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SAP® Extended Warehouse Management: Processes, Functionality, and Configuration

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# Contents at a Glance

1. Introduction to SAP Extended Warehouse Management ............... 27
2. Organizational Structure ......................................................... 37
3. The Warehouse Structure .................................................... 55
4. Product Master Data ............................................................ 117
5. Other Warehouse Master Data ............................................. 175
6. Warehouse Stock Management ............................................. 229
7. Warehouse Document Types ................................................. 307
8. Integration from ERP to EWM ................................................. 327
9. Inbound Processing ............................................................ 343
10. Outbound Processing .......................................................... 411
11. Production Supply ............................................................ 469
12. Internal Warehouse Movements ............................................ 483
13. Configuring Multistep Warehouse Movements ......................... 517
14. Physical Inventory ........................................................... 531
15. Warehouse Monitoring and Reporting .................................... 555
16. Exception Handling .......................................................... 585
17. Cross-Docking ............................................................... 607
18. Yard Management ............................................................. 631
19. Value-Added Services (VAS) ................................................ 649
20. Kitting ................................................................. 667
21. Labor Management .......................................................... 687
22. Data Capture and Resource Optimization ............................... 713
23. Integration with Other Applications ....................................... 755
24. Post-Processing Framework and Form Printing ........................ 781
25. Authorizations and Roles and Data Archiving .......................... 789
26. Deploying Extended Warehouse Management .......................... 797
27. Conclusion ........................................................................... 815
## Contents

Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................ 25

1 Introduction to SAP Extended Warehouse Management ........ 27
   1.1 Background and History ................................................................. 27
   1.2 The Evolution of SAP WMS .......................................................... 29
   1.3 The EWM Brand ......................................................................... 33
   1.4 Target Audience .......................................................................... 35
   1.5 Summary .................................................................................... 36

2 Organizational Structure ......................................................................................... 37
   2.1 Plants ......................................................................................... 39
   2.2 Storage Locations ....................................................................... 40
   2.3 Warehouses ................................................................................ 42
      2.3.1 Defining the Warehouse Numbers .................................. 42
      2.3.2 Integrating to DWM and EWM ...................................... 45
      2.3.3 Specifying the Warehouse Management Methodology .... 46
      2.3.4 Delivery Split Indicators ................................................... 49
      2.3.5 Connecting ERP to EWM ............................................... 50
      2.3.6 Defining the Warehouse in EWM .................................. 50
      2.3.7 Assigning the Warehouse in EWM to the ERP Warehouse ........................................................................................................ 52
      2.3.8 Assigning Business Partners and Supply Chain Units ...... 52
   2.4 Summary .................................................................................... 53

3 The Warehouse Structure ....................................................................................... 55
   3.1 Storage Types .............................................................................. 56
      3.1.1 General .......................................................................... 58
      3.1.2 Putaway Control ............................................................. 65
      3.1.3 Stock Removal Control ................................................... 79
      3.1.4 Goods Movement Control .............................................. 83
      3.1.5 Replenishment ............................................................... 86
## 3.2 Storage Sections

3.2 Storage Sections ................................................................. 87

## 3.3 Storage Bins

3.3 Storage Bins ........................................................................ 88

3.3.1 Creating Storage Bins ................................................... 89

3.3.2 Generating Storage Bins Using Storage Bin Structures .... 94

3.3.3 Mass Change to Bins ................................................. 98

3.3.4 Setting Up Storage Bin Sorting .................................. 98

3.3.5 Fixed Bin Assignments ................................................ 99

3.3.6 Creating Verification Fields ....................................... 101

3.3.7 Printing Labels for Storage Bins ................................. 102

## 3.4 Activity Areas

3.4 Activity Areas ..................................................................... 105

## 3.5 Doors and Staging Areas

3.5 Doors and Staging Areas ..................................................... 107

## 3.6 Work Centers

3.6 Work Centers ...................................................................... 110

3.6.1 Work Center Layout ................................................... 110

3.6.2 Creating Work Centers ................................................ 111

3.6.3 Optimizing Work Center Determination ....................... 114

## 3.7 Summary

3.7 Summary ............................................................................ 115

## 4 Product Master Data

4.1 The ERP Material Master .................................................... 117

4.1.1 Existing Views of the ERP Material Master .................. 118

4.1.2 WM Execution ........................................................... 121

4.1.3 WM Packaging .......................................................... 124

4.1.4 Integrating the ERP Material Master to EWM ............ 126

4.2 The EWM Product Master .................................................. 130

4.2.1 General ..................................................................... 132

4.2.2 Properties ................................................................... 133

4.2.3 Units of Measure ....................................................... 139

4.2.4 Classification .............................................................. 143

4.2.5 Packaging Data .......................................................... 144

4.2.6 Storage ..................................................................... 150

4.2.7 Warehouse Data ......................................................... 155

4.2.8 Slotting ....................................................................... 163

4.2.9 Storage Type Data ...................................................... 165

## 4.3 Summary

4.3 Summary ............................................................................ 173
## 5 Other Warehouse Master Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Business Partner Data</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1 Customers</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2 Vendors</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.3 Employees</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.4 Plants</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.5 Other Business Partner Roles</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Supply Chain Units (SCUs)</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Maintaining SCUs</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Assigning SCUs to the Warehouse</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3 Using SCUs in Transportation</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.4 Assigning Calendars to SCUs</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Master Data for Transportation</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1 Prerequisite Configuration</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2 Transportation Hierarchy</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3 Transportation Lanes</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.4 Transportation Zones</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.5 Transportation Routes</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.6 Carriers as Business Partners</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.7 Carrier Profiles</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Packaging Materials</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Packaging Specifications</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.1 Structure of the Packaging Specification</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.2 Creating a Packaging Specification</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.3 Activating the Packaging Specification</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.4 Distributing Packaging Specifications</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.5 Determination of Packaging Specifications</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Production Master Data</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.1 Creating Production Supply Areas</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.2 Mapping Production Supply Areas</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.3 Assigning Bins for Production Supply</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 Resources</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7.1 Resource Types</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7.2 Execution Priorities</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7.3 Resource Groups</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7.4 Queues</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 5.7.5 Queue Sequences ............................................................... 215
## 5.7.6 Queue Types .................................................................. 216
## 5.7.7 Queue Type Sequences .................................................. 216
## 5.7.8 Standard Bin (or “Start Bin”) ........................................... 217
## 5.7.9 Tracking the Current Storage Bin ................................. 217
## 5.7.10 Maintaining Users .......................................................... 217
## 5.7.11 Resource Execution Constraints (RECs) ....................... 218
## 5.7.12 Processors ................................................................... 221
## 5.7.13 Presentation Devices ...................................................... 226

## 5.8 Summary ........................................................................... 228

## 6 Warehouse Stock Management ............................................. 229

### 6.1 Quants ............................................................................ 230
#### 6.1.1 Definition of a Quant .................................................. 230
#### 6.1.2 Adding To Existing Quants ........................................ 231
#### 6.1.3 Displaying Quants ........................................................ 231
#### 6.1.4 Stock Visibility on Storage Bins, Resources, and
     Transportation Units ................................................................. 233
#### 6.1.5 Physical Stock and Available Stock, Incoming
     and Outgoing Stock ................................................................. 233
#### 6.1.6 Logistics Inventory Management Engine (LIME) .......... 238

