



BARCODING SYSTEMS

Why Small to Medium Businesses Should Incorporate Barcoding Systems for Growth



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INTRODUCTION

Sustaining Business Growth Requires Having the Right Tools

Growing as a business presents its own set of rewards, as well as difficulties. Keeping tabs on inventory, processes, and information becomes more challenging as customers and contracts increase and diversify. The ability to keep up with demands can cause frustration for businesses and customers, and frustrated customers can halt growth.

With the current shopping economy, keeping up with order demands and fulfillment can be stressful. In a world where 'one-click-buying' and 'next-day-shipping' are common terms, *how can growing SMBs (small to medium businesses) meet and keep up with demands?*

- **Are you a small business** needing to incorporate barcode labeling systems and software to process and track orders for a new contract? It doesn't have to be complex or complicated. With the right specialist, anyone in the company can easily learn and manage barcoding systems.
- **Are you a medium-sized business** needing to upgrade their current systems and software to better manage the complexity of growing demands? The goal should be to optimize technology to become more dynamic and profitable, not break your bank.

Having a barcode system that works with you starts with understanding basic needs as a small business and moves into how to upgrade existing systems for more complex and dynamic needs. One key to upgrading your barcode labeling systems and software is finding a company that understands where you're at and can see where you're going, while building a relationship on trust that lasts a lifetime.



Getting Started

Small businesses that are just starting out with their products might be selling items in their own stores, selling online, or selling in other small shops. Tracking inventory and orders may not be a big deal in the beginning, but what happens when you land that awesome contract with a larger venue that has requirements for tracking and coding?

Getting a barcode system set up does require a whole new department that your company may not be ready for yet. There are systems that are easy to learn and manage so you can meet the growing needs of your business.

Getting Smarter

Medium-sized businesses often have barcoding systems and software that they set up during the move from small to medium. How effective are those systems in keeping up with current and future growth? Chances are that your current technology needs optimizing to become more dynamic.

Updating and upgrading your barcoding systems and software can help your business create smoother forward momentum with more profitable returns. Often there is a need to coordinate between several departments. You know what your company needs or wants but are unsure of how to get there. Why wouldn't you want help from an expert that can see your future with you?

System and Software Concepts

From basic concepts to more complex needs, this eBook highlights some of the most popular products and software that every SMB should become familiar with.

It doesn't have to be complicated to help your business excel while keeping happy customers.

In the beginning, a small business will need to understand scanners, printers, and the basics of barcode labeling.

Medium businesses typically already have the basics down and are moving into more complex matters, such as Bartender, RFID, and upgrading warehouse systems.

A Partner Can Make All the Difference

How many companies seem to come in, drop off your items, and then walk away, leaving you scratching your head on what do?

Why wouldn't you

*want a partner that understands **where you're at** and **where you're going**?*

DecisionPoint Technologies has been creating partnerships, helping SMB's move forward into the future.

DecisionPoint has helped many businesses meet the demands of growth, such as a small business getting their first big grocery store contract and a medium business growing from \$25 million in sales to \$900 million.

What are your goals?

When you are considering a company to help set up your barcoding systems and needs, it should be about the quality you can receive and the trust that they will be there to help you along the way.



PART 1

Getting Started for Small Businesses

Landing major contracts is a dream come true for a small business wanting to grow. Maintaining and renewing those contracts can add stress to an already-adapting small business. When managing growth with contract requirements, it is imperative to understand the basics of barcoding.

Barcode labels are used to identify products and assets, and have been in use since the 1980's. Over time, as technology has improved, so have barcode and scanning technology. From 1D to 2D, tracking stock and inventory has become faster and far more efficient. The amount of data in a single barcode has become more complex in a smaller footprint.

Scanning and printing equipment have also upgraded along the way. Scanning equipment has become more durable, can scan at greater distances, and can even scan at different angles. Barcode printers are available to small businesses for inhouse printing for simple solutions.

What's in a Barcode?

Barcodes improve efficiency and are vital to supply chains, inventory management, transportation, asset management, and more. Barcodes provide a means of knowing what a product is and where it goes. It would be rare to find a major retailer that does not require barcodes to sell products at their stores.



A 1D barcode is a linear black and white line pattern, using variable-width lines and spaces for encoding information. The horizontally encoded numbers and characters, from left to right, typically holds only 20-25 characters. The most familiar 1D barcode is that of the common UPC code on grocery and consumer items.

2D barcodes created a faster and more efficient method of tracking stock and inventory than 1D could. 2D barcodes are scannable from any direction and orientation, even if the barcode is worn out and slightly damaged, interpreting the missing information accurately.

