

## Building new or extending warehouses and logistics centers? Start planning waste management from the beginning!



When building new or rebuilding existing warehouses and logistics centers, it is important to include waste management in the plan at an early stage. If it is initiated late in the process, mistakes are often made, or worse - no decisions, which can lead to expensive and ineffective solutions that also affect the working environment in the warehouse.

The sales teams of the compaction solution provider Orwak often meet warehouse managers to review and discuss waste management solutions. Unfortunately, there are quite a few examples of how waste disposal in warehouse and logistics center can be lost in the process, planned late or simply down-prioritized.

"We often see that the companies do not fully understand their own waste management or at least not reflect upon it. Many are complacent with their current solution and do not see that it is ineffective."

There are of course also examples of companies that discover that the existing solution does not work properly, but the majority do not even know that they have a problem.

## **Waste management not in focus in the planning process**

The main cause of expensive and ineffective waste solutions is that thoughts about how to manage the waste streams and organize the waste logistics from the warehouse come in too late in the construction process. When that is the case, the waste solution must be adapted to what is already built, which means that the best solutions are no longer an option.

The primary focus when building a new warehouse is the inbound and outbound delivery of goods; the amount of goods to handle, where to unload and unpack incoming goods and where to pack and dispatch the outgoing. What quantities of packaging material they must handle and where those are generated is unfortunately often forgotten.

This approach creates poor conditions for optimal waste management and frequently results in special solutions that become unnecessarily expensive, partly due to the fact that it becomes much more expensive to develop non-standard solutions and partly because a lot of work time is spent on waste handling.

## **High level decisions without regard for waste management**

Whether a new warehouse is built or an entire business including the warehouse is moving to a new location, the decision is often taken on a high level in the organization. It sometimes happens then that the warehouse moves into a building originally intended for offices.

As management is often unaware of exactly how the staff handled unpacking, handling, transportation and disposal of waste in the old building, the decision is often made without taking the optimal waste solution for the specific warehouse into account.

## **Poor waste management planning has negative impact on the working environment for the warehouse staff**

Not only is the business suffering from increased costs and reduced efficiency, when waste management is not planned properly, but it can also have a negative effect on the working environment for the staff in the warehouse, unless the correct tools and equipment are in place. One example is that warehouse staff may lift waste bins, which are often heavy, high to empty them. That is far from an ergonomic approach, but the heavy lifting can be avoided by using an automatic bin lifter.

## **Under-dimensioned - the most common fault at warehouses and logistics centers**

Another risk of a poorly planned waste solution is that it is under-dimensioned; the machines do not have the sufficient capacity for the amount of waste in the business or the loading gate of the machine is too small for the warehouse staff to easily get rid of all the waste. As a result, warehouse and logistics personnel need to spend a lot of time on something that should actually go fast and smoothly.



You may see warehouse personnel push down the waste by hand or with a stick to force it into a baler or waste compactor. To spend that much time on manual work and on waiting for the machine to process the waste and get ready for the next load, is not a sustainable solution in the long run. It is important to choose waste handling equipment with the right capacity. The warehouse staff should be able to effortlessly drop the packaging material into the machine and then just walk away and forget about waste!

*If you are planning to rebuild, expand or move a warehouse or distribution center, please contact Orwak! We are happy to guide you to the optimal waste management solution for your business.*