### 6.2 Stock Types ..................................................................... 239

### 6.3 Owner ............................................................................. 244

### 6.4 Party Entitled to Dispose .................................................. 246
#### 6.4.1 Stocks from a Single Plant in One Warehouse ............ 247
#### 6.4.2 Stocks from Several Plants in One Warehouse .......... 249
#### 6.4.3 Background on the Party Entitled to Dispose ............ 250
#### 6.4.4 Link between Custodian, Party Entitled to Dispose,
     and Owner ........................................................................ 251

### 6.5 Batch Management ........................................................... 251
#### 6.5.1 Batch Management in EWM ...................................... 253
#### 6.5.2 Batches in the Goods Receipt Process ....................... 254
#### 6.5.3 Batches in Goods Issue Process ................................. 255

### 6.6 Documentary Batch Management ................................... 256
#### 6.6.1 Distribute Documentary Batch Management
     Settings to EWM ................................................................. 258
6.7 Serial Number Management ................................................................. 258
6.7.1 Setting Up Serial Number Profiles .............................................. 261
6.7.2 Serial Numbers in Delivery Processing ....................................... 266
6.7.3 Provisional Serial Numbers ......................................................... 271
6.7.4 Serial Numbers in Warehouse Tasks .......................................... 272
6.7.5 Serial Numbers in the Warehouse Management Monitor ............... 274
6.7.6 General Settings for Using Serial Numbers in EWM ................. 275
6.8 Handling Unit Management ............................................................... 277
6.8.1 Structure of an HU Hierarchy ...................................................... 277
6.8.2 Packaging Materials ................................................................. 278
6.8.3 Empty HUs in EWM ................................................................. 278
6.8.4 Printing HUs ............................................................................ 279
6.8.5 Smart Forms Available in EWM Standard for Printing HUs .......... 279
6.8.6 PPF Framework and Condition Maintenance for HU Printing ...... 280
6.8.7 Status Management ................................................................. 281
6.8.8 Unique Identification of HUs Using Serialized Shipping Container Code (SSCC) Numbers ......................................................... 282
6.9 Transportation Units ....................................................................... 283
6.10 Stock Identification ....................................................................... 283
6.10.1 Creation of Stock Identification ............................................... 284
6.10.2 Deletion of a Stock Identification ............................................ 285
6.10.3 Use of Stock Identification ...................................................... 285
6.10.4 Splitting a Stock Identification ................................................ 286
6.11 Shelf-Life Expiration Date Control ................................................ 286
6.11.1 Master Data for SLED Control ................................................. 287
6.11.2 SLED Control in Goods Receipt Process ................................ 288
6.11.3 SLED Control in Goods Issue Process .................................... 290
6.11.4 Monitoring SLED of Warehouse Stock .................................... 290
6.12 Catch Weight Management ............................................................ 291
6.12.1 Activating CWM per Product .................................................. 292
6.12.2 Integration of CWM into the EWM Processes ......................... 293
6.12.3 Integration of CWM into the EWM Delivery Process ............... 294
6.12.4 Integration of CWM to Physical Inventory .............................. 296
6.13 Tracking Country of Origin ............................................................. 298
6.13.1 Country of Origin without Batch Management ....................... 299
6.13.2 Country of Origin with Batch Management ............................ 299
6.14 Stock Determination and Valuation ............................................. 300
6.14.1 Stock Determination .............................................................. 300
6.14.2 Stock Valuation ................................................................. 303
6.15 Special Stocks ............................................................................. 303
6.15.1 Sales Order Stock ............................................................... 304
6.15.2 Project Stock .................................................................. 305
6.16 Summary .................................................................................... 305

7 Warehouse Document Types .............................................................. 307
7.1 Inbound Delivery Documents ..................................................... 307
7.2 Outbound Delivery Documents .................................................. 310
7.3 Warehouse Tasks ......................................................................... 312
7.3.1 Product Warehouse Tasks .................................................. 313
7.3.2 Handling Unit Warehouse Tasks ....................................... 314
7.3.3 Yard Warehouse Tasks ....................................................... 314
7.4 Warehouse Orders .................................................................. 314
7.4.1 The Warehouse Order Concept ....................................... 315
7.4.2 Warehouse Order Creation Rules ..................................... 316
7.4.3 Warehouse Orders for Physical Inventory Documents .... 318
7.5 Waves ......................................................................................... 318
7.6 Physical Inventory Documents .................................................... 319
7.7 Value-Added Service Orders ..................................................... 321
7.8 Stock Transfers and Posting Changes ..................................... 322
7.9 Quality Inspection Documents .................................................. 324
7.10 Summary .................................................................................... 325

8 Integration from ERP to EWM ......................................................... 327
8.1 Basic System Setup ...................................................................... 329
8.2 Master Data Integration ............................................................... 330
8.3 Delivery Integration ..................................................................... 337
8.4 Purchase Order and Production Order Integration ..................... 339
8.4.1 Pulling Expected Goods Receipts into EWM from ERP ... 340
8.4.2 Pushing Expected Goods Receipts from ERP to EWM .... 341
8.5 Summary .................................................................................... 342
## Inbound Processing

9.1 Goods Receipt Notification ...................................................... 344
9.1.1 Goods Receipt Notification Based on Advanced Shipping Notice ................................................. 345
9.1.2 Goods Receipt Notification for Purchase Order/Production Order .................................................. 352
9.1.3 Setup for Inbound Delivery Processing ........................................... 354
9.2 Truck Arrival and Yard Management ............................................ 360
9.2.1 Setting Up Yard Management .................................................. 364
9.3 Goods Receipt Preparation ......................................................... 365
9.3.1 Administrative Goods Receipt Based on ASNs ........................ 366
9.3.2 Administrative Goods Receipt Based on EGRs ...................... 367
9.4 Unloading and Goods Receipt ..................................................... 369
9.4.1 Unloading ................................................................. 369
9.4.2 Visual Inspection and Completeness Check ....................... 370
9.4.3 Posting Goods Receipt ................................................... 372
9.5 Putaway Processing ................................................................. 372
9.5.1 Process-Oriented Storage Control for Inbound Processes ...................................................... 373
9.5.2 Layout-Oriented Storage Control for Inbound Processes .......................................................... 375
9.5.3 Combined Storage Control for Inbound Processing ...... 375
9.5.4 Quality Inspection in Inbound Processes .................................. 375
9.5.5 Deconsolidation ............................................................. 378
9.5.6 Value Added Services ..................................................... 381
9.5.7 Putaway ................................................................. 382
9.6 Slotting .............................................................................. 393
9.7 Quality Management in EWM ................................................... 400
9.7.1 Quality Inspection Engine Architecture .................................. 400
9.7.2 Quality Inspection Engine Data .......................................... 401
9.7.3 Counting .................................................................. 403
9.8 Summary ............................................................................ 408

## Outbound Processing

10.1 Outbound Delivery Creation ..................................................... 411
10.1.1 Outbound Processing for Sales Orders ............................... 412
Contents

