

11 Questions *(plus one!)*

a Wholesale Distributor
Must Ask Itself



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11 Questions a Wholesale Distributor Must Ask Itself

Wholesale distribution has been around for a very long time. Envision merchant traders of centuries past standing on docks eyeing the horizon for ships bringing goods from faraway lands. Despite the timelessness of wholesale distribution, the industry has seen much change over the centuries, especially in the last few decades thanks to digitalization.

The success of a modern wholesale distributor depends on its ability to streamline processes and **maximize efficiency**. At the same time, however, it is vital to keep **customer service** the highest priority. After all, retaining customers is much less costly than gaining new ones.

To walk this line between efficiency and keeping customers happy, a wholesale distributor must ensure its operation is reliable, well-supported, and cost-effective. To achieve this, DPS offers this list of **11 questions** that management must ask themselves and think through carefully.



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1. How stable is your system?

Every organization has its own way of doing things. Often, homegrown systems arise out of necessity, and though they aren't perfect, they work fine, at least for a while. But when they become "the way we've always done things," there's no incentive to upgrade the system.

With the speed of innovation today, not keeping up means slipping farther and farther behind. Homegrown systems need constant propping up to keep them going, and when they give out, it's a major headache that hurts your business. Imagine all the time you could save with a **professionally designed, stable platform** that stays up-to-date by itself. Plus, since a modern software solution can streamline your operation, your investment will help you save money in the long run.

DPS's solutions are designed to meet the unique needs and challenges of the distribution industry.



2. What is the future of your IT staff?

Companies are comprised of people of course, and your wholesale distribution relies on a team of dedicated technical staff that has the knowledge and experience to keep your systems running smoothly.

However, what if that knowledge is localized in just a few minds? In small to medium-sized firms, the IT team might consist of just a few people, or even one individual. If that key person retires or experiences a sudden life change, what happens to that knowledge? What if there's no chance to write it down or pass it on to someone else? Your company could be severely affected.

In larger companies, staff turnover gets in the way of operations running efficiently. Or, if your business is expanding, new employees will need time to get up to speed.

It's better to **prepare for these scenarios ahead of time**. An integrated, standardized software system both decreases the reliance on the knowhow of any single person and shortens the learning curve for new employees.



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3. How can you benefit from mobile?

Many wholesale distributors still send their sales team out without the mobile technology that enables wireless selling. Companies that embrace mobile technology, on the other hand, have a competitive edge and usually find that they can further streamline business processes and improve customer service.

DPS has developed **PocketFlash**, which offers mobile B2B eCommerce solutions for sales reps. The result is more sales for your company, and most importantly, better customer service.

The ability to access and transmit information in real-time isn't a luxury anymore, and customers expect that they can get what they want, when they want it. 68% of American adults now own a smartphone, and accessing the internet via mobile devices has become more popular than desktops. If your company can't deliver, you risk losing sales or diminishing customer esteem.

By implementing mobile software solutions in your distribution process, supervisors can solve problems remotely, sales reps have direct access to your database, and customers can view your inventory 24/7.



4. Which manual tasks can be eliminated?

Manual tasks are usually time-consuming and prone to the **dreaded human error**. Even the best of us makes mistakes and typos sometimes. Thankfully, the technological march of progress has automated many tasks that we humans previously had to do manually. The more extensive of a technology solution you implement, the more efficient your company will be.

Of course, some tasks might always need a human touch, but your staff's to-do lists might be full of automation opportunities. For example, an integrated barcode solution from DPS can replace manual systems for cycle counts, data entry, putaway, receiving, tracking, and shipping. It can also greatly reduce the need for time-consuming paperwork!

Best of all, eliminating as many manual tasks as possible can **save you money** by decreasing headache-inducing errors, as well as reducing training and labor costs. Plus, you'll be able to shift more of your time to activities that are more productive or profitable.

After implementing one of DPS's solutions, a customer reduced its annual shipping errors down to a single bag, achieving a Six Sigma level of accuracy.



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5. How can you better serve customers?

The most important aspect of your business is your customers - plain and simple. After all, no company can survive without them! Customers need nurturing in order to fulfill the potential of their lifetime values.

The right software can greatly benefit your clients. For example, an eCommerce solution includes customer self-service, which gives them the convenience of placing their own orders online. DPS clients have found eCommerce also helps **increase sales!** It also allows customers to communicate with service personnel in real time. Meanwhile, an integrated barcode solution improves the customer experience by enhancing shipment accuracy and speed, all while lending the peace of mind from live order tracking.

When customers are more confident in your company, they are more likely to stay. In fact, one of DPS's clients greatly improved its level of customer service after implementing our solution and actually reacquired a number of customers that had previously left a few years earlier, resulting in gaining back over **\$100,000** in lost sales revenue.



6. How fast is your company growing?

Expansion is what every company aims to achieve, so if yours is expanding, congratulations! But do you have the tools in place to cope with that growth?

If your company is relying on the same systems it has used in the past, these could face strain due to serving more employees, more customers, and more product volume. The result? Expansion turns into regression because the platform buckles or gets too complicated to manage efficiently. That's no way for an otherwise successful company to operate!

Your technical solution's scalability should match your company's current needs, but more importantly, it should have the **flexibility** to be easily adjusted or expanded. Professionally-designed software is optimized to avoid bottlenecks and can easily be scaled up to seamlessly handle future growth.



