Distribution Software
Evaluation & Planning Guide

Microsoft Dynamics™

How does your distribution system

measure up?

Continuous flexibility in order to control costs and meet customer demand is critical to succeed in the distribution environment of today and tomorrow. The following survey was designed to help you analyze your current system's ability to deliver the speed and flexibility you need to stay competitive. It will also help you measure your system's potential for improvement and help you determine if your organization would benefit from implementing a new distribution software system.

Take a few minutes right now to complete this Distribution Evaluation from Microsoft

The Distribution Software Evaluation & Planning Guide is divided into three separate sections. Each section deals with factors critical to a fast, flexible system, including software system requirements, information access and reporting needs. Please circle your answer to the questions as best you can, and write your score in the right-hand column. When you've finished, tabulate your total score to find out the results of your survey.
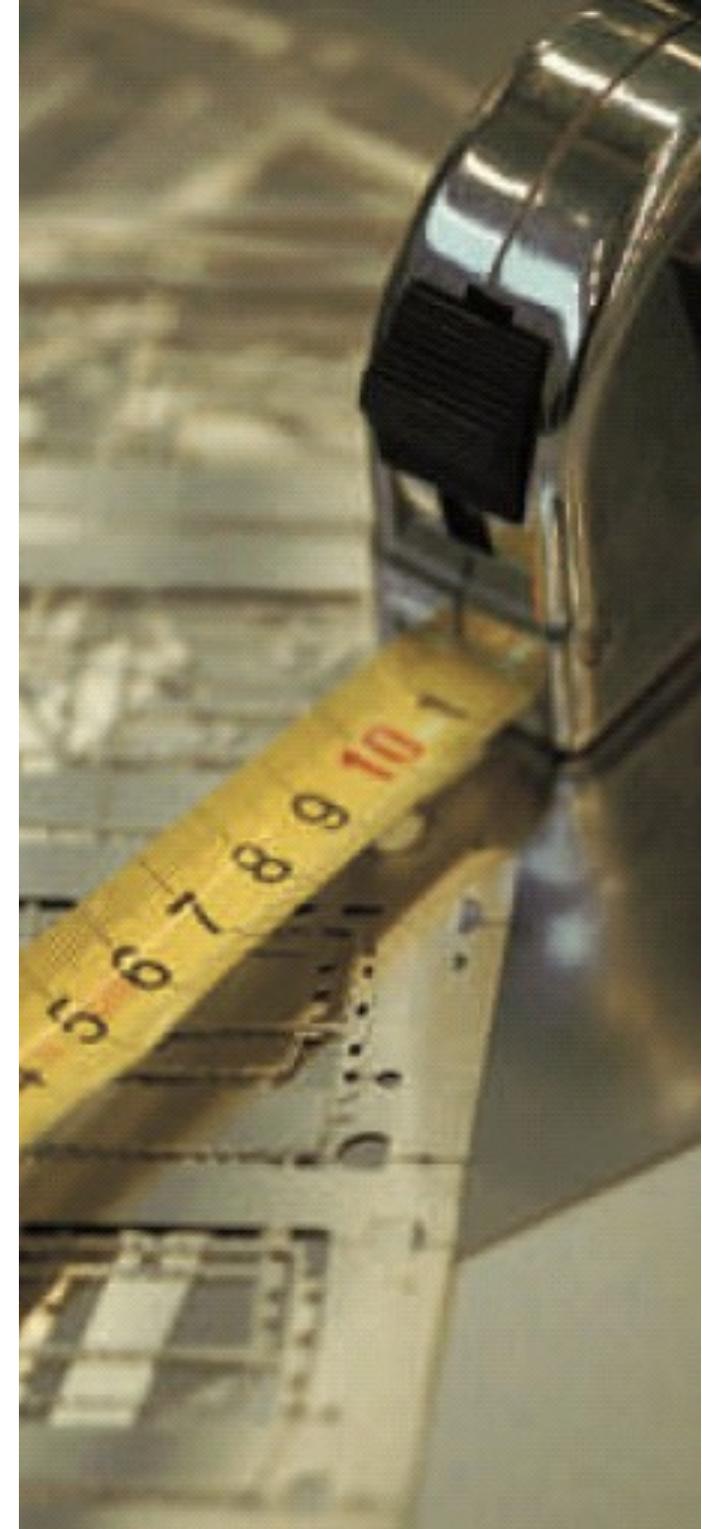
The Distribution Software Evaluation from Microsoft

Section 1: Distribution Software System Requirements

1. Does your current distribution system allow you to easily see what changes you could make to your shipment schedule to maximize on-time deliveries?