10.1.2 Direct Outbound Delivery Process .................................................. 414
10.2 Overview of Outbound Processing in the Warehouse .......................... 416
10.3 Route Determination ........................................................................ 422
  10.3.1 Executing the Route Determination ........................................ 422
  10.3.2 Setting Up Route Determination ........................................... 426
10.4 Details of Warehouse Process Steps .................................................. 427
  10.4.1 Warehouse Process Type Determination ................................... 427
  10.4.2 Wave Management ............................................................... 429
  10.4.3 Warehouse Order Creation during Outbound Processes ................. 435
  10.4.4 Storage Type Determination ............................................... 440
  10.4.5 Stock Removal Strategies ................................................... 443
  10.4.6 Storage Control in the Outbound Processes .............................. 446
  10.4.7 Picking Execution — Optimization of Picking ......................... 447
  10.4.8 Execution with Picking List .................................................. 447
  10.4.9 Execution with Mobile Devices ............................................ 449
  10.4.10 Cancelling Picking ............................................................. 452
  10.4.11 Pick Denial ........................................................................ 453
  10.4.12 Pick, Pack, and Pass .......................................................... 453
  10.4.13 Pick Point Handling ........................................................... 456
  10.4.14 Packing ............................................................................. 458
  10.4.15 Door and Staging Area Determination ................................ 460
  10.4.16 Loading, Shipping, and Freight Order Management ............... 462
  10.4.17 Freight Order Management ................................................ 464
  10.4.18 Invoice Before Goods Issue .............................................. 465
  10.4.19 Posting Goods Issue ........................................................ 467
10.5 Summary ....................................................................................... 468

11 Production Supply ........................................................................... 469

  11.1 Organizational Structure for Production Supply .............................. 469
    11.1.1 Single EWM Warehouse .................................................... 469
    11.1.2 Separate EWM Warehouse ................................................ 470
    11.1.3 Non-EWM-Managed Storage Location ................................. 471
    11.1.4 Configuring the Organizational Structure for Production Supply .................................................. 472
  11.2 Setting Up the Integration to Production ...................................... 472
  11.3 Executing the Production Supply ................................................... 476
    11.3.1 Production Staging ......................................................... 477
    11.3.2 Executing the Picks for Production .................................... 478
11.3.3 Goods Issue and Backflushing ................................. 480
11.4 Summary ................................................................. 481

12 Internal Warehouse Movements ...................................... 483

12.1 Replenishment ........................................................... 483
12.1.1 Planned and Unplanned Replenishment .................. 484
12.1.2 Configuration for Replenishment ......................... 484
12.1.3 Planned Replenishment .......................................... 489
12.1.4 Order-Related Replenishment ............................ 492
12.1.5 Crate Part Replenishment ...................................... 496
12.1.6 Direct Replenishment .......................................... 498
12.1.7 Automatic Replenishment .................................... 500
12.2 Rearrangement ......................................................... 500
12.2.1 Additional General Configuration for Rearrangement .... 501
12.2.2 Master Data for Determination of Optimal Storage Bins ... 505
12.2.3 Execution of Rearrangement .............................. 507
12.2.4 Alerts for Rearrangement .................................. 509
12.3 Ad Hoc Moves .......................................................... 511
12.3.1 RF Creation and Execution of Ad Hoc Warehouse Tasks ... 512
12.4 Posting Changes ....................................................... 513
12.5 Summary ................................................................. 515

13 Configuring Multistep Warehouse Movements .................... 517

13.1 Introduction .................................................................. 517
13.1.1 Storage Control in Inbound .................................. 518
13.1.2 Storage Control in Outbound .............................. 520
13.1.3 Storage Control for Warehouse Internal Movements ...... 522
13.2 Process-Oriented Storage Control .............................. 524
13.2.1 Definition of Storage Process ............................ 524
13.3 Layout-Oriented Storage Control ............................... 527
13.4 Summary ................................................................. 529

14 Physical Inventory .......................................................... 531

14.1 Introduction ............................................................... 531
14.2 Physical Inventory Process .......................................... 534
## Contents

14.3 Physical Inventory Objects .......................................................... 535  
14.3.1 Physical Inventory Documents ........................................ 535  
14.3.2 Physical Inventory Areas ................................................. 540  
14.3.3 Difference Analyzer ........................................................ 541  
14.3.4 Physical Inventory Using External Systems ...................... 543  
14.3.5 Stock Comparison to ERP ............................................... 544  
14.3.6 Posting Differences Automatically ................................. 544  
14.4 Supported Methods for Physical Inventory .............................. 545  
14.4.1 Ad Hoc Physical Inventory .............................................. 545  
14.4.2 Annual Physical Inventory .............................................. 545  
14.4.3 Low Stock Check (Storage Bin Specific) .......................... 545  
14.4.4 Putaway Physical Inventory ............................................ 546  
14.4.5 Cycle Counting ............................................................... 546  
14.4.6 Storage Bin Check .......................................................... 547  
14.5 Integration to Resource Management ....................................... 548  
14.6 Monitoring the Physical Inventory Progress ............................. 550  
14.7 Summary .................................................................................... 553

15 Warehouse Monitoring and Reporting ....................................... 555  
15.1 Warehouse Management Monitor .............................................. 555  
15.1.1 Overview of the Warehouse Monitor ............................. 556  
15.1.2 Personalizing the Warehouse Monitor ........................... 559  
15.2 Easy Graphics Framework ............................................................ 566  
15.2.1 Enhancing the Warehouse Cockpit ................................. 567  
15.3 Graphical Warehouse Layout ....................................................... 574  
15.4 Warehouse Reporting ................................................................. 575  
15.4.1 Overview of EWM BW integration ................................. 575  
15.4.2 EWM-Specific Reporting Content ................................... 577  
15.4.3 BW Objects for Reporting .............................................. 577  
15.4.4 Extraction Process .......................................................... 581  
15.4.5 Reporting Tools .............................................................. 582  
15.5 Summary .................................................................................... 584

16 Exception Handling ................................................................. 585  
16.1 Configuring Exception Codes ...................................................... 586  
16.1.1 Technical Information about EWM Exception Codes ...... 586
16.1.2 Defining a New Exception Code ........................................... 588
16.2 Using Exception Codes .......................................................... 592
16.3 Managing Stock Transport Order (STO) Exceptions .................. 597
  16.3.1 Background and Overview of STOs .................................... 597
  16.3.2 General Customizing for STO Discrepancies ....................... 598
  16.3.3 General Customizing for STO Discrepancies ....................... 598
  16.3.4 Carrier Responsibility ...................................................... 599
  16.3.5 Shipper Responsibility ..................................................... 599
  16.3.6 Correction Delivery for the Shipping Warehouse
    to Clear Difference .............................................................. 601
16.4 Managing Exceptions at Cross-Docking ................................... 602
16.5 Confirmation Corrections ........................................................ 604
16.6 Summary ............................................................................... 606

17 Cross-Docking ........................................................................ 607
  17.1 Transportation Cross Decking (TCD) ...................................... 610
    17.1.1 Cross-Docking Routes .................................................. 611
    17.1.2 TCD Storage Locations ................................................ 613
    17.1.3 Integration of TCD into EWM Stock Processing ............... 615
    17.1.4 TCD for Contract Packagers .......................................... 617
    17.1.5 Additional Remarks about TCD ..................................... 617
  17.2 EWM-Triggered Opportunistic Cross-Docking ....................... 618
    17.2.1 Variants of Opportunistic Cross-Docking ....................... 618
    17.2.2 Activating Opportunistic Cross-Docking ......................... 619
  17.3 Merchandise Distribution ..................................................... 623
  17.4 Push Deployment and Pick From Goods Receipt ..................... 625
    17.4.1 Putaway Delay at Goods Receipt in EWM ....................... 627
    17.4.2 Integration of PD and PFGR into the EWM Storage
      Control ........................................................................... 628
  17.5 Summary ............................................................................ 629