7. What insights could more data give?

With a modern software solution comes an abundance of data. Software can analyze the patterns in data better than even the most wondrous of analytical wunderkinds. Enterprise resource planning (ERP) software integrates data from many departments and core business functions (purchasing, receiving, customer service, inventory management, shipping, and billing) in real-time to further smooth out operations. You'll not only have **incredible insight** into how effectively your company is currently performing, but you'll also see opportunities for running more profitably. Who knew a bunch of 1s and 0s could be so powerful?

DPS Extend ERP is specifically designed to integrate with the tools you use to succeed in today's competitive environment.

Finally, a robust software solution provides you with rich analytics on your customers, giving you insights into their habits and expectations so you can **better serve them**. It's even possible to recognize the patterns of a potential lost customer before it is too late.



8. How can your warehouse be streamlined?

The heart of an efficient wholesale distribution operation is a streamlined warehouse. Have you looked at how your warehouse could be better optimized? Here are a few possible ways:

- Integrate a system for labeling, receiving, picking, and shipping
- Optimize space utilization
- Increase product movement speed
- Minimize product damage
- Decrease picking and shipping errors

There's a solution that can do all of the above, and the investment is worth it. Streamlining your warehouse **reduces costs and saves time**, thus boosting your company's return.

DPS Zap is a barcode solution that streamlines your warehouse operation, reducing many of the costs associated with warehousing.



9. How can your company boost sales?

There are a few ways to increase sales:

1. Pursue and sign new customers
2. Sell more to your current base of customers

It's really as simple as that. First, when you have a software solution that helps your company be more streamlined and accurate, these are advantages that your sales reps can tout to prospects. New customers will **feel more confident** about their decision to do business with you.

Second, if you haven't already implemented a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution, you can store customer information then refer to it, making it easier to offer a personal touch in your business dealings.

The CRM tool can also be used to **increase sales** by analyzing data for cross-selling and upselling to your current customers. By offering them more value, you can further boost your revenue.



10. Is it time to add eCommerce?

If you have to ask, the answer is definitely yes!

Why step up to a digital sales portal? First, in this era, it's a necessity. Any business without it is quickly falling behind its competitors. Second, an eCommerce solution incorporates tools that help you better reach, sell to, and serve customers, all while boosting operational efficiency and scalability.

With the growth of mobile and pervasive computing, new opportunities exist to push business applications into sales territories. A mobile-enabled eCommerce solution lets your sales reps have constant access to stock inventory and allows them to **close sales much faster** while out in the field. This can be done even when wireless connectivity is not available!

DPS Flash eCommerce software is designed for small to mid-sized companies but can support large companies as well.



11 • Are you prepared to handle future leaps in technology?

This is one of the biggest concerns that many companies have. Technology continues to advance very quickly, and each year we see new innovations coming onto the market. While some are just passing trends, many have staying power and can positively impact your business.

With the day-to-day challenges of running your company, it can be difficult to stay on the cutting edge, especially if you're currently maintaining a multitude of systems. Before attempting to keep up with the **fast pace of technology**, it's necessary to have a software solution that is stable, easily updateable, and can accommodate integrations with other platforms and solutions.

DPS offers an extensive array of programming-related services. From developing software to maintaining your current platforms to creating mobile apps, our dedicated team of professional software developers specializes in the latest technology for wholesale distributors.



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Bonus! How can your company become more efficient?

Of course, no company is 100% perfect, so there are always opportunities for increasing efficiency. Rather than falling into “the way we’ve always done things,” keep analyzing, evaluating, and pursuing improvement for your wholesale distributorship!

DPS Extend™

Comprehensive, Proven
Distribution Management System

DPS Zap™

Integrated RF
Warehouse Management Solution

DPS Flash™

Web-Based, Real-Time
Customer Self-Service

PocketFlash

eCommerce for
Mobile Sales Reps



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About Us

Established in 1972, DPS, Inc. is a software development, consulting and services company. We are a proven partner in transformative technology in the form of easy-to-use, reliable, well supported and cost-effective business software solutions, primarily for the wholesale distribution industry.

At DPS, we promote only tested and proven technology to our clients — technology that works for wholesale distributors. As the developer, marketer and implementer of the DPS Product Suite, DPS assures reliability and ROI without all the hassle of managing multiple vendors and non-compatible systems. The Product Suite for Wholesale Distribution includes complete distribution and financial management (ERP), web-based customer self-service (eCommerce), advanced warehouse management (WMS) with barcoding and wireless terminal/scanners, and mobile computing for sales reps and delivery drivers on the road.

DPS also offers a full complement of technology services and is on the forefront of hosting business applications through the DPS SureSource Application Services Provider (ASP) offering. Through our partnership with IBM, we can provide IBM Power Systems as well as virtualization and storage solutions. We are dedicated to delivering the most comprehensive and innovative systems available.

As an IBM Premier Business Partner, we have achieved the highest level of recognition offered by IBM. However, nothing promotes our capabilities better than our satisfied customers — hundreds of successful installations across the US, Canada, United Kingdom, and the Caribbean region. This experience gives us the knowledge to add significant value to a distribution business. Ultimately, clients rely on our expertise to plan and implement comprehensive information systems that boost operational efficiency, improve customer loyalty and help with the acquisition of new customers.

DPS is headquartered in Carmel, Indiana. For more information on any DPS solution or service, visit our website at www.dpslink.com, e-mail info@dpslink.com or call us at (317) 574-4300 or toll free at (800) 654-4689.

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