2D barcodes use patterns, shapes, and dots to encrypt as many as 2,000 characters, and are scannable up to 50 feet away. 2D barcodes can also contain images, website addresses, and binary data, allowing them to be independent of a database.

Meeting Contract Needs

On top of the serialization requirements barcodes hold, many major contracts also require **Advanced Shipping Notifications (ASN)**. This maximizes visibility, accountability, and transparency. An ASN is an electronic document that provides detailed information about a pending delivery, such as:

- When shipping occurs
- Physical characteristics about the shipment
- Mode of transportation being used (carrier information)
- Estimated arrival

An ASN adheres to compliance labeling and shipping labels for your new contract. Within the ASN are serial numbers and purchase order numbers, providing a means to automatically capture data for your clients to quickly process inbound orders.

Get Started on the Right Foot

More businesses are streamlining their processes by incorporating technology that can grow with them. Adding barcode technology into your business to help maintain new contract requirements doesn't have to be "one more thing" on the list of to-dos. It is a crucial step in the growth of your business, and it can help to streamline current processes.

Integrating a barcoding system into your small business does not have to be overly complicated. Getting started with a barcoding system as a small business does not require a specialized department. Nor does a good setup have to cost a small fortune. There are good, better, and best options to match your budget and your needs.

Barcode systems can also allow for better inventory management, monitoring incoming and outgoing materials/products, and help keep your company focused on the current task at hand while thinking about what comes next.

Instead of focusing on a finish line, focus on your growth and obtaining that next contract.





PART 2

Getting Smarter for Medium Businesses

Finding the right barcode labeling products as a medium-sized business to meet your constantly growing needs can sometimes feel like a minefield. Contracts can have several different demands and using old or outdated technology is a setback that can also cost a lot of money in chargebacks. You know what you need and want from your technology, but you may not know how to get it.

Wouldn't it be easier to have your technology bring all the different demands of contracts as well as your wants and needs into a single, user-friendly interface? By upgrading your technology, department coordination and general management can be made simpler.

Smarter Technology

Having been inducted into the world of barcoding for a while now, you may already be familiar with 1D and 2D barcoding technology. Are 3D barcodes the next step for your company? 3D barcodes are primarily used as an added security measure during the manufacturing of some pharmaceutical, medical, and high-end jewelry products.

3D barcodes, also known as QR codes, are an upgraded version of 2D and are not a replacement. 3D barcodes look like 2D barcodes but differ in the fact that you can feel the bars and squares that are slightly protruding from the barcode. This form of barcode is typically engraved directly onto the surface of a product or onto a type of alloy that is then attached to the product.

Maybe it's time to integrate a barcode labeling system with an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. By providing a direct interface between the barcode labeling system and the ERP system, your operations can benefit with interconnection while maintaining the look and feel of your current systems and keep production flowing smoothly.

Barcodes are not the only items that have been quickly advancing with technology. Barcode printers can print better and faster than before, with varying sizes to match in-house printing demands. Barcode scanners range from ring-size to rechargeable handheld devices. Monitors can be fixed to vehicles or transferable and are stronger and faster.



Even software systems have seen major advances. Medium-sized businesses tend to have several contracts with different needs, requiring something to bring everything into a single interface, which is more common now. With all the options available now, it's easy to see how a company can get lost in a sea of options to choose from.

Coordination Between Departments

Many medium-sized businesses have several departments that need to cohesively work together: IT, marketing, sales, warehousing, etc. When barcode systems are outdated, one department may not get pertinent information. Or the system could constantly bug out, creating chaos and disrupting fulfillment. This costs more money for a business than upgrading a system.

Some businesses also use consultants for contract fulfillment. This requires hiring someone to take your company into the future while managing complexity of communication inside and outside of your company. *How many solutions driven companies can help you upgrade your systems with what you need to grow while managing several chains of communication?*

Warehouse Management Upgrading

In an era of technology and increasing omnichannel shopping, creating a smarter warehouse for the future to keep up with demands and your growing needs is ever important.

If you have a warehouse management system, look around your warehouse to see if labels are fading and wearing down.

If you don't have a system, how will you maintain growth?

Installing smart labels for easy scanning and enhancing the visibility of your signs will boost productivity and expedite order fulfillment.

Is your warehouse

*designed to keep up with your **demands** and **growing needs**?*

Smart Growth is Your Future

Optimize the expense of updating/upgrading your barcode systems and software in a way that will help your company see faster growth with larger profits. Hire a company that will understand multiple aspects of your business, from multiple internal points of contact to including external consultants.