Yes = 0
No = 3

2. How easily can you accommodate rush orders with your software system?

Very easily = 0
Somewhat easily = 1
Not very easily = 3
Not at all = 5

3. How easily can you distinguish between your most and least profitable customer?

Very easily = 0
Somewhat easily = 1
Not very easily = 3
Not at all = 5

4. Is XML, EDI or electronic commerce a concern for you?

Very important = 5
Somewhat important = 3
Not very important = 1
Not important = 0

5. If a customer wants to order the same thing as last time, how important is pulling up previous orders to your company?

Very important = 5
Somewhat important = 3
Not very important = 1
Not important = 0

6. How easily does your current solution allow you to utilize wireless technologies such as Automated Data Capture, RFID, Bar-coding, etc.?

Very easily = 0
Somewhat easily = 1
Not very easily = 3
Not at all = 5

7. How easily does your current system allow you to collect information from your warehouse?

Very easily = 0
Somewhat easily = 1
Not very easily = 3
Not at all = 5

8. Are your inventory turns at goal or better?

Yes = 0
Somewhat = 1
Not very much = 3
Not at all = 5

9. How easily does your distribution software handle cycle counting?

Very easily = 0
Somewhat easily = 1
Not very easily = 3
Not at all = 5

10. Consider if your system takes advantage of current productivity tools. How old is your distribution software system?

10+ yrs = 5
7-10 yrs = 3
3-7 yrs = 1
Less than 3 yrs = 0

11. How often do you experience unforeseen stock shortages?

Very often = 5
Somewhat often = 3
Not very often = 1
Never = 0

12. How easily are you able to combine purchase requests from multiple sources to achieve purchasing efficiencies, such as vendor discounts?

Very easily = 0
Somewhat easily = 1
Not very easily = 3
Not at all = 5

13. How would your employees rate your current system?

Very easy to use = 0
Somewhat easy to use = 1
Not very easy to use = 3
Not at all = 5

14. How easily can you modify your system to fit your changing business needs?

Very easily = 0
Somewhat easily = 1
Not very easily = 3
Not at all = 5

15. How easily does your current software allow you to quickly access transaction information online?

Very easily = 0
Somewhat easily = 1
Not very easily = 3
Not at all = 5

DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS SUBTOTAL: _____

Section 2: Information Access

Ever feel like you go through all the work of entering data into a computer, but you are not able to access the right information when you need it? Review this section to see if a new distribution business system may be able to improve the information flow within your company.

1. How much would being able to share information across the network improve communication between departments?

Very much = 5
Somewhat = 3
Not very much = 1
Not at all = 0

2. How often do you experience delays or confusion because real-time information doesn't flow easily between systems?

Very often = 5
Somewhat often = 3
Not very often = 1
Never = 0

3. How often is accurate and up-to-date information readily available to decision makers?

Very often = 0
Somewhat often = 1
Not very often = 3
Never = 5

4. How easily can information be available online and in real-time from the warehouse floor to the top floor?

Very easily = 0
Somewhat easily = 1
Not very easily = 3
Not at all = 5

INFORMATION ACCESS SUBTOTAL:

_____

Section 3: Reporting Needs

Data is good, but can you access it in the format you would like to see it?
This section will help determine how urgently you need a new reporting system
to access your critical data.

