Logistics management is essential in today's global marketplace, whether you run a small shop that handles a few tons of merchandise each year, or your company ships and receives from multiple warehouses in far-flung locales. The last thing you want is to lose products, waste time or squander any operational resource because of inefficient third-party logistics (3PL). Luckily, 3PL solutions help you solve logistics problems in warehouse settings, especially as they relate to increasing ROI, efficiency and productivity. Effective 3PL software provides the following 9 key benefits to your logistics management:

1. Security

3PL software is more expansive that a typical warehouse management system (WMS). It integrates several layers of security, which is an essential feature if your company handles sensitive materials or private products with high confidentiality options. In what is now the Internet's era, it's good to have strong encryption layers in your 3PL application.

2. Reliability

You don't want a WMS that malfunctions in the middle of an important shipment, do you? Nobody wants to lose money because of unreliable software, so choosing a solid program like 3PL software indirectly increases your ROI, logistical efficiency and customer satisfaction levels.

3. Transparency

Everything is transparent in a 3PL management suite. You see what goes out, what comes in, the final inventory balance and with which various logistics services providers you're partnering. The beauty of the program is that you can track everything everywhere all the time.

4. 3PL Invoicing

Your ROI goes up when you can correctly bill customers on time. Inefficiency is no longer an issue in your operations when you use a 3PL program, because the system automatically generates invoices based on inputted data. Make sure that you key in proper codes, data and pricing information for all clients to make the most out of your 3PL program.

5. Item Ownership at the Warehouse Location Level

You can track item ownership at the warehouse level, an important feature that gives you peace of mind when you handle several different items at multiple locations. Whether it is raw

material, a work-in-process or a finished product, the software helps you track inventory in real time.

6. Self-Service: Customer Access to Their Data

Logistics problems often arise when clients can't access or see their inventory data in the supply chain. With 3PL software, this is one headache you won't have to worry about. 3PL software embeds functionalities that add value to clients through real-time and effective access to their shipping, receiving and ending-balance information.

7. Multiple Communication Channels

Multi-channel communication is another highly-valued feature in a 3PL program. Unlike the standard WMS, which manages inventory within proprietary warehouses for one company, 3PL management software takes care of logistics for thousands of client-owned products. Multiple communication channels become essential here as each client has specific requirements about the way products are manufactured, invoiced, packed and shipped. These channels include everything from cloud-based services to email and built-in messaging features.

8. Cost Tracking

It's good to bill customers on time and correctly, but it's even better to track costs for those clients. That way, you add value to clients' operations by showing them not only their logistics expenses, but also their operational costs such as materials, labor and production overhead. Providing such services boosts your company's bottom line and ROI because it adds tangible value to clients, which increases their loyalty and improves your brand's reputation.

9. Industry Standard Flexibility

3PL applications have industry standard flexibility, meaning they give you state-of-the-art features as well as options that abide by the latest government regulations and industry best practices.