PART 3

Concepts for Small Businesses

Getting your small business set up with barcoding technologies does not have to be intimidating. If you're not familiar with the lingo involved with it, it can seem a little overwhelming. This is where a good specialist should be able to help you easily understand the most complex aspects.

From understanding barcode labels to understanding the type of equipment out there, it helps you to understand what you might want to ask for.

This section describes what equipment is needed to get you started, such as scanners, printers, labels, and software.

Barcode Labels

Barcode labels identify products and assets, which is critical to your business. Compliance, brand identity, and effective data/asset management require effective and accurate labeling. The quality of the labeling and printing effects operational efficiency.

Knowing the type of barcode you need will also determine the supporting technology you need (integration systems, printers, scanners, readers). And like with any equipment, repair service and proactive maintenance to keep printers making labels with scannable barcodes is essential.

Scanning and Verifying Barcode Labels

As you start off, you will need scanners that can read the barcodes you are using quickly and efficiently. Using a cheap alternative can lead to misreads and are not designed for longevity. Following is a description of the types of equipment used when incorporating barcodes into your company.

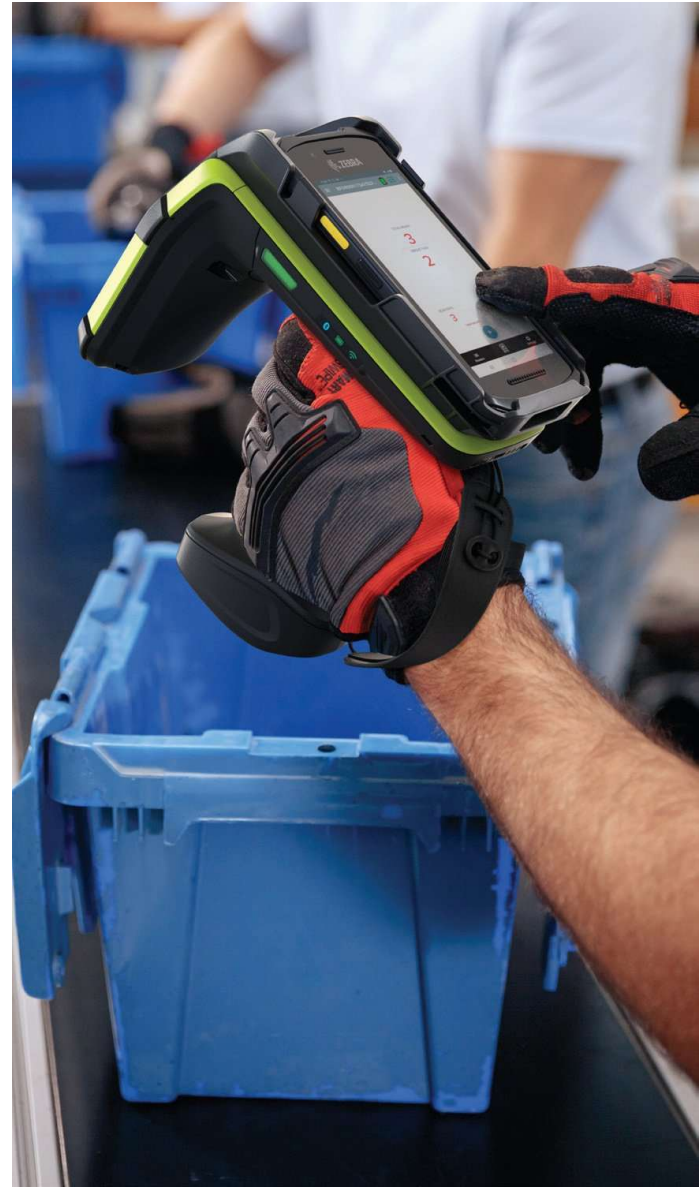
Handheld devices enable data collection while on the move. They're available in a variety of keypad configurations to accommodate your business needs, and they support several different wireless technologies. Handhelds, manufactured by companies like Zebra Technologies, are commonly used for barcode scanning.

Using barcode verifiers can make sure barcodes are readable. Verifiers are designed for accuracy and repeatability, checking your barcodes for the highest ANSI or ISO quality using a pass/fail or letter grade. A quick search will find a wide range of models and prices. It's important to hire a specialist that can get the best fit for your size, your goals, and your budget.

Printing Barcodes

Printing barcode labels from your facility provides 24/7 reliability to eliminate downtime. From large labels to small, you can find a barcode printer that is right for you that can be connected wirelessly or through a standard connection for flexible configuration. The user-friendly designs of barcode printers simplify maintenance and troubleshooting.

Industrial barcode label printers range from specialty thermal printers, including barcode label printers, mobile barcode printers, and print-and-apply systems. Printers are adaptable to meet your small business and evolving technology needs, from black-and-white labels to color.



