



Finding the Right WMS for Ambitious Warehouse Operators

Table of Contents

- 3 Ambitious Warehouse Operators
- 5 Growing Pains
- 9 Fuel Growth, Not Limit It
- 13 The WMS Search and Evaluation Process



Ambitious Warehouse Operators

Working Smarter, Not Harder

Growing warehouse operators and 3PLs know their business inside and out and they're always looking for ways to do more. To drive growth, they focus on improving efficiency, meeting changing customer expectations, and making the most of their existing resources. Growth comes from working smarter, not just harder.

Growing 3PLs and warehouse operators use technology to work smarter, faster, and scale confidently

Warehouse operators are turning to tech to do more with less. With labor still hard to find, automation helps teams streamline tasks, cut manual work, and keep operations moving without scrambling to fill every role.

But modern warehouse tech does more than cut errors and labor costs; it delivers real-time insights. Tools like AI and predictive analytics help forecast demand, plan labor, manage inventory, and fine-tune routes, making operations smarter from end to end

With automation, IoT, and robotics, operators gain data they can act on and share. That means better visibility for you and your customers, faster decisions, and stronger trust.

Growing Warehouse Operators



Serve businesses generating between **\$10 million to \$1 billion** in annual revenue



The warehouse typically range from **100,000-500,000 Sq ft**

Are often geared towards **e-commerce, manufacturing or 3PL**



Growth is fueled by expansion of **manufacturing, retail, and pharmaceutical sectors**



There are approximately **20,000-25,000** warehouses in the U.S.



U.S. warehousing and storage industry revenue reached **\$50.40 billion** in 2021

Warehouse operators use technology to work smarter, faster, and scale confidently



Increase flexibility and scalability



Enhance efficiency and optimize space utilization



Increase growth opportunities



Deal with persistent labor shortages



Be more competitive

Growing Pains

Need for Flexibility, Complexity and Scalability

Today's growing warehouses handle far more than pallet-in, pallet-out. From high SKU volumes to B2B, D2C, kitting, and returns, operations are more complex, and require flexible systems that adapt fast, without costly code changes or enterprise-scale overhead.

A WMS built on a low-code platform gives warehouse operators the agility to adapt fast. Whether it's meeting unique customer demands or solving problems on the fly, low-code systems make it easier and more cost-effective to tailor workflows and scale operations. That flexibility becomes a key advantage, especially for growing businesses looking to stand out in a crowded market.



Budget Constraints


Unlike enterprise giants, many growing warehouse operators don't have the luxury of big upfront investments. They need solutions that balance cost and capability, favoring SaaS and subscription-based WMS models that offer powerful functionality without the heavy lift on day one.



Pain Point: When Systems Don't Talk to Each Other

Growing warehouses need to connect quickly to the tools they already use. From ERPs to OMS platforms, seamless integrations help keep inventory, orders, and financial data in sync, without costly delays.

Out-of-the-box connectors speed up deployment and reduce manual effort, while real-time data ensures stock levels stay accurate, operations stay smooth, and customers aren't left waiting.



3PLs and warehouse operators supporting omnichannel and e-commerce rely on seamless platform integrations. From Amazon and Shopify to Magento and BigCommerce, it's common to connect with multiple systems at once, making smooth, reliable integration essential for keeping orders moving and customers happy.

To stay competitive, today's warehouse operators are leaning on robotics, IoT, and flexible automation. Integrating these technologies with a WMS reduces manual work, cuts errors, and frees up staff for higher-value tasks.

