantities of smaller items? Your product mix determines the type of equipment you'll need, such as conveyor systems or automated storage and retrieval systems.

☐ **Determine what equipment you'll need based on inventory.**
Larger inventory items or bulk items stored on pallets will require equipment such as forklifts and pallet jacks to move inventory throughout the warehouse. Conveyor systems may be useful for warehouses that handle large quantities of a variety of smaller SKUs.

☐ **Choose the appropriate storage equipment.**
The size of your inventory dictates the storage equipment you'll need, as well. Storage equipment may include pallet racks, shelving, bins, and more. If your warehouse handles a variety of SKUs in varying sizes, you'll need the appropriate mix of storage equipment to store the anticipated stock.

3. Develop a Starting Layout

☐ **Plan your layout within building constraints.**
Create a floor plan that defines spaces for essential functional areas while allowing appropriate space for existing fixtures and obstructions like HVAC equipment.

☐ **Allocate space for all functional areas.**
These include storage, receiving, picking, packing and shipping, offices, restrooms, staff areas, and open space for future expansion if possible.

☐ **Configure aisles, racks, and shelving.**
Allocate appropriate storage space for the aisles, racks, and shelving required to store (and allow access to) inventory. If your warehouse will have a variety of types of storage equipment, ensure that the highest-velocity items are most accessible and that all necessary material handling equipment can easily access the relevant storage areas.

☐ **Conduct a walk-through to ensure efficient traffic flows.**
With functional areas, racks, and shelving taped out on the floor of the facility, conduct a walk-through to ensure that traffic and workflows can flow smoothly throughout the warehouse.

4. Implement Software & Hardware Solutions

☐ **Choose a warehouse management system (WMS) suitable for your needs.**
There are a variety of warehouse management systems and inventory management systems to choose from, some with specialized functionality to meet unique warehousing needs in certain industries.

☐ **Implement warehouse signage and barcode labels.**
Warehouse signs should be incorporated to designate functional areas of the warehouse, such as aisles, docks, and doors. Warehouse barcode labels can be used to label shelves, racks, and containers to ensure the efficient flow of goods throughout the facility.

☐ **Choose compatible barcode scanning hardware.**
Some barcode scanners are capable of reading both 1D and 2D barcodes, while others can only read one type of barcode. Check specifications such as scanning distance to ensure compatibility with your warehouse barcode label solution. For instance, if you've implemented long-range retro-reflective barcode labels, you'll need barcode scanning hardware capable of long-range scanning.

5. Ensure the Availability of Tools & Supplies

☐ **Identify the tools and supplies needed at each functional area or workstation.**
Plan space for workers to check out barcode scanners at the start of a shift and store other necessary tools and supplies at each workstation.

☐ **Keep ergonomics in mind.**
Ensure adequate storage in packaging and shipping areas to keep packing tape, cardboard boxes, shipping envelopes, scissors, labels, and all other supplies within easy reach for maximum efficiency and safety per OSHA guidelines.