



5 Proven Tips to Boost Productivity at Your Food Distribution Facility

By Brad Emerson



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5 Proven Tips to Boost Productivity at Your Food Distribution Warehouse

ALL food distributors; whether Foodservice, Wholesale Grocery or Food Processors, are under constant pressure to fill and deliver more orders in less time, while managing an explosion of changing SKU's and mandates to reduce costs. We've developed **5 Quick Tips Guaranteed to Boost Productivity...** and save you a few dollars too!

1

Add Case Flow to the Mix

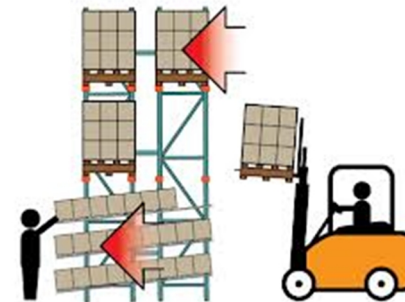
Case flow is a Food Distributor's Silver Bullet! -

This gravity-fed system consists of inclined rollers or tracks, creating dynamic FIFO storage where product flows from the load point at the back of the system to the pick location in front. When integrated properly within the storage mix, case flow creates space saving storage for efficient order selection while ensuring proper stock rotation practices.

Order picking accounts for up to 60% of operational costs, with approximately 70% of that spend comprised of slow to medium moving inventory – Consolidation of these slow-pick SKU's into first level case flow or pick modules achieves far greater item density in a smaller footprint, reducing travel time and increasing order picking productivity

Productivity, Space & Cost Savings:

- ◆ Converting floor level pallet rack bays to case flow can increase pick slots in a single bay by up to **40 locations**.
- ◆ Travel time will decrease between **40%-80%** while increasing pick rates and space utilization by **30-50%**.
- ◆ Immediate labor savings can exceed **50%** for items converted to carton flow from static shelving or pallet racking. (<http://www.mhi.org/ofs/solutions-guide/carton-flow>)



First Level Case Flow Conversion



Multi-Level Pick Module for Slow-Pick Consolidation



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2 Audit Slow-Pick SKU's Often

With slow-pick SKU's designated in case flow or pick modules, you're well on your way to improved productivity. However, this isn't a 'once and done' proposition. It's essential that you conduct periodic inventory audits to analyze SKU throughput and make needed slotting adjustments. This is particularly critical for Food Distributors who have to manage frequent velocity shifts and seasonal inventory.



- ◆ **Rule of Thumb** - Maintain a minimum of 1-2 weeks inventory per case flow lane
- ◆ Move the faster SKUs to selective pallet rack to avoid excessive replenishment for a particular slot.

3 Shift Some Fast Movers to the Floor

This is a great option for the high volume items, like paper towels or water, that require frequent case picks and rack replenishment. If pallet loads are stackable, and you have extra floor space, consider dropping some of these SKU's to the floor.

High volume case selection from bulk stacked pallets is very efficient and can **free up 6-7 pallet rack slots** as well as save labor the rack replenishment tasks.



4 Optimize Merge Routes

Not all items in a route are selected in the same area of the warehouse. Careful consideration of a possible merge point can help minimize the congestion and chaos around the dock door. Merging allows for the consolidation and less multiple handling of items being merged. The pick path is considered before any changes so it makes less impact on the operation.

5 Raise the Bar & Set Goals

Your workforce will rise to the challenge

- Develop strategies that will maximize labor productivity while ensuring job satisfaction. Accurately measuring labor rates and providing incentives for exceeding goals will help motivate workers and boost productivity.



- ◆ First make sure your workforce is prepared and train them to work smarter. Provide essential procedure and safety training to staff.
- ◆ Conduct time and motion studies for everything from truck unloading to case picking and pallet replenishment.
- ◆ Create a set of standards based on these studies and develop workforce goals.
- ◆ Award employees incentives for completing training and meeting productivity goals; recognition awards, certification, cash bonuses, if feasible.

E-Distribution can help you implement these productivity improvements starting with and preliminary inventory analysis. We'll develop storage mix and layout recommendations based on your SKU and velocity reports. Call or email today - info@e-dist.com or (866) 690-4585.

E-Distribution is a national storage and conveyor systems integrator with extensive experience helping Food Distributors develop efficient, cost-effective solutions using both new and like-new equipment; all expertly designed and seamlessly integrated for the most productive results.

