

Packing Stations: Their Uses, Their Setup, and Importance



Packing Stations in Warehouse Management

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For the order fulfillment process to be flawless, you need to ensure that the correct order is packed correctly so that it reaches its destination, fully intact, and on time. To ensure that the products reach consumers in the undamaged condition, you need to master pickings, packing, and shipping operations.

In the article ahead, I am going to talk about one of the three critical processes mentioned above, packing, which requires a packing station where all the preparation happens. In the highly competitive market, just a 10-foot long table to wrap and pack a product won't work, since people need same-day delivery or shipping in ecommerce companies packing stations have to be more evolved.

But first, understand the order packing process in a warehouse.

What is an Order Packing Process?

Order packing is the warehouse management process of integrating all items of order into the appropriate boxes and packing them after weighing and checking them for the shipment.

The order packing process typically involves specific requisites to function appropriately, like choosing suitable packaging, printing relevant labels, and weighing the parcel.

Everybody knows that to ensure that the order picking is done most appropriately, one has to have a packing station that is advanced and provides all sorts of the necessary equipment to the worker.

What is a Packing Station?

A packing station is a space where the products are checked, packed, and labeled for shipping. It has all sorts of materials needed for packing within a hand's reach and is also ergonomically perfect. A perfect packing station can have tremendous positive effects on the order fulfillment process.

Packing stations are customizable and can be bought according to your workplace needs. There is a different packing station for various industries, for instance, an ecommerce company that deals with liquid and food items would have a packing station that has amenities to pack liquid and food products. On the other hand, a shoe selling ecommerce company will have a cardboard box and tapes.

Steps to Configure an Efficient Packing Station

Below you will find the steps about what all things you need to consider to set up a packing station. Let's go.

Ensure you have a lean warehouse

Well, all the tasks that are carried out in a warehouse are co-dependent, and hence fault in any of the departments can hamper your packing station's efficiency as well.

In this case, you need to look at your picking and inventory flow closely, arrange the packing station accordingly, and consider the following points.

- Is inventory flow smooth and unhampered or not?
- Is warehouses one of the missions to provide customers with quality products with the use of quality warehouse equipment and operation.
- Are the picking shipping and packing operations that good that you will buy products shipped from your warehouse?
- Are you employing failsafe methods to make sure the equipment or machinery doesn't pass on the errors and be safe?
- Are you and your warehouse operations team determined to deliver productivity, overcome issues, and ensure the highest safety precautions?
- Is the space in the shipping facility utilized efficiently

Customize packing station tables to ensure they are productive and worker-friendly

Create a detailed packing workflow after you have made your facility that supports your packing station.

Identify and segregate packing workflows that are distinctive from one another.

Packing stations with high volume small packages need to be more compact in design so that the worker has enough space to pack products quickly with all the packing materials within reach of hands.

Packing stations that deal with large and bulky products need to be spacious, more significant with equipment for lifting products to help workers in packing heavy items.

Plan the space where you keep packing stations by keeping in mind the festival and sales season. If you have a bustling packing station, you need to have more space so that the workers don't cause chaos. Also, extra space can accommodate automation equipment if you plan to install automated machines for packing.

5S Workflow Should be Employed to Enhance Packing Efficiency

"5S" is a Japanese philosophy that has a list of 5 steps that, if carried out meticulously, prepare a "clean and organized" workplace.

The five steps are:

Seiri means Sort

Seiton means Set In Order.

Seiso means Shine

Seiketsu means Standardize

Shitsuke means Sustain

Packing Station's design should be Ergonomically Viable.

Accidental injuries are bad, but what's more harmful is the injuries happening because of the wrong working postures; they slowly damage the muscles and bones. As a warehouse owner, you need to take care of your employee's health. Therefore, the packing stations should be designed to help your workers work in an ergonomic environment.

Packing stations should be fixed with power-assisted loading tools for heavy items, powered shelves, vertical lift modules (VLM), or horizontal carousels safely transporting heavy objects through the packing process.

Moreover, the packing station and chair's height should be adjustable depending on the workers' heights so that they don't have to bend time and again. Power assist also plays a vital role in adjusting the height.

Check if the packing process is working fine.

- Does the packer have the required table room to process orders?
- Did you make the method to confirm the packing list items?
- Are "protect and pack" steps followed without any errors?
- Are packers comfortable in including the printed offer materials or any other documentation in the shipping packages
- Is the packing station making it easy for the packer to affix the label containing details like the address and other things to the shipper without any errors?
- Is shipping manifests efficiently handled?
- What policies are designed to tackle errors and reduce them?

Conclusion

Packing is the last process that is in your hand before the order leaves for delivery. It's like a climax of a movie where all the efforts culminated to a single focal point, and if the director screws it up, all the efforts put by the initial scenes might go in vain.

To ensure that your order delivery is not ruined and you keep earning more by satisfying your customer, follow the above listed essential points to run and set up a packing station.

Because the packing station is where you prepare your product.

Essential Resources -

- <https://www.cisco-eagle.com/catalog/category/3190/configuring-an-efficient-packaging-station>
- <https://solusgrp.com/blog/post/designing-packing-stations-conserve-space.html>
- http://www.supplychain247.com/article/putting_the_power_of_the_packing_station_into_users_hands/dehnco
- <https://formaspace.com/articles/material-handling/13-ways-packing-stations-have-advanced/>