The need for integration is growing, and not just for efficiency. Operators rely on strong connectivity to:

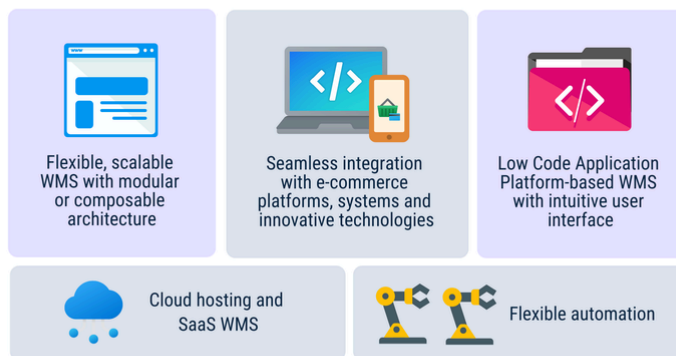
- Onboard new systems and partners without rebuilding infrastructure
- Accelerate order processing and returns while keeping data clean and visible
- Lower costs by reducing manual steps and avoiding third-party middleware

Without solid integration capabilities, warehouses risk siloed data, slower decisions, and rising operational costs. Worse, they fall behind as the market, and customer expectations, continue to shift.

Need to Connect to Innovative Technologies

Many warehousing and 3PL companies that are using legacy warehouse management systems may not realize the limitations of their software. Legacy WMS platforms tend to be built on rigid, outdated architecture that is incapable of effectively scaling to handle increased volume of inventory, orders, or SKUs. Dealing with operational complexity may also be problematic. As warehouse operations have shifted from simple pallet in/pallet out to direct-to-consumer individual item order selection, as well as to multi-channel, the level of complexity has significantly increased.

Warehouse Technology Adoption



Legacy WMS platforms weren't built for today's tech stack. Integrating with modern tools like ERPs, e-commerce platforms, IoT, robotics, and AI, is often clunky or impossible. That leaves teams relying on spreadsheets and manual work to bridge the gaps, driving up labor costs, slowing processes, and increasing the risk of errors.

The Need for Strong Partnerships with Technology Vendors

Many growing warehouse teams run lean, especially in IT. That's why they often choose turnkey WMS solutions with built-in services like implementation, project management, and ongoing support to keep things moving smoothly.

Vendors who offer hands-on guidance, multi-channel training, and tailored

onboarding help operators go live with confidence, and grow without getting bogged down.

The real advantage? A tech partner who shows up, adapts with you, and helps you win more business by making operations easier for your customers.

Examples of Flexible Automation in Warehousing



Fuel Growth, Not Limit It

Fast Growth Demands Smart
Resource Use





For 3PLs: Growing Revenue Through Value-Added Services

3PL warehouses often expand their offerings to stand out; charging for services like labeling, kitting, returns processing, portioning, quality checks, and even light manufacturing. These extras don't just add value, they open the door to new customer segments.

But delivering the service is only half the equation. To truly grow revenue, operators need flexible, automated billing that captures every task, every time. Tailored billing by customer, service type, or volume helps ensure nothing slips through the cracks and that every touchpoint gets paid.

Make More Room, Without Building More

With construction costs soaring, warehouse operators are rethinking space instead of expanding it. That might mean redesigning floor plans, adding vertical storage, or investing in mobile racks, all to fit more inventory without breaking ground.

But layout changes alone aren't enough. Pairing a smart WMS with the right tech partner helps ensure every inch of space is used efficiently. That means smoother operations, and room for growth, without the cost of building out.



Maximizing Workforce Productivity, Without Burning Out Your Team

With labor still hard to find, warehouse operators are doing more to attract, retain, and empower workers. From gamified tools and wearables to robots and AGVs, the goal is the same: help teams do more with less effort.

But productivity starts with the basics, giving every worker the right tools, training, and tech. Modern WMS platforms with labor management features make it easier to assign tasks, track performance, and identify where support is needed. Role-based interfaces help streamline workflows, keeping workers focused and efficient.

Many operators now use real-time labor data to track KPIs like order accuracy and lead time and tie them to performance incentives. And with a low-code WMS, you can tailor interfaces and workflows without IT bottlenecks or custom code.

The result? Faster, more accurate fulfillment, happier teams, and customers who keep coming back.



Stronger Customer Relationships Drive Smarter Growth

Growth-minded warehouse operators know that loyalty starts with trust. That means keeping communication clear, staying flexible, and adapting fast.