Barcode Labels

Barcode labels come in a variety of sizes, shapes, colors, and materials. There are also the printing supplies like wax, wax/resin, and resin barcode ribbons. Direct thermal fuses ink onto the label material while the thermal transfer method prints images via wax or resin ribbons.

Food and beverage companies will need to consider pressure-sensitive prime labels. These items leverage flexographic and digital offset printing technologies to deliver professional, polished graphic treatments. Digital printing for prime labels enables you to adjust specifications as needed, change labels according to seasonality, print multiple SKUs, and personalize offerings according to location or client.

Software Basics

Barcode printing software, such as BarTender® which is outlined in more detail in the next chapter, can help you more effectively create custom labels, asset tags, shipping labels, ID badges, coupons, and other items that can improve your supply chain, asset tracking, and other applications. These solutions also reduce errors by eliminating manual data entry and can automatically generate company-specific serial numbers and other data you need for your labels.

An enterprise resource planning (ERP) system is meant to have all areas of your business synchronized to improve accuracy and efficiency.

Merging barcode label software with your ERP system will make it easy to print labels with the information that's provided in your ERP system, streamlining the process.

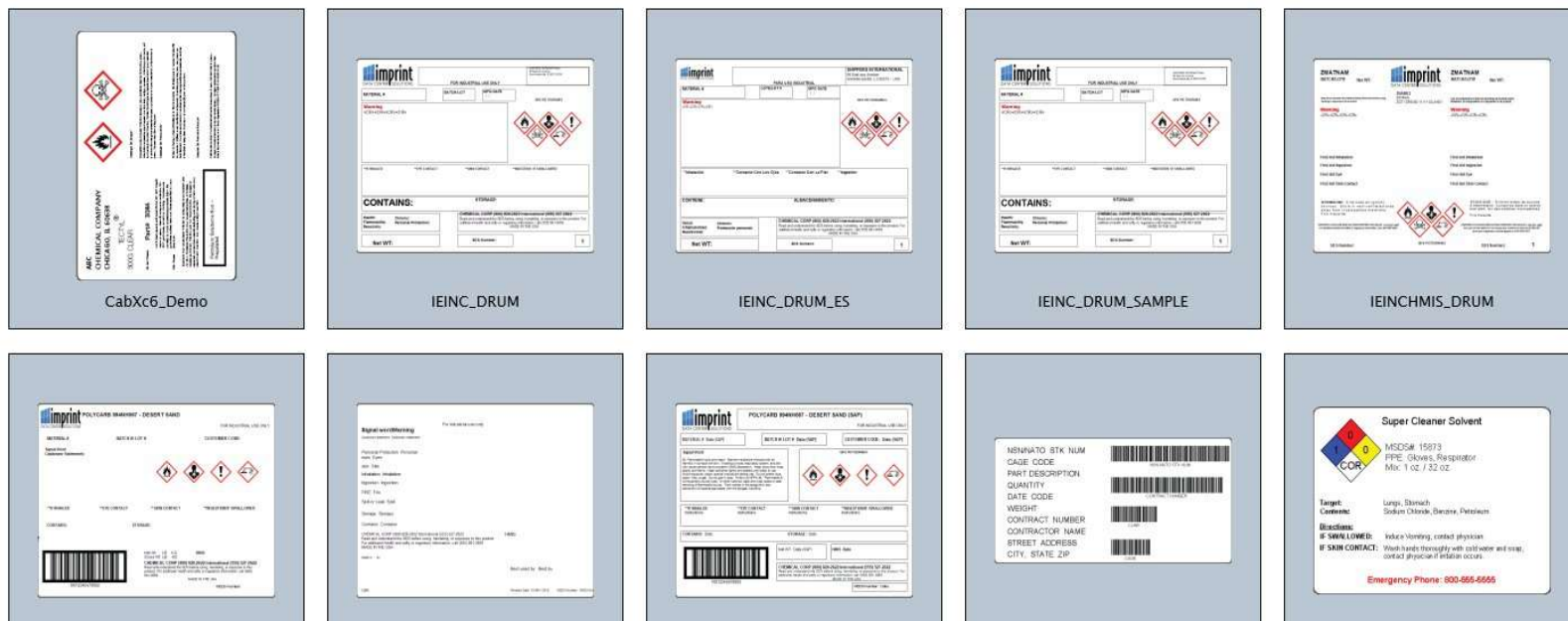
Start with Someone that Understands Your Needs

While all this information can seem overwhelming at first, it helps to find someone that will be able to easily walk you through everything. Getting started with a barcoding system to help your company grow while working with a budget should be a specialist's priority.