18 Yard Management .................................................................... 631
  18.1 Yard Management Structure ............................................... 632
  18.2 Transportation Units and Vehicles ....................................... 634
    18.2.1 Creating Transportation Units ..................................... 635
    18.2.2 Other Functions of the Transportation Unit UI ............... 637
## Contents

18.2.3 Creating Vehicles ............................................................ 639  
18.2.4 Other Functions of the Vehicle UI  ................................. 640  
18.3 Check-In and Check-Out ..................................................... 642  
18.4 Yard Movements .................................................................. 643  
18.5 Monitoring the Yard .............................................................. 646  
18.6 Interfacing Yard Data to ERP ............................................... 647  
18.7 Summary ............................................................................. 648  

19 Value-Added Services (VAS) ..................................................... 649  
19.1 Configuration and Master Data for VAS  ............................. 650  
19.1.1 Configuration for VAS .................................................... 650  
19.1.2 Master Data for VAS ...................................................... 653  
19.2 VAS Order Creation ............................................................ 656  
19.3 VAS Integration in Warehouse Processes  .......................... 656  
19.3.1 VAS for Outbound Process ............................................. 657  
19.3.2 Using the VAS Work Center and VAS Execution ............ 660  
19.3.3 Effort Codes and Consumption of Auxiliary Materials ...... 662  
19.3.4 VAS for Inbound Processes ............................................. 664  
19.3.5 VAS for Internal Processes .............................................. 665  
19.4 Summary ............................................................................. 666  

20 Kitting ...................................................................................... 667  
20.1 Kit to Order using ERP Sales Orders .................................... 668  
20.1.1 Kit to Order at a Work Center Using VAS Orders ............ 669  
20.1.2 Kit to Order at a Work Center without VAS Orders ...... 678  
20.1.3 Kit to Order During Picking ............................................ 678  
20.2 Kit to Stock .......................................................................... 681  
20.2.1 Kit to Stock Using an ERP Production Order ................. 681  
20.2.2 Kit to Stock Initiated from VAS Orders in EWM .......... 682  
20.3 Reverse Kitting ................................................................. 684  
20.4 Summary ............................................................................. 686  

21 Labor Management ............................................................... 687  
21.1 Activating Labor Management ............................................ 688  
21.2 Master Data for Labor Management ................................. 690
21.2.1 Processors ................................................................. 690
21.2.2 Formulas and Conditions .............................................. 691
21.3 Engineered Labor Standards ............................................. 695
  21.3.1 Determining Engineered Labor Standards ................. 695
  21.3.2 Uploading Engineered Labor Standards .................... 696
21.4 Direct Labor Activities .................................................... 698
  21.4.1 Capturing Start and End Times .................................. 698
  21.4.2 Travel Distance and Travel Time ............................... 700
21.5 Indirect Labor Activities .................................................. 701
  21.5.1 Creating Indirect Activity Types ................................. 701
  21.5.2 Entering Indirect Activities on the GUI ...................... 702
  21.5.3 Entering Indirect Activities on a Mobile Device .......... 702
21.6 Calculating Workload for Planning ................................. 703
  21.6.1 Assigning the Planning Activity Area ......................... 704
  21.6.2 Calculating the Planned Workload ............................ 704
  21.6.3 Preprocessing ......................................................... 705
  21.6.4 Viewing Planned Workload in the Warehouse Monitor .... 706
  21.6.5 Operational Planning .............................................. 707
  21.6.6 Loading Planning and Simulation Results .................... 708
21.7 Employee Performance ................................................... 708
  21.7.1 Creating the Employee Performance Documents .......... 708
  21.7.2 Efficiency versus Utilization .................................... 709
  21.7.3 Viewing Calculated Results on Mobile Devices .......... 710
  21.7.4 Viewing Employee Performance in the Warehouse Monitor 711
21.8 Summary ....................................................................... 711

22 Data Capture and Resource Optimization ............................. 713

  22.1 Overview of Data Capture Methods for Warehousing ........ 714
  22.2 Technical Mobile Data Capture Integration ..................... 714
  22.3 Resource Management and Warehouse Optimization .......... 720
    22.3.1 Users ................................................................. 720
    22.3.2 Resources .......................................................... 721
    22.3.3 Queues .............................................................. 722
    22.3.4 Resource Groups .................................................. 723
    22.3.5 Resource Types .................................................... 724
22.4 System-Guided Processing .......................................................... 725
  22.4.1 Monitoring of the Resources ............................................. 729
22.5 RF Framework ............................................................................ 731
  22.5.1 Advantages of the EWM RF Framework ......................... 732
  22.5.2 Setup of the RF Framework ............................................ 732
  22.5.3 Enhancing the EWM RF Transactions ............................. 735
  22.5.4 Personalization of the EWM RF Transaction ................. 738
22.6 Comparison of the Mobile Online User Interface Technologies ... 739
  22.6.1 SAP Console ................................................................. 739
  22.6.2 SAP Web SAP Console ................................................... 740
  22.6.3 SAP ITSmobile ............................................................ 741
  22.6.4 SAP ABAP and Java Web Dynpro ................................. 745
  22.6.5 Third-Party Integration ............................................... 746
  22.6.6 Windows Terminal Server and Citrix Integration .......... 747
22.7 Integration of the Other Technologies ....................................... 747
  22.7.1 Pick-by-Voice Integration ............................................... 747
  22.7.2 RFID Integration .......................................................... 749
22.8 Summary .................................................................................... 754

23 Integration with Other Applications ........................................ 755
  23.1 Integration with CRM .......................................................... 756
    23.1.1 Business Partners ..................................................... 756
    23.1.2 Outbound Orders and Deliveries ............................... 757
    23.1.3 CRM Sales Order Status Updates ......................... 758
    23.1.4 Returns Order Processing .................................. 758
  23.2 Integration with SNC .......................................................... 759
    23.2.1 Integration with ASNs ............................................. 760
    23.2.2 Integration of Return ASNs .................................. 760
  23.3 Integration with SPP .......................................................... 761
    23.3.1 Demand and Forecast Data for Slotting ................. 761
    23.3.2 Inbound Receipts for Vendor Purchases ................. 762
    23.3.3 Inbound and Outbound Deliveries for Stock Transfers ... 763
    23.3.4 Kit to Stock .......................................................... 764
  23.4 Integration with Global ATP ................................................... 764
  23.5 Integration with Global Trade Services (GTS) ....................... 765
  23.6 Integration with Other Applications .................................... 766
  23.7 Integration with BW .......................................................... 767
23.8 Master Data Integration ............................................................... 767
23.9 Integration with Inventory Management ........................................ 768
  23.9.1 Adjustments from Inbound and Outbound Deliveries ............ 768
  23.9.2 Posting Changes ................................................................. 768
  23.9.3 Physical Inventory Adjustments ............................................ 769
  23.9.4 Comparing and Synchronizing Inventory .............................. 769
23.10 Integration with Purchasing ................................................. 771
  23.10.1 Transfer of ASNs and Inbound Deliveries ......................... 771
  23.10.2 Downloading Expected Receipts for Purchase Orders ............. 771
  23.10.3 Inbound Delivery Creation in EWM .................................. 772
23.11 Integration with ERP Sales and Distribution ............................. 772
  23.11.1 Integrating Deliveries from ERP to EWM ......................... 772
  23.11.2 Processes Supported Using ERP SD .................................... 772
23.12 Integration with PP ................................................................. 773
  23.12.1 Production Receiving ........................................................ 773
  23.12.2 Production Supply ............................................................ 773
  23.12.3 Kit to Stock ........................................................................ 773
23.13 Integration with Finance ......................................................... 774
  23.13.1 Goods Movements .............................................................. 774
  23.13.2 Material Valuation ............................................................. 775
  23.13.3 VAS Billing ....................................................................... 775
23.14 Integration with HCM .............................................................. 775
  23.14.1 Employee Data ................................................................. 775
  23.14.2 Performance Data ............................................................... 776
23.15 Integration with Material Flow Systems ..................................... 777
23.16 Integration with Warehouse Subsystems ................................. 779
  23.16.1 Integration with Warehouse Control Units ......................... 779
  23.16.2 Integration with Voice Picking Systems ............................... 780
23.17 Summary ................................................................................. 780

