



# A Guide to Getting the Most out of a Warehouse Design Service



YOUR #1 WAREHOUSE SUPPLIER

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# A Guide to Getting the Most out of a Warehouse Design Service

Today's warehouses have evolved beyond a waiting room of surplus inventory and into a mission critical distribution arena with tremendous value add.

That is assuming your warehouse facility has a well-designed layout and comparable storage system solution. When dealing with storage areas that have square footage areas hundreds of thousands of feet large, even incremental deviations can result in huge shortfalls.

For instance, a moderately sized 100,000-square foot warehouse that's design is off by a margin of 10% could come up 10,000-square feet short. With too little space to operate, said operation may incur significant productivity losses and see their supply chain operations completely bottleneck.

It's one of the many reasons choosing a comprehensive warehouse design service is so crucial. Through the use of architectural renderings like Auto-CAD drawings, a warehouse design service can help you pinpoint areas of opportunity and locate potential problem areas before negatively affect your bottom line.

This quick guide will help you chart your course as you navigate the involved world of warehouse design.

## What is involved with a warehouse and distribution center design service?

In short, warehouse and distribution center design services can help you fully utilize your warehouse space, making it safer and more efficient. From narrow aisles and pallet flow to shelf supported mezzanines and pick modules, they map out your physical space and show you the best storage solutions for your unique needs.

The end result is a bespoke set of accurate 3D representations that detail the layout and best available storage solutions for your warehouse. Typically outlined in 3-D CAD drawings, these visually represented layouts allow you to see all the ways your warehouse can be maximized. Be it racking, shelving, or building structures a good warehouse consultant will analyze your entire facility, then stick around to help you implement the agreed upon solutions.

## What all does a quality warehouse design consulting service assess?

Before making storage solution recommendations, an experienced warehouse design service will want to assess a variety of processes. For instance, they'll want to do a flow check to see the degree of mobility product have moving in, out and within your warehouse. This will allow them to suss out any restrictions.

They might move on to see if your picking and storage modules have proper inventory capacity and make recommendations to the size to help you avoid excessive replenishment. From there they'll help you ensure you have the proper manpower to staff the operation and review your budgets sufficient maintenance, information systems costs.

Expect an ongoing collaboration between these professionals and your operations personnel so the warehouse design service can accurately account for key elements like:

- Future Growth Plans or Product Changes
- Your Preferred Material Handling Systems
- Loading Dock Requirements
- Necessary Sprinkler Systems
- Security Issues
- Networking Capabilities

## How do Warehouse Designs Vary for Different Types of Spaces?

There are as many ways to design a warehouse as there are facilities. Based on the specific needs of your organization, your space may dramatically differ from a warehouse serving the same industry.

Whether you're moving into a new space or updating your current layout, one of the most important pieces of information you can communicate is the overall activity level and storage requirement of your operation:

- **Low activity/low storage requirements** - Often seen in smaller operations where manual handling is the norm.
- **High activity/low storage requirements** - Characterized by a single forward picking area with minimal storage overflow.
- **Low activity/high storage requirements** - Frequently a manual or semi-manual picking procedure that necessitates multi-level, high-density storage.
- **High activity/high storage requirements** - Typical of large-scale distribution centers, these fast-paced facilities rely heavily on automated material handling systems and extensive storage capacity.

Heating, cooling, and humidity controls can also have significant bearing on the warehouse design. Some require more general accouterments like storage, sufficient aisle space, designated receiving and shipping areas, etc. Others must protect perishables with proper chill space, refrigeration requirements and humidity control equipment.



# What Are the Steps in a Thorough Warehouse Design Plan and implementation process?

Warehouses are more than simply a sizable investment. They are the gatekeepers of your company's products and critical to its profits. The imperative planning associated with warehouse design and implementation ultimately hinges on these seven essential steps:

## 1. Get Clear on the Main Goals and Objectives

We often hear of operations managers looking to cut costs, capitalize on productivity, increase the efficiency of the picking process, and/or improve their customer service. However, it's not uncommon to want to keep the designs flexible enough to accommodate future expansion or account for product changes.

## 2. Identify and Document Areas for Improvement

Ping your staff and front line employees to make sure all methodologies and processes target specific opportunities for improvement. Have them weigh in based on their collective experience.

## 3. Gather Facility Information and Data

Warehouse design consultants can help you measure and document physical elements like personnel and inventory entrances/exits, column sizes and locations, ceiling heights, etc. Make sure you also furnish them with product information like the amount, size, and weight of SKUs, order history and activity logs.

## 4. Analyze Collected Data

Your consultant will then compare the data that was collected against your stated goals and objectives. If there are gaps in information or potential problem areas, modifications and alternate plans can be re-established.

## 5. Develop a Thorough Plan

Once a detailed project plan emerges, it will be easy to isolate the necessary steps required to take the layout from where it is, to where you want it to be. A proper plan will highlight essential tasks, necessary resources, and timeline for completion to include delivery and installation of your new storage solution equipment.

## 6. Plan the Implementation Process

At this stage your layout will morph from 3-D concept drawing to reality. A quality warehouse design service will go beyond conception, coordinating the arrival of essential products like racks and shelving and fine tuning sortation systems, pallet flow racks and the like.

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## **7. Conduct a Post-Project Review**

Before closing out the project, take time to dialog with the implementation team-- a vital step to help smooth future planning initiatives. For example, was the final layout implemented per design specifications? If not, were changes properly documented?

To conclude, when it comes to getting the most out of your warehouse design service the rules are simple, but not necessarily easy. In the long run, you want a warehouse design service that makes recommendations which go beyond the layouts and storage solutions you're currently using, or even those you think you need. Do your research to ensure their expertise is backed by an accumulated knowledge with varied experience across different warehouse and industry types. Give them access to intimate knowledge about your products so they can make an educated decision about which racks and layouts will work best. Be it cantilever, structural, pushback, or pallet flow, a good warehouse design service can help you determine which style is right for your operations.