DecisionPoint has managed service offerings that can help you maintain and manage your devices.



Click on a document or type in a document name to search for.



PART 4

Concepts for Medium Businesses

Medium businesses typically have the basics of barcoding down. *Where they're at now is updating and upgrading their technology to help them keep growing.* In the past it was a matter of getting up and running. Now it's all about the future and the increasing complexity of meeting multiple demands.

Upgrading to a system such as BarTender® can improve the lifecycle of barcode labels, ensure compliance for any industry, and has multiple editions for any business need.

Upgrading to RFID enhances traceability.

Creating a functional warehouse enhances productivity and effectiveness.

BarTender® is an all-in-one barcode software solution from Seagull Scientific that is simple and cost-effective. This software program makes it easy for medium-sized businesses to create, automate, and manage barcodes, labels, RFID tags, and more.

BarTender 12 is the latest upgrade of a program that has been around for decades. It is a game changer with upgraded automation, integration, and database capabilities with new design tools and greater security.

Create any barcode label you need from any network printer. BarTender® 12 can help any organization on a local or global scale to better manage their labeling lifecycle, increase label quality, integrate with existing business systems, and improve reliability, traceability, and compliance. With this integrated and network connected software program, labels can be printed anywhere anytime, by anyone.



RFID

Living in an on-demand economy, everyone wants super speedy fulfillment, delivery, and return/exchange yesterday. *Is your warehouse already equipped to handle the extreme asset and production identification, tracking, and management that comes with the on-demand landscape?*

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) is commonly used in various applications for traced, from production through the supply chain. RFID uses a chip and tag combination for optimal reading, making it superior to barcodes with the ability to be read from long distances and storing significantly more information.

RFID technology can increase operational efficiency, eliminate human error, and reduce capital costs. RFID technology also provides access to real-time data, offering insight for better decision making and precise asset management. Each tag has its own unique serial number.

RFID readers can be fixed for maximum visibility and pinpointing location throughout the warehouse. Readers also come as handheld readers and mobile computers to extend a network's visibility beyond the walls of the warehouse.



Warehouse Improvements

As warehouse labels age, such as rack and bin labels and vertical aisle signs, they lose their scannability and visibility. This causes slowdowns on stocking orders and even confusion about where the proper materials are or where they go. So now you must consider what it will take to replace all those labels. *How much time will it take? Will it interfere with getting orders out on time?*

What if you don't even have a system set up in your warehouse yet? As you grow and your warehouse starts increasing in capacity and size, not having a proper system in place will negatively impact the productivity of workers.

From the floor to the bins, from the shelves to the aisle signs, here are some solutions that will work for you and your warehouse. Warehouse management systems need to keep up with the changing times and increasing demands. This is your first step to find out more about what you need to transform your warehouse for the future:

Floor Labels & Kits



Retro-reflective Labels



Warehouse Magnets



Warehouse & Aisle Signs



Rack & Bin Labels



Barcodes are the dominant tool for warehouse inventory tracking, which increases the need to upgrade technological solutions in your labeling system. This increases the need to upgrade technological solutions in your labeling system. Incorporating technology, such as scanners to go with the labels, can also help your warehouse go green by reducing the amount of paper material needed to conduct an inventory and fill orders.

Grow Smarter for your Future

As a medium-sized business you've likely already incorporated barcode labeling systems that have become outdated. As such, you might be struggling to keep up with your current and future growth.

Your goal is to optimize technology to become more dynamic and profitable in business, especially when your current technology is not meeting expectations.





CONCLUSION

Trust is a Lifelong Relationship

Small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of the global economy. They employ much of the workforce and drive much of the growth. You can see where you are now and where you want to go in the future.

Why would you hire someone to help you grow that doesn't understand where you are and where you're going?

DecisionPoint creates lifelong relationships and will help you every step of the way. Why would you hire someone that is one-and-done? Call the specialists that understand your needs even if you don't.

As a small business, DecisionPoint can help you to move beyond current deadlines and look towards future possibilities. It all starts with understanding that barcoding technology is not as overwhelming as it may seem. Basic concepts are easily outlined from what a label is, to the equipment needed, to software that more effectively manages tracking barcode information.

For medium-sized businesses, DecisionPoint can assist in moving forward with technology that is designed to last, grow, and learn with you. From upgrading your software system to BarTender®, incorporating RFID technology, or installing/upgrading your warehouse technologies, DecisionPoint has a solution for every aspect of growth.

Allow DecisionPoint to become a part of your family, not just an addition to your function.

[Contact us](#) today to see what we can do for you.