Ultimate Guide to Incorporate Knowledge Management for Product Fulfillment

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Customers are evolving and so are their expectations. In eCommerce, product fulfillment is the key to your brand's reputation and your profits. It's what dictates your customer retention.

To get it right, you need to make informed decisions, and to make informed decisions, you need knowledge management. We're using data in almost all aspects of eCommerce. Product fulfillment is no different.

Data analysis and knowledge management are leading the change in product fulfillment. Also, 81% of supply chain managers believe that it is knowledge management that will be prominent in reducing costs but most product fulfillment managers aren't yet well-versed with integrating knowledge management.

You don't have to look any further. We've listed some methods you can use to **integrate knowledge management** for the **product fulfillment** process.

1. Choose a Knowledge Management Platform

A key feature of knowledge management is to bring your customers, your sales team, and your supply chain provider, all under one platform. So the first step to incorporating knowledge management for product fulfillment is to create a knowledge-based supply chain, where everyone has easy access to data from various sources when they need it. PHPKB is one such knowledge management platform.

The objective of your knowledge management system is to overcome the challenges of information management and ensure the distribution of quality product information. It should enable you with the opportunity and tools to improve access to product data at all times. Use an order fulfillment system that offers end-to-end tracking for orders and inventory. It will facilitate you to track the entire order fulfillment process, finances, and human resources, through a secure, cloud-based

system.

2. Develop a Partner Ecosystem

Here's a surprising fact: 65% of procurement leaders have no visibility beyond their tier 1 suppliers. There's a big knowledge gap to be filled. So if you're incorporating knowledge management into the product fulfillment process, they should be the first to get educated and receive the necessary training for that.

This holds especially true if you're using a third-party logistics provider. Encouraging their participation is crucial to mitigating risk. Supply chain mapping across stakeholders improves internal and external collaboration to benefit customers and improve end-to-end visibility.

3. Integrate with Suppliers and Vendors

As evident from the previous point, supply chain vendors play a key role in your order fulfillment process. So don't treat them like any other vendor. Knowledge Management systems enable you to integrate directly with your supply chain vendors. It allows you and them to be on the same page about access or shortage of inventory so that they can take the necessary steps to address fulfillment issues.

This may seem like a simple process but as an eCommerce store, you might have numerous suppliers scattered across regions. So you need a centralized knowledge base system where your entire restocking and accounts payable process can tie together and function seamlessly without extensive human involvement. All you have to do is set up your rules, and connect with your vendors and supplies, and your system can take it from there.

4. Select the Right Order Picking Strategy

Order picking is one of the most critical functions in the warehouse. It largely dictates the order accuracy and timely order fulfillment which ultimately defines a successful customer experience. Some common order picking strategies include discrete order picking — where orders are picked one at a time and zone and batch order picking — where multiple orders are picked at once.

At this stage, you need to involve knowledge management — everything from order management to the creation of packaging, carrier-complaint labels, cross-docking, picking and consolidation of orders, and labor management. Your knowledge management systems will track every item as it moves through a distribution center by employing radio frequency ID (RFID) tags, barcoding, etc. It will ultimately increase throughput, accuracy, and productivity.

5. Optimize Inventory Management

If you're in eCommerce, you'd know that having too much inventory or too little is not ideal. Having too little poses the risk of running out of stock and short for a customer order and having too many increases the working capital and storage costs. Hence, integrating knowledge management can tremendously be helpful for this task. In fact, 76% of IT managers and warehouse managers stated that investing in analytics platforms is their top priority.

Integrate a tool that facilitates you to forecast demand based on your previous sales. Machine learning features help you predict the future based on past transactions. Experts may perform predictive analysis by looking at seasonal demands from the previous purchases or by leveraging the prior knowledge of an event. Knowing just how much inventory to have at the right time can significantly help you lower your costs and fulfill the current product demand.

6. Work with Real-time Data

Guessing doesn't work in order fulfillment. You need to know everything for sure. Why was the product delayed? Why is there a shortage? Why is there an excess? And how is the product reaching your customer? You need to be in the loop for everything. And while you're at it, you also need to find a method to get access as you scale. It's simply impossible to coordinate with vendors for every single order.

So while you're integrating your knowledge management system, ensure that it gives you a bird's eye view of all the consolidated information under a single system. The things that you need to have at your disposal are:

Products	Orders	Suppliers	Procurement

Products	Orders	Suppliers	Procurement
Product ID	First name	Supplier name	Supplier ID
Item name	Last name	Supplier ID	Product ID
Item location	Product ID	Supplier email	Number received
Item numbers	Number shipped	Supplier phone	Purchase date
Measurement units	Order date		
Starting inventory			
Minimum required.			

Use this data to find incomplete records in product fulfillment. Also, frequently audit to find any errors. To enhance this practice, use mobile technology to integrate it with the supply networks everywhere.

Wrapping Up

Knowledge is everywhere. From why your customer is ordering a particular product to why they want to return it. And when you have millions of orders on a weekly basis, you need an automated mechanism to record this information for you. From optimizing your inventory to leveraging real-time data, a knowledge management system can help you source the most valuable information when you need it the most.

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