24 Post-Processing Framework (PPF) and Form Printing ............... 781
24.1 Overview of the PPF ................................................................. 781
24.2 Administration of the PPF ........................................................ 782
  24.2.1 Defining Action Profiles and Actions ................................. 783
  24.2.2 Condition Configuration ...................................................... 785
24.3 Printing in EWM Using PPF ..................................................... 787
24.4 Summary ................................................................................. 788
### Conclusion

27.1 What We Covered ......................................................... 815
27.2 Key Learnings ........................................................... 816
27.3 The Future of EWM ....................................................... 816
27.4 Next Steps ................................................................. 816

Abbreviations ............................................................................. 819
The Authors ............................................................................. 823
Index ......................................................................................... 825
The SAP® Extended Warehouse Management (EWM) application provides functionality for managing complex scenarios for high-volume distribution operations.

1 Introduction to SAP Extended Warehouse Management

This text provides you with the information you need to understand the SAP EWM solution, including the functions that it supports, how to set up those functions, and how to get started with a project that will utilize those functions to support your warehouse operations. In this chapter, we will start by providing some background and history on SAP's warehousing applications, tell you how SAP EWM evolved, inform you about the variations of the EWM brand, and tell you who this text is for and how to use it. We hope that the text serves to inform and educate you and help you make the right decisions regarding your EWM implementation.

1.1 Background and History

In the past few decades, warehouses have evolved from simple receiving, storage, and shipping facilities to full-scale, high-volume, flow-through distribution operations. Global competition has driven businesses to hold less inventory and to get their products to market both faster and with more precise timing than in the past. Competition has also driven both local and global corporations to become leaner and more efficient and to react faster to both changes in the marketplace and in the internal business environment. Constantly shifting business priorities, increasing seasonality of products, faster business cycles, and more frequent mergers and acquisitions are just some of the market conditions that lead to intense pressure on warehouses to increase efficiency while still providing flexibility to the business to allow it to react to changing demands.
At the same time, disproportionate increases in costs of labor, raw materials, and real estate threaten to drive warehousing costs higher, impeding companies’ ability to make a profit. For some companies, this pressure to perform effective logistics operations is too great or comes at too great a cost, and they are increasingly turning to outsourced solutions, such as third-party logistics providers, to cost-effectively handle the volumes of products and ever-changing business requirements. However, this just shifts the burden to a whole new group of people, upon whom the pressures are even more intensified by the need to not only maintain flexibility for a single organization, but to maintain flexibility across multiple organizations. To top it off, those organizations often have very different products, processes, business requirements, and management styles.

This increase in pressure on warehouses to do more with less has led to a corresponding increase in the complexity of business processes. In turn, this increasing complexity of business processes then requires both an increase in talent of warehouse managers and an increase in capabilities of the systems that help those managers run their businesses.

The evolution of the warehouse management system (WMS) software industry has run parallel to the changes in the warehousing and distribution marketplace, with ever-increasing business process capabilities supported by more and more capable WMSs delivered by companies who specialize in standardized software. However, there are still companies who prefer to run their own bespoke systems filled with functionality specific to their own businesses and supported by armies of programmers. But more and more, those companies are realizing the benefits in the total cost of ownership (TCO) of using standard software solutions that also meet their business needs. And those companies are turning to software vendors like SAP for their software solutions.

Since 1972, SAP has specialized in providing standard software solutions for common business processes. Since the first release of R/1 a year after the company's founding, SAP has constantly evolved their products to expand into new markets or to match the changing business needs of their customer base. Through the R/2 days in the late 1970s and 1980s, SAP delivered software to not only meet the needs of back-office functions like finance and purchasing, but began to move more and more to the front lines of managing the product manufacturing, sales, and distribution. In the early 1990s, SAP delivered its flagship client-server product, SAP R/3, and it has continued to enhance that application throughout its lifecycle. The SAP R/3 product evolved in the early 2000s into what is today known
The Evolution of SAP WMS

Even as early as release R/2, SAP contained functionality for locating products in the warehouse. At the time, it was a basic locator system, but it provided the baseline for SAP’s foray into the warehouse management (WM) world. In 1993, SAP released R/3 Release 2.0 and with it, its first warehousing application on the client server framework. Back then, SAP WM only covered the basics of a warehousing application, namely to track product in multiple bins in the warehouse and assign pallet identification labels, or pallet IDs, to the product in the bin. In SAP parlance, these pallet IDs were known as storage units.

Since its initial releases, SAP has extended its WM application with additional functionality including:

- integration to SAP R/3 Production Planning, Quality Management, and Logistics Information Systems (in SAP R/3 Release 3.0 and 3.1)
- wave picking, warehouse monitoring, and integration to SAP R/3 Human Resources (HR) (in SAP R/3 Release 4.0)
Introduction to SAP Extended Warehouse Management

- decentralized WM and radio frequency support (in SAP R/3 Release 4.5)
- support for handling unit (HU) management (an Inventory Management–level method for tracking pallet IDs across plants, storage locations, and warehouses) and packing station capabilities (in SAP R/3 Release 4.6)
- task and resource management for handling multistep movements that could be performed by multiple resources (in SAP R/3 Enterprise (4.7) Extension Set 1.1)
- support for yard management, cross-docking, and value-added services (VAS) (in SAP R/3 Enterprise (4.7) Extension Set 2.0)

In parallel, businesses around the world started to use the SAP WM system to manage more and more complex warehouses and distribution centers. As the product grew, the customer base grew with it, and today, SAP WM is deployed by more than 5,000 SAP customers worldwide.

In 2005, SAP released version 5.0 of its SCM software, and with it, released the first version of its SAP SCM EWM software. This version of the WM software was completely separate architecturally from the SAP WM from ERP. Although they shared some common themes in terms of capabilities, the SAP EWM was designed from the ground up with the needs of complex, highly automated, high-volume distribution centers in mind.