As industries evolve, so do expectations. Operators who can pivot quickly, not just respond, earn more than just satisfaction. They earn long-term loyalty, glowing reviews, and the kind of referrals that drive real growth.

How to Easily Scale Your Growing Business



Leveraging Innovative Technologies



Optimizing Warehouse Layout and Space



Boosting Revenue



Fostering Strong Bonds with Customers



Ensuring Top Notch Workforce Productivity

Business Expansion is Driven by



Increased Demand for E-Commerce and Omnichannel Retailing



Geographic Expansion Due to North American Advanced Technological Infrastructure and Asia-Pacific Growth in E-Commerce and Urbanization



Investment in Automation and Technology



Focus on Scalability and Sustainability



Industry-Specific Growth in Need for Cold Storage Warehousing for Food and Beverage Perishable Goods

The WMS Search and Evaluation Process

Thinking About a New WMS?

Choosing the right warehouse management system takes time, focus, and a clear plan. Before diving in, it helps to align your team and map out what success looks like.

Here are a few practical steps to jumpstart your search and set your evaluation process on the right track.



Define Your Objectives

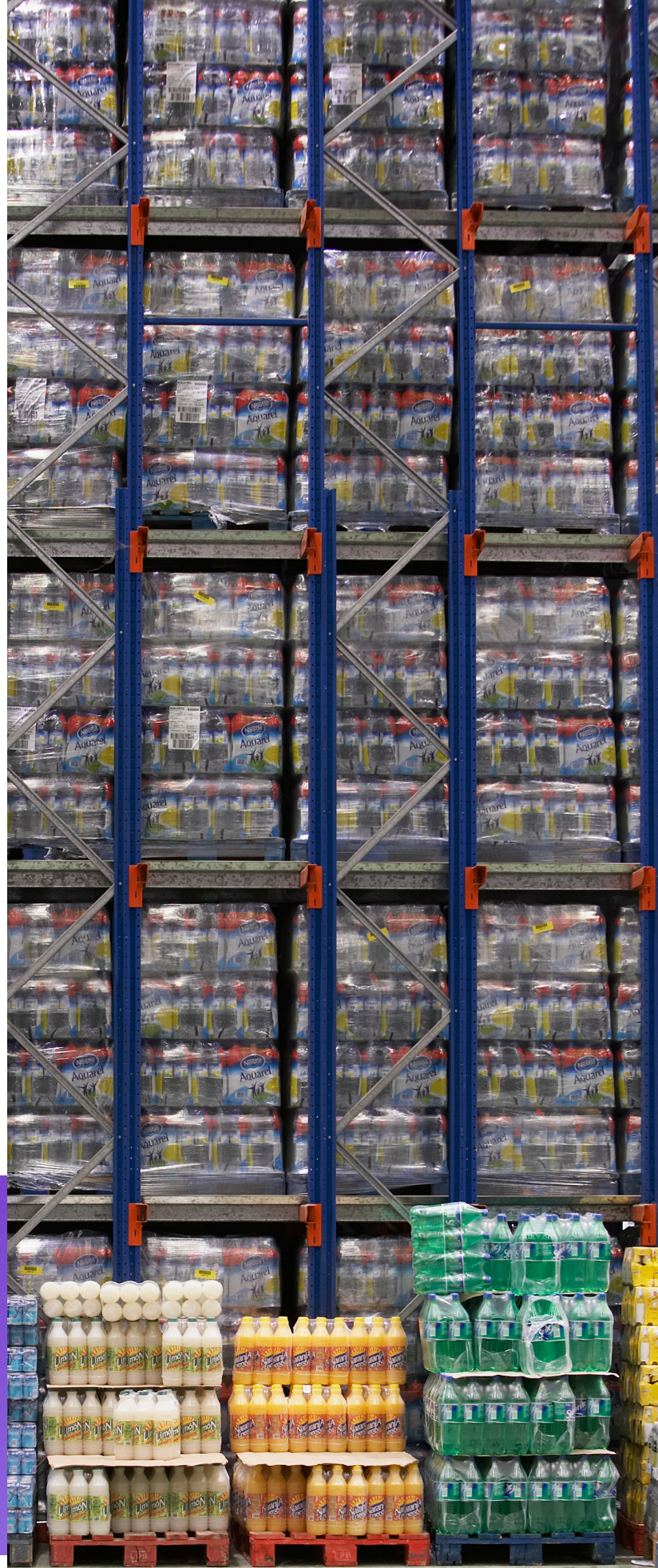
Before evaluating WMS options, get clear on what you need to solve and what success looks like.