1. Does your current system require you to use an additional report-writing package to obtain important information?

Yes = 3
No = 0

2. How clearly do your current reports communicate important information?

Very clearly = 0
Somewhat clearly = 1
Not very clearly = 3
Not at all = 5

3. How easily is your staff able to produce reporting information in a graphic format?

Very easily = 0
Somewhat easily = 1
Not very easily = 3
Not at all = 5

4. Some business software systems use accepted reporting standards such as XML to allow for smooth delivery of information. Do you have to reformat your data for financial reporting purposes?

Yes = 5
No = 0

5. How easily does your current system allow you to modify existing reports to communicate information to your employees and managers?

Very easily = 0
Somewhat easily = 1
Not very easily = 3
Not at all = 5

6. How easily does your current system allow you to develop customized reports To communicate with others within your organization?

Very easily = 0
Somewhat easily = 1
Not very easily = 3
Not at all = 5

7. How quickly does your current system tell which products and customers are profitable?

Very quickly = 0
Somewhat quickly = 1
Not very quickly = 3
Not at all = 5

REPORTING NEEDS SUBTOTAL:

_____

Tabulate your score.

Place the number for each section in the spaces below and add them together to determine whether a new distribution solution may be right for your organization.

Section 1: Distribution System Requirements _____

Section 2: Information Access _____

Section 3: Reporting Needs _____

OVERALL SCORE OF 95-126

With a score this high, you may want to seriously consider replacing your distribution software with a new solution that allows you to deploy your resources to their fullest, while ensuring a virtually seamless flow of information across the organization.

OVERALL SCORE OF 31-62

Overall, your system may be operating efficiently right now. However, you may want to consider an upgrade in the very near future. We suggest going back to the survey to start identifying which areas of your system may need improvement and then keeping closer track of these areas for efficiency and overall performance.

OVERALL SCORE OF 63-94

While some elements of your distribution software may be operating satisfactorily, your score suggests that other elements may be in need of upgrades. In fact, these upgrades may be crucial to maintaining your competitive edge as other players in the sector take advantage of more advanced systems.

OVERALL SCORE OF 30 OR LESS

Congratulations! Your distribution applications appear to be fitting your business needs at this time. If you feel that this evaluation guide didn't examine your business goals closely enough or as your needs change, we urge you to consider new software options, such as Microsoft Dynamics.

How Microsoft Dynamics

can help.

We at Microsoft hope that the Distribution Software Evaluation & Planning Guide has helped you analyze your current distribution system's capabilities and quantify its potential for improvement. If after completing the evaluation, you feel your organization could benefit from new technology, we also hope you'll consider Microsoft Dynamics.

This highly adaptable set of business software solutions are already used by thousands of mid-size companies to help lower inventory costs and deliver higher standards of customer service. This set of distribution solutions from Microsoft can help your organization:

- Automate critical business processes, from order capture to inventory replenishment, and help reduce wasteful activities.

- Deliver real-time business intelligence and alerts on the status of the business to management and customers.

- Enable customer self-service through Web portals.

- Create customer loyalty—Make it easy for you to provide your customers with accurate, up-to-date information so you can quickly answer all their questions.

- Empower employees to collect and use accurate inventory data in real-time with the latest wireless technology.

- Provide easy, real-time visibility into inventory, sales, purchasing, and financial information across multiple locations.

- Accurately track shipping and delivery of parts by integrating Automatic Data Collection (ADC) functionality with enterprise resource planning (ERP).

- Maintain accurate real-time inventory data and optimize layout, picking methods, and movement.

- Import sales and inventory data directly into familiar Microsoft Office system software such as Excel® and Outlook®

- Create accurate demand forecasts.

- Respond rapidly to unique customer demands, such as specific packaging and shipping requirements.

- Manage customer interactions across multiple communication channels.

Find out more today
Of course, this guide doesn't replace the expert advice you receive from an experienced industry professional. If you would like to learn more about the distribution solutions from Microsoft, or would like to find out how a new distribution solution can benefit your organization, please contact your local Microsoft Dynamics Certified Partner.

To find out more about Microsoft Dynamics, please visit:
www.microsoft.com/dynamics