The design of the solution was based on a coordinated effort between the industry, solution, and development experts at SAP and a set of development partners who brought extensive business expertise on high-volume planning, order fulfillment, and distribution operations. SAP worked together with its development partners in a strategic development project that lasted over three years to design and deploy a standard software solution that would compete in the marketplace with the most advanced WMS. SAP and the development partners engaged in this effort to build a complete set of software solutions to manage their complex, high-volume service parts operations — not just a WMS, but also a planning and fulfillment system that would coordinate together perfectly to manage entire operations. Today, those applications, including SAP CRM, SAP ERP, and SAP SCM, including the Service Parts Planning and EWM applications, are marketed together in the SAP Service and Asset Management industry solution. The components of the industry solution used for service parts are often collectively referred to as “the SAP solution for service parts management.”
Even though the development partners of SAP intended to use the solution to manage distribution centers full of service parts, and the solution was delivered along with other applications specific to service parts, the SAP EWM solution was built with the intent that it could be used across multiple industries. For instance, the first release of EWM (as part of SAP SCM 5.0) delivered functionality to support the needs of complex, high-volume distribution centers, including:

- slotting
- deconsolidation
- cross-docking
- yard management
- complex internal routing
- kitting
- VAS

In EWM 2007 (also called EWM 5.1), SAP added support for:

- Labor Management (LM)
- Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) enablement for internal warehouse processes
- kit-to-stock
- additional goods receipt functions
- catch weight support
- capabilities for direct connection to automated material handling equipment, or Material Flow Systems (MFS)
- enhancements for batch management
- enhancements for serial number handling
- manual creation of outbound deliveries

In more recent years, SAP has added additional functionality to SAP EWM to support the needs of consumer products and retail companies, and today, the solution is marketed and sold to all industries that require complex WMSs. Specifically, in EWM 7.0, SAP added support for:
Introduction to SAP Extended Warehouse Management

- graphical warehouse layouts
- additional resource management features, including:
  - task interleaving
  - execution constraints
  - support for semi-system guided work
- additional cross-docking support, including:
  - opportunistic cross-docking
  - retail merchandise distribution
  - production cross-docking
- support for production supply from an EWM-managed warehouse

Following Release EWM 7.0, SAP will convert the SCM platform, including EWM, to the enhancement package model for deploying new functionality. This model has already been employed on ERP following the release of SAP ERP 2005 (or what is now known as SAP ERP 6.0), and now the same model will be utilized for SCM, CRM, and the other major SAP business applications. The enhancement package model allows SAP to deliver enhanced functionality through regular updates between major releases. The updates can be activated as needed via business functions.

The business functions contain a set of similar or related functions, allowing you to decide which business functions to activate without requiring you to activate all of the functionality delivered with the enhancement package at once. This can save you considerable time in testing the application of the enhancement package, because you only have to test the functions that are affected by the activated business functions. In turn, the business functions allow you to deploy the functionality to your end users faster. And the enhancement package model allows SAP to bring new functionality to market faster, making it a win-win for everyone.

The first enhancement package for SAP EWM is scheduled to be released in mid-2010. The functions will be delivered in separate business functions, which will allow you to install the enhancement pack and then activate one or all (or none) of the business functions and test your solution accordingly. In the coming years, SAP will continue to add additional features to the EWM 7.0 release through enhancement packages.
1.3 The EWM Brand

When SAP released its SAP R/3 Enterprise Extension Set 2.0 functionality to support yard management, cross-docking, and VAS, it assigned the informal name Extended Warehouse Management to this collection of new functions. Though you wouldn't find this name anywhere in the system, the features were collectively referred to using this moniker so that SAP employees and partners could effectively discuss the new features with their customers.

One common point of confusion is that the EWM brand, as it applies to ERP WM, does not include the function Task and Resource Management (TRM). TRM was released with SAP R/3 Enterprise Extension Set 1.1, whereas the EWM naming only applies as of R/3 Enterprise Extension Set 2.0.

What is also sometimes confusing is that the EWM naming does not even apply to all of the features that were delivered for SAP ERP WM with Extension Set 2.0. For example, dynamic cycle counting, the functionality that lets the user walk up to a storage bin in the warehouse with a Radio Frequency device and initiate an ad hoc cycle count, was introduced with Extension Set 2.0, but it is not included in the EWM features. The only three functions that are included in the EWM brand as it applies to SAP ERP WM include cross-docking, yard management, and VAS.

When SAP delivered SAP SCM 5.0 in 2005, it also delivered EWM. As mentioned previously, this version of EWM was related to SAP ERP EWM in name only. The SAP SCM EWM was delivered on the SCM platform, completely separate from SAP ERP and without any direct link to SAP ERP WM or SAP ERP EWM. It uses different tables, different structures, and different program from the ERP application. In some ways, it uses the same concepts and paradigms, but in other ways, it is significantly different and even performs the same functions in uniquely different ways. To hopefully make it more clear, Figure 1.1 provides a visual diagram of the functions to which the EWM is used to refer. However, in this text, we will focus on the right-hand side of the diagram — the SCM EWM.

In 2007, SAP decoupled EWM from the SCM Basis layer so that the company could prepare to deploy the solution as an add-on to ERP. An add-on is a product that can be deployed on top of another application platform without being coupled to or dependent on the underlying software technology architecture. Allowing the EWM to be deployed as an add-on would mean that businesses of all sizes that did not necessarily have the skills, manpower, or funding to deploy an SCM
server could deploy EWM on their ERP server and enjoy the benefits of the latest warehousing applications.

As briefly mentioned earlier, in 2005, SAP announced that it would migrate its ERP application to the Enhancement Pack model and that the ERP 2005 release (which it later renamed ERP 6.0) would be the “go to” release for the next several years. This Enhancement Pack model allows SAP to deliver new functions in a quicker way and allows customers to implement those new functions more quickly and easily by giving customers the freedom to choose which business functions to activate after implementing the enhancement pack.

**EWM – When Does it Apply?**

When SAP delivered its second Enhancement Pack for ERP, SAP ERP 2005 Enhancement Pack 2, in 2007, it made good on its promise to allow EWM to be deployed as an add-on to ERP. Now customers have the choice of whether to deploy EWM on the SCM platform or on their existing ERP platform, giving them the freedom to provide all of the functionality on the right-hand side in Figure 1.1 on the ERP platform. In Chapter 26, Deploying EWM, we will further discuss the option of deploying EWM as an add-on to ERP.
1.4 Target Audience

In this text, we intend to provide knowledge, information, and reference material for project leads, implementation consultants, project team members, business analysts, and business users who are responsible for implementing, maintaining, or problem solving for the SAP EWM solution. Key decision makers who need to understand the application well enough to decide how and where to deploy EWM may also find the text useful in their decision-making processes. The text will cover an overview of the capabilities of the EWM solution, the configuration elements available in the standard solution, the methods used to solve common business process problems, plus the possibilities to extend the solution to meet more complex or unique business requirements. The text will provide both detailed system configuration and setup instructions, and descriptions of and solutions to common business concerns for complex high-volume distribution operations.

Following the introduction, the second section of the text will cover the basic warehouse setup, including the warehouse structure, warehouse master data, stock management, and warehouse document types. This section will provide a baseline for understanding the remaining sections and will also provide a reference for users who are getting started with an EWM implementation.

The third section will cover configuration and setup for basic warehousing processes, including inbound processing, outbound processing, internal movements (including replenishment and rearrangement), and physical inventory.

The fourth section will cover special cross-topics such as cross-docking, yard management, VAS, and data capture (including mobile data entry using radio frequency–enabled devices and RFID).

The final section and the appendix will provide conclusions, a list of common abbreviations, and the index. If you are not familiar with the SAP warehousing terms already, you may want to check the index or the online glossary (available in the SAP Online Help at http://help.sap.com/saphelp_glossary/en/) before you continue, or you may find it helpful to refer to them periodically as you read through the chapters.