Start by identifying your top priorities. Are you trying to:

- Improve inventory accuracy?
- Eliminate manual workarounds?
- Increase efficiency and reduce errors?
- Lower labor costs?

Next, define the scope. Will this rollout cover a single site or your entire network? Do you need 300 users or 3,000? Will you phase the implementation over time or go all in from day one?

Clear goals and scope give you a smarter starting point and help vendors respond with solutions that actually fit.



Take Stock of Your Needs

Choosing a WMS isn't just an IT decision. To find a solution that truly fits your needs, budget, and timeline, you'll need input from across your operation, typically operations, IT, and executive leadership.

Start by bringing these teams together. Discuss what's holding you back: Is it outdated workflows? Manual workarounds? Missed revenue opportunities? Capture the specific challenges each team faces and the outcomes they want to see.

Then, get organized:

- List your business goals, critical problems, and success criteria
- Outline your “must-haves” and “nice-to-haves” for features, integrations, and support
- Map your current workflows and highlight inefficiencies, especially areas patched with workarounds
- Note which processes need to be fixed, which customers are affected, and why change matters

Finally, don't just plan for today, think ahead. Make sure any WMS you consider is ready to scale with your business and support emerging tech like IoT, automation, AI, and predictive analytics.



Engage Cross-Functional Key Stakeholders

From the start, document input from every team involved. Each stakeholder, whether in operations, IT, or leadership—has unique priorities and pain points that deserve to be understood and addressed.

It's also smart to ask each team how they envision the rollout. Should you start with your largest customer? A smaller, less

complex account? A single site? Different strategies work for different businesses. What matters is finding the one that's least disruptive for you.

Having this perspective upfront helps you communicate clearly with WMS vendors and choose a solution that aligns with your reality.

WMS Budgeting: What to Consider Beyond the Software

Buying a warehouse management system isn't just about licensing costs. A smart budget looks at the full picture, from hardware to support to implementation.

Here are key areas to factor in:

1. Hardware Upgrades

Will you need new mobile devices, printers, or scanners? If so, estimate how many need replacing.

2. System Integrations

What systems will the WMS need to connect with? ERPs, e-commerce, shipping platforms? If EDI is involved, how many trading partners and document sets? Will EDI be part of this project or budgeted separately?

3. User Licenses

How many concurrent users will need access to the WMS?

4. Support Needs

Will standard business-hours support be enough, or do you need 24/7 coverage?

5. Managed Services

Are you planning to outsource system maintenance or monitoring? If yes, define the scope and whether it's included in the WMS project or handled separately.

6. Implementation & Project Management

WMS isn't plug-and-play. You'll need hands-on help from the vendor's professional services team, working closely with yours. Budget accordingly.



Think of your WMS budget as both a guide and a long-term investment. Most companies replace their WMS every 7–10 years, but growth, new technologies, and shifting customer needs can shorten that cycle, especially if your current system can't scale or integrate easily.

Legacy systems often reach a breaking point, not just functionally, but financially. Rigid architecture and rising maintenance costs eventually make replacement the smarter move.

When setting your budget:

- Define a realistic range with a clear “not to exceed” number
- Decide if one vendor can handle hardware, software, and services, or if multiple providers are needed
- Factor in the added complexity and oversight required when working with multiple vendors

Finally, clearly identify your “must-haves” and “nice to have.” Be sure vendors include all required features up front and flag any hidden costs for core functionality.



