

# 5 KEY TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

That Distribution Businesses Should Adopt to be Successful in 2019

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Cloud computing is a game-changer for businesses of all sizes, enabling them to compete with larger enterprises by giving them access to the advanced technology they require to improve efficiencies, reduce costs, and grow in one simple deployment. The CIO's of today are no longer solely responsible for the management of IT, but also for supporting business growth by driving innovation in an effort to build a strategic advantage. As we advance into the New Year, here are some of the key technology solutions that wholesale distribution businesses should adopt to be successful in 2019.

## **Mobile Order Entry:**

Enterprises everywhere are being dramatically impacted by the rapid expansion of new mobile technology. Mobile solutions can turn ordinary smartphones into powerful business tools that can

access different applications to help improve efficiencies, enhance customer service, and increase sales. One application that is seeing tremendous traction in the industry is Mobile Order Entry. Having a web presence alone is no longer sufficient as online activity continues to shift to mobile. This rise in mobile device usage means that mobile apps have become a key sales tool for companies of all sizes. Giving sales teams immediate access to account and product information can make the difference between getting the sale or not. In addition, these apps can be given to customers making it simpler for them to place orders directly with your company. Quick easy access to ordering can result in increased order frequency, customer loyalty, and an improved bottom-line for your business.

## **Suggested Purchasing:**

Automated purchasing systems help businesses reduce inventory and increase sales, while helping maintain customer service levels and retaining customers. Advanced purchasing tools can forecast demand and predict long-range trends, as well as seasonality for each item. These solutions can optimally push order quantities up to get prepaid freight, hit vendor minimums, or cube out a full container, saving distributors significant time by doing so automatically and accurately. Another major benefit is that suggested purchasing tools can consider multiple warehouses and check for overstocked items to facilitate stock transfers before buyers place orders to the vendor. Companies that utilize automated forecasting and purchasing tools will have a strategic advantage in lower costs and increased profits.

## **Warehouse Management:**



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Warehouse management systems have been a proven tool to help companies improve warehouse operations, increase employee productivity, and insure customer satisfaction. What is new about these solutions is that companies can now take advantage of low cost mobile devices to effectively manage their inventory at a fraction of the cost of what it previously used to cost. In the past, companies could expect to pay anywhere from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per device for a rugged RF unit. Today, companies can combine a low cost mobile device with a Bluetooth scanner and automate their warehouse for approximately \$400 to \$1,000 per unit. Mobile warehouse apps have been designed to make transaction processing in warehouses lighter, easier, and faster than ever. By leveraging the enhanced touch screen display on the mobile device, data can be presented in a clear concise easy-to-read format that reduces training time and speeds up operations. Automating warehouses provides a wide range of benefits from space savings, lower building costs, improved productivity, more efficient material flow, less people, and safer operations, to reductions in inventory, reduced operational

costs, better ROI, and lower lifecycle costs.

### **Business Intelligence:**

In today's highly competitive market companies need to constantly evaluate the success of the activities their business engages in. Analytics software is one of the most valuable tools for businesses, as it provides organizations with both high-level monitoring that focuses on the overall performance of the enterprise, and low-level monitoring that focuses on departmental metrics. Modern ERP systems generate massive amounts of data and it is critical that companies leverage business intelligence tools to help them easily identify anomalies that could turn into significant business issues, and identify trends that could lead to business opportunities. Access to this data is vital to grow revenue, protect margins, and improve profitability.

### **CRM / Marketing Automation:**

When organizations focus their efforts on cutting costs, too often they forget about sales growth. One of the top ways a company can achieve revenue growth is to align and automate their sales and marketing efforts. With powerful

automation tools, companies can engage subscribers depending on how they have responded to previous messages by sending a series of specific action-based emails. Whether thanking a customer for their business, informing them of a promotional offer, sending a birthday message, or reminding them about an important deadline— marketing tools enable businesses to reach out to subscribers at every opportunity for longer and more meaningful connections. Interacting with audiences regularly can build trust and brand recognition, and with automated workflows, businesses can give their subscribers the information they want during each stage of the sales funnel. It also enables businesses to create a workflow that will automatically separate and send emails to subscribers based on their response to previous campaigns, scores, shopping cart activity, web page visits, and much more for more personalized, valuable communications. With advanced marketing automation, companies can nurture prospects and customers with highly personalized, useful content that helps convert prospects to customers and turn customers into delighted customers.



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