Whether you read the text cover to cover or place it on your desk to use as a handy reference during your implementation (or both), we think that you will enjoy the text and find it both interesting and useful.
1.5 Summary

In this chapter, we introduced SAP EWM and described the contents of this text. Hopefully, this gives you an idea of what this text is about and how to use it. In the next chapters, we will describe the organizational structure and master data for EWM.
Index

A

Access sequence, 397
  for staging area and door determination, 460
Action definition, 784, 785
Action profile, 357, 783
Activity, 214, 362
Activity area, 105, 214, 378, 436
  Assign bins, 106
  assigning to physical inventory area, 540
  create, 105
  in queue determination, 723
  join, 105, 455
Activity types, 701
Actual workload, 688
Addition to existing stock, 67, 168, 383, 390
  Certificate number, 72
  Goods receipt date, 71
  Level, 75
  Shelf-life expiration date, 72
Add-on for EWM, 799
Ad hoc movements, 483, 511
  via RF, 512
Ad Hoc PI Physical Inventory, 545
Adjustment profile, 153, 158
Adobe Forms, 279
Advanced Planning and Optimization (APO), 126, 414
  Demand data, 164
Advance Shipment Notice (ASNs), 339, 343, 345, 635, 758, 760, 771
Alert Monitor, 510
Alert priority, 509
Alerts
  for capacity utilization, 509
  triggering for stock situation, 510
  triggering in RF, 451
Allowed package volume, 120
Allowed package weight, 120
Allowed volume tolerance, 120
Alternate unit, 119, 139, 140
Alternative storage bin type sequence, 168, 504
Annual inventory, 531
Annual PI Physical Inventory, 545
Application Link Enablement, 50
Application platform, 781
Archive objects, 795
Archiving, 794
ASN, 307
ASN tracking number, 365
Assign warehouse
  in EWM, 52
Authorization fields, 790
Authorization objects, 790, 791
Authorization profiles, 790, 791
Authorizations, 790, 791
Auto ID infrastructure (AII), 141, 749
Auto-ID Object Event Repository, 750
Auto Logon, 721
Automated storage and retrieval systems (ASRS), 57
Automatic packing, 351
Automatic refresh
  Easy Graphics Framework, 730
Automatic replenishment, 484, 500
Autorefresh, 566
Auxiliary packaging material, 195, 662
Auxiliary products, 653
Availability, 798, 804
Availability group, 84, 240, 349, 359, 392
  For production supply, 473
Index

Available for Sale (AFS), 40, 41
Available quantity
   Batches, 62

B

Backflushing, 157, 476, 480
Backflush withdrawal, 157, 683
Barcodes, 719
Base unit, 119, 141
Base unit of measure, 132, 139
Basic measurement services, 567
Batch
   In goods issue process, 255
   In the goods receipt process, 254
   Update control, 253
Batch data communication (BDC), 808
Batch Management, 120, 136, 251
   Documentary batch management, 256
   Enable, 254
BC Set, 804
   Activation, 806
   Collective, 805
   Production supply, 472
Bill of lading, 365, 641
   document for freight order management, 464
Bill of material, 203, 474, 667
Billing
   delivery related, 415
Bin access type, 90, 214
   allowed for resource, 725
   in queue determination, 723
Bin type determination, 165
Bin type sequence, 384, 505
Bonded stock, 414, 773
Bonded warehouse stock, 765
Book inventory, 540
BP role category, 224
Bulk storage, 57, 62, 383
Bulk storage indicator, 160
Bulk structures, 160
Business Add-In (BAdI)
   Calculating labor factor, 222
   calculating resource execution constraints, 729
   Date determination for comparison of shelf life, 157
   Determine available time of processor, 710
   enable documentary batch in ERP, 258
   Enhancing product number, 134
   Enhancing the warehouse graphic layout, 575
   mapping serial numbers ERP->EWM, 276
   Posting goods movement via PPF, 785
   prioritization of warehouse orders, 727
   resource execution constraints storage group engaged, 729
   /SCWM/DLV_BATCH_CHAR, 255
   /SCWM/DLV_BATCH_VAL, 255
   /SCWM/EX_CORE_CR_STOCK_ID, 285
   /SCWM/EX_DLV_DET_LOAD, 352
   /SCWM/EX_ERP_SN, 276
   /SCWM/EX_RECRP_ENGAGED_HANDL, 729
   /SCWM/EX_RECRP_LEAVETIME_CALC, 729
   /SCWM/EX_SR_PRIOP, 352
   SMOD_APOCF005, 809
   specify your own number for the stock ID, 285
   stock removal strategy, 444
   transferring additional valuations into the batch, 255
   Travel distance calculation, 701
   Verification field, 102
Business Application Programming Interfaces (BAPIs)
   for physical inventory, 544
Business configuration set, 360
Business context, 586, 587

826
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business explorer (BEx), 582</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business hours, 181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Delta extraction</em>, 581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Initial extraction</em>, 581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business partner, 52, 175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Employee</em>, 775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Identification numbers</em>, 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Loading</em>, 807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Plants</em>, 183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Processor</em>, 691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Roles</em>, 178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business partner roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Processors</em>, 224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business partner types, 176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business system group, 134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>for wave</em>, 431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>maintain</em>, 426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancelling picking, 452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacities, 120, 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity check, 75, 92, 390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Early</em>, 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity consumption, 120, 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>for wave</em>, 431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity utilization, 509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrier, 176, 183, 193, 367, 462, 636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrier profile, 193, 427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catch weight, 123, 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Measuring in work center</em>, 114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catch weight management, 360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activation, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ERP activation</em>, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>In EWM delivery</em>, 294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration into EWM processes, 293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance group, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuation measured, 294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catch weight product, 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catch weight profile, 154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catch weight profile for catch weight quantity, 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catch weight relevant, 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catch weight tolerance group, 124, 154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories, 563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of unit of measure, 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed by, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change documents, 355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checked by, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checked delivery, 680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-in, 344, 367, 642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-out, 642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checkpoint, 362, 632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIF, 330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citrix, 747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed, 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed packaging, 120, 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing indicator, 605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code group, 407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comma delimited file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>creating for data loads</em>, 809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication point, 777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company code, 37, 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>assign plants</em>, 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion check, 370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex loading, 462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex unloading, 369, 370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite roles, 790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition configuration, 785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition (for labor management), 694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition maintenance group, 397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>for wave template determination</em>, 434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition table, 397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition technique, 394, 787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Creation</em>, 398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition type, 397</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Confirmation correction, 604
Consistency check, 347
Consolidation group, 436, 458
determination, 417
Consolidation group, 67, 113, 378, 520, 522, 624
Consolidator, 183
Consumption-relevant for VAS, 158
Control cycle records, 475
Control indicator, 359
Control indicator for process type
determination, 359
Controlling (ERP), 541
Conveyor system, 453
Conveyors, 574
Core interface (CIF), 117, 119, 126, 179, 182, 183, 334, 766, 801, 808
Automatic transfer, 335
Integration model, 126
Initial transfer, 330
Correction delivery, 601
Correlation fix, 157
Counting, 374, 402
Explicit, 403
Implicit, 403
Counting inbound delivery, 402
Counting procedure, 531
Country of origin, 136, 352
With batch management, 299
Without batch management, 299
Crate part replenishment, 484, 496, 487
Crate parts, 208, 496
Created by, 134
Cross-docking, 33, 607
Exceptions, 602
Cross-docking monitor, 610
Cross-docking route, 192, 423, 611
Crystal reports, 583
Currency Unit, 532
Custodian, 249
Customer, 175, 179