Researching WMS Vendors: What to Ask First

Questions to Ask When Starting to Look for Your Next WMS:

For growing 3PLs and warehouse operators, needs often fall between small operations and large enterprises. While you may not need massive custom builds, you also can't compromise on flexibility, scalability, and integration, especially if you're planning to grow.

As you begin your search, here are key questions to help guide your evaluation and ensure the WMS you choose is built for what's next.

Technology

1. How flexible is your WMS?

We're looking for a modern, adaptable platform. Is your solution built on a Low Code Application Platform?

2. Can you walk us through your architecture?

Does your WMS use modular or composable architecture to support scalability and configurability?

3. What cloud or SaaS options do you offer?

What's included in your hosting model; support, updates, security, uptime guarantees?

4. How does your WMS handle integrations?

Do you offer open APIs, pre-built connectors, or other tools that make integration fast, reliable, and cost-effective?

5. What are your cybersecurity protections?

How does your WMS safeguard data and ensure compliance with industry security standards?

6. How do you support automation and emerging tech?

Can your platform integrate with robotics, IoT devices, or other advanced technologies?

7. Is AI or predictive analytics built in or handled through third-party tools?

Tell us how your system uses technologies like AI and machine learning to drive smarter decisions or automate tasks.



Best Fit

1. What specific capabilities does your WMS provide for growth-oriented companies?
2. What other growing warehouse operations like ours are using your WMS?
3. How would this WMS scale with our changing business needs?
4. How long will it take for our company to be able to recognize the value of this system?
5. How long does it take to onboard new WMS users and customers?

Operations

1. How are reports and dashboards created in your system? Can business users build them, or does this require IT involvement?
2. Explain the capabilities that your WMS includes for ensuring regulatory compliance.
3. How difficult is the system to learn and use? What training options are available?
4. What specific functionality does your WMS include to optimize labor? Reduce operational costs?
5. If you have a complex operation or deal with multi-channel or e-commerce, make sure you validate that the WMS can support the required high transaction volume and speed.

Implementation, Support and Long-Term Success

1. What's your implementation methodology?

How many resources will be needed from our team and yours? What's the typical timeline, and what implementation strategy would you recommend for our business?

2. What support options are available?

Please outline all levels of support, standard, premium, 24/7, etc., and what's included with each.

3. Can we take a phased implementation approach?

Is it possible to roll out features gradually? If so, what are the pros and cons?

