

E-commerce pressures demand SME warehouse innovation

According to Statista, e-commerce has become an indispensable part of global retail noting that like many other industries, the advent of the internet has hailed a significant transformation in the buying and selling of goods.

By [Rina Redelinghuys](#) 12 May 2025



Rina Redelinghuys, Customer Services Executive, Cquential, part of the Argility Technology Group. Image supplied

The world is increasingly being digitalised – it's an ongoing factor of modern life with consumers all over the world now profiting from the perks of online transactions.

As global internet access and adoption rapidly increases - with over five billion internet users worldwide reported in 2025 - the number of people making purchases online is also growing exponentially.

In 2025, retail e-commerce sales are estimated to exceed \$4.3tn worldwide, and this figure is expected to reach new heights in future years.

So, in tandem with this online shopping trend, warehouses are under ever increasing intense pressure to deliver fast – and we mean fast. The problem is, many smaller operations just can't keep up, and their outdated systems and/or equipment is what's holding them back.

Retail supply chain re-imagined

Increased online shopping has turned the supply chain on its head, and customers expect a smooth experience from every business, regardless of its size.

Today, consumers are empowered with a myriad of choices at the touch of a button and they are unforgiving in the face of slow or poor service.

For small-to-medium sized businesses, this change is a difficult challenge, especially for those new to e-commerce.

For small to medium-sized businesses (SMEs) the stakes are high: their very survival depends on getting it right online.

However, despite the urgency, many SMEs are still stuck in the past, relying on manual processes that are holding them back. As a result, they are missing out on improved customer satisfaction, streamlined operations, and reduced inefficiencies.

Though it might seem obvious to adopt a warehouse management system, all too often SMEs cannot use many of the current solutions available because they are designed for large-scale operations.

Therefore, they need to seek a solution that has flexible functionality that adapts to their unique e-commerce business model. Moreover, such a solution must factor in their specific organisational setup as well as their financial limitations.

If SME retailers can't compete they can't win and grow

My advice is for SMEs to unleash their warehouse potential and turn it into a competitive differentiator in the market and the only way to do this is to:

- Automate.
- Optimise.
- Elevate.

Discover the power of automated, intelligent, and system-driven operations with a Warehouse Management System.

Critical processes such as inventory management, order fulfilment, and despatching need to be streamlined with seamless ERP integration and customised workflows.

Simplifying Warehouse Management System (WMS) implementations

SMEs often face significant challenges when implementing a WMS due to constraints on their IT resources. What is needed is a WMS that adjusts to their warehouse requirements without the need for modification or further development – simply put you can get beyond IT resource limitations.

It's important to ensure seamless integration with ERP solutions and standardised despatch processes. Cloud-based WMS solutions come with minimal IT requirements, inclusive maintenance and upgrades.

Cut costs – not capabilities

The switch to a cloud-based WMS can yield predictable monthly fees, eliminating upfront capital expenditures. Furthermore, it can reduce IT resource needs and support costs, as cloud-based solutions often include maintenance and software upgrades.

In a nutshell – the immediate benefits of introducing a WMS include:

- Accurate View of Inventory.
- Processing different kinds of order types plus larger volumes across different channels.
- Improved Efficiency and reduced labour costs.
- Improved Productivity and Customer Satisfaction.

What retailer does not want to achieve all of this as they navigate the choppy waters of online consumerisr

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