4. What additional services do you offer?

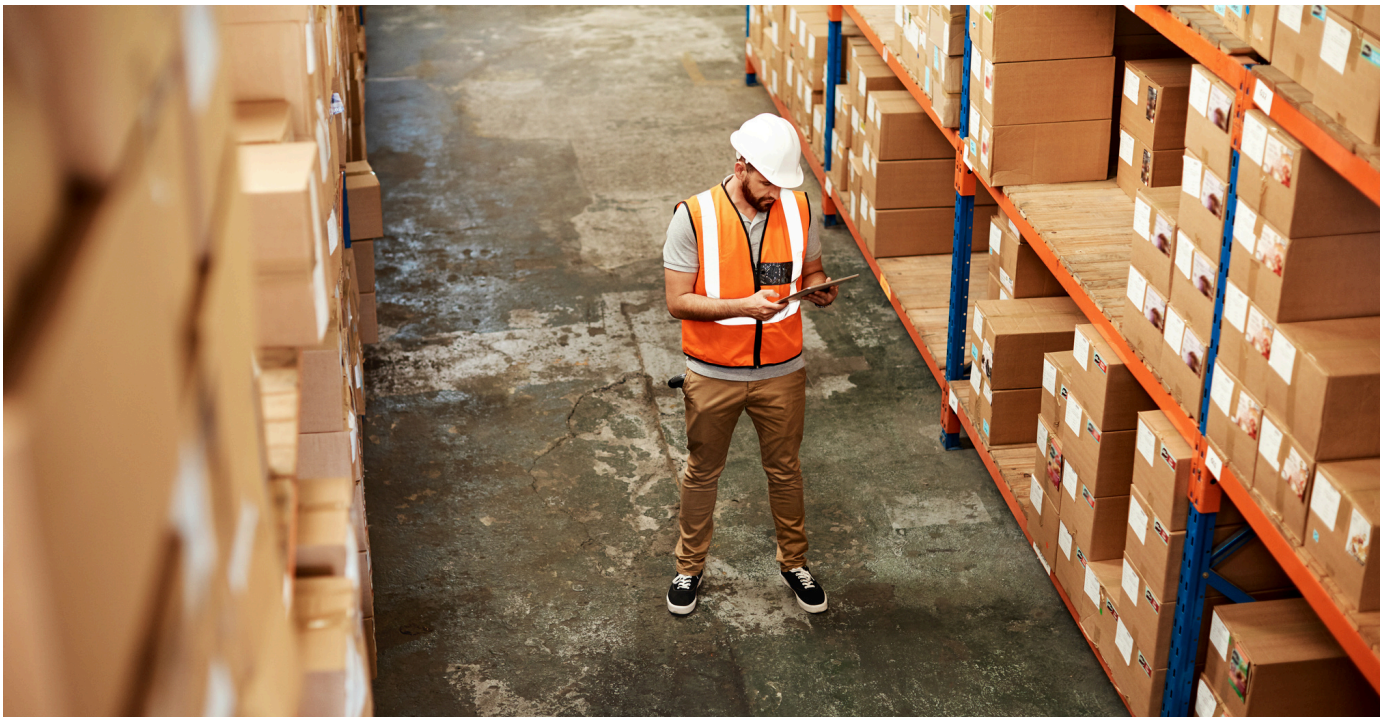
Beyond software, what services, such as managed services, hardware, or integration support, are available?

5. How do you ensure long-term WMS performance?

What tools, monitoring, or services help keep our system running at peak performance over time?

6. What are your training options?

Do you offer role-based training, on-demand resources, or in-app guidance? Is there a built-in help system within the WMS?



Ensuring Technology Fit

Integration must-Haves: What to Look For

Check for:

1. **Robust APIs** that enable reliable, flexible connectivity
2. **Middleware tools** for smooth communication with your existing systems
3. **Real-time data sync** with critical platforms like ERP, OMS, and e-commerce
4. **Pre-built connectors** to reduce time and cost for popular integrations
5. **Future-ready compatibility** with emerging tech like robotics, automation, AI, and IoT

WMS System Architecture: What to Confirm

1. **Modern Cloud Architecture**
Ensure the WMS is SaaS-based and built for today's cloud environments, not just hosted legacy software.
2. **Scalability**
Confirm it can scale seamlessly with your business, supporting more users, sites, and transaction volume without performance issues.

Test for Compatibility

1. **Validate System Fit**
Confirm the WMS works smoothly with your existing hardware, software, and network setup.
2. **Use Real Data in Demos**
Request a demo using real-world scenarios and sample data to test performance and usability.

Verify Data Compatibility

1. **Supported Formats**
Ensure the WMS can import and export data in formats you use such as CSV, XML, or JSON.
2. **Legacy System Integration**
If you're replacing an older WMS, confirm whether the new system can integrate with legacy tech or requires migration tools.

Examine Configurability and Customization Options

1. **Built-In Flexibility**
Confirm the WMS offers configurable workflows and settings, so you can adapt without relying on costly custom development.
2. **Customization Clarity**
Make sure you fully understand what can be customized, how it's done, and whether it requires vendor support or can be managed in-house.

datex

Engineered for Easy™

Get in touch.

marketing@datexcorp.com

<https://www.datexcorp.com>

Your warehouse operations are complex, but your WMS doesn't have to be

Datex is a SaaS platform provider that specializes in making Warehouse Management Software easier for operators in complex, regulated third party logistics, food and beverage, life science and industrial industry segments.

Founded in 1978 and based in Florida, Datex today serves over 200 clients across the United States and other global markets.

**Get a Preview
Footprint WMS.**