Supply chain units, 184
Transfer via CIF, 127
Customer Relationship Management
(CRM), 310, 411
Customer maintenance, 179
Customer returns
Inspection, 402
Customs business partner, 183
Customs office, 183
Cutover, 812
Cycle count indicator, 156, 546
Cycle Counting, 546

D
Dangerous goods, 150, 187, 766
Dangerous goods indicator profile, 154
Data archiving, 794
Data entry type, 226
DataSources, 555, 577
Data store objects, 576
Date profile, 357
Date types, 357
Decentralized warehouse management,
130, 800
Decision code, 377, 407
Deconsolidation, 343, 374, 375, 378, 380
Deconsolidation work center, 380
Delivery, 757
Integration ERP-EWM, 337
Delivery adjustment in case of
differences, 591
Delivery date, 347
Delivery item type
Serialization, 276
Delivery priority, 359
Delivery processing, 781, 783
Delivery Split Indicators, 49
Delivery status, 354
Delta extraction, 581
Demand data, 163, 396, 761
Demand quantity, 164
Denominator, 119, 140
Destination bin
determination, 446
Determination procedure, 397
Difference Analyzer, 453, 541, 602, 769
Difference category, 590
Dimension checks, 143
Dimension ratio, 165
Direct delivery distribution, 413, 757
Direct labor activities, 698
Direct Outbound Delivery (EWM), 414, 416
Direct replenishment, 484, 498, 499
Direct sales, 772
Display profile, 226, 733
Distance calculation, 64
Distribution Mode for the Delivery, 49
Distribution model, 337
Document
Category, 354
Type, 354
Documentary batch, 158
Document category, 358
Document flow, 413
Document type, 358, 359, 428
Assign, 369
determination, 413
Door determination, 364, 369, 370, 460
Door determination groups, 364
Doors, 57, 107
Driver, 462
Dynamic cycle counting, 33
Dynamic selection criteria, 560

E
EAN category, 119, 141
EAN / UPC, 119, 141
Early capacity check, 76
Easy Graphics Framework (EGF), 555, 730
EDI, 307
Efficiency, 710
Effort codes, 662
Electronic data interchange (EDI), 344
Electronic Product Code (EPC), 749
Element groups, 198
Elements, 199
Employee, 176, 182
Business partner number, 222
Performance levels, 222
Employee number, 222, 775
Employee performance, 688, 708
Viewing results, 710
Employee performance documents, 708
Empty bin, 67, 507
Putaway rule, 168
Search rule, 74
Empty storage bin, 383
Empty storage bin search, 168
End time, 698
Engineered labor standard, 222, 687
Uploading, 696
Work steps, 695
Enhancement pack model, 32, 34
Enterprise resource planning
Add-on for EWM, 799
Integration to non-SAP, 800
Integration to older releases, 800
Entitled to dispose, 131, 497
Environmentally relevant, 154
EPC, 752
Equipment
As resource, 209
Evaluation points, 500, 503, 504, 505, 508
Event-driven quantity assignment, 764
Event Manager, 750
EWM transaction codes
How to use, 130
EWM-triggered opportunistic cross-docking, 618
Exception Code, 377, 391, 451, 453, 499, 569, 585
  Configuration, 586
  Definition, 588
  Difference Category, 590
  In RF, 593
  LIST, 595
  Testing, 597
  Usage, 592
Exception code profile, 588
Exception handling, 585
Exceptions
  Carrier responsibility, 599
  Shipper responsibility, 599
Excess capacity tolerance, 126, 148
Excess volume tolerance, 148
Excess weight tolerance, 120, 147
Exchange infrastructure (XI), 801
Executed workload, 708
Execution code profile, 586
execution priorities
  for resource types, 727
Execution priorities, 211
Execution step, 586, 587
Execution time for replenishment, 485
Expected goods receipt, 339, 344, 345, 352, 354, 355, 360, 367, 763, 773
Export regulations, 414
Expiration date, 352
Extended computer aided test tools (eCATTs), 808
Extended Warehouse Management (EWM)
  Add-on, 33, 34, 328
  Deployment, 328
  Development partners, 30
  IDoc interface, 329
  Integration to ERP, 50
  Release of, 33
External product number, 134
External step, 63
External Warehouse Management, 48
Extract time calculation, 156
Extract transform load, 576

F

Factory Calendar, 532
Fast mover, 501
Field control profile, 357
Filling level, 148
Final delivery, 311
Final ship-to party, 613
Finance
  Integration, 774
Finance (ERP), 541
Final outbound delivery, 413, 466
Final Shipment, 464
Financials (FI), 39
Findings, 403
Fire containment section, 91
First-in/first-out (FIFO), 444, 483
Fiscal Year
  assignment for physical inventory, 532
Fixed bin, 57, 60, 99, 483, 489, 498
  stock removal strategy, 444
Fixed storage bin, 383
Floor storage, 57
Flow racks, 57
Follow-up action, 377, 391, 403, 406
Forecast data, 761
Foreign trade organizational unit, 183
Form name, 146, 195
Formulas, 691
Forward picking area, 483
Freight code sets, 193
Freight forwarders, 176
Freight Order Document, 464
Freight Order Management, 421, 464
Function codes, 737
Function key quantity, 226
GANTT chart, 566
Gaylords, 149
General Item category group, 119, 151
General storage, 383
Geographic location of EWM, 803
GET_URL, 571
Global trade identification number (GTIN), 141
Global Trade Services (GTS), 414
Goods issue, 467
  cancellation, 467, 773
  For production, 480
  posting automatically, 463
  posting for ODO, 422
Goods movement bin, 356, 370
Goods movement control, 83
Goods receipt, 350
  From production, 343
  From supplier, 343
Goods receipt notification (GRN), 353
Goods receipt office, 354
Goods receipt posting, 343
Graphical User Interface, 38
Graphical warehouse layout, 555
  Define object, 574
Gross weight, 119, 136, 142
Group resource types, 219

Pick HU, 659
Picking control, 81
Printing, 279
SSCC number, 282
Status management, 281
Structure, 277
Type check, 66
Handling unit management (ERP), 374
Handling unit type, 195
Handling unit warehouse task, 312
Hazardous goods, 150
Hazardous materials, 57, 62
Hazardous rating, 385
Hazardous material rating, 441
Hazardous substances, 766
Hazardous substance storage-Relevant, 154
Height, 119, 142
Height indicator, 165
Hierarchy tree, 564
High availability, 804
High-rack storage, 57
Human capital management (HCM), 222
Human resources (HR), 183
  Integration, 775
HU type, 125, 146
  groups, 725
HU warehouse task
  Nonactive, 519

Handling indicator, 121, 151
Handling unit (HU), 451, 574
  close at packing station, 421
  Empty handling units, 278
  for picking, 421
  for transportation, 462
  Packaging materials, 278
  physical inventory, 531
Identification numbers, 180
Identification point, 57, 73, 375
ID point, 447
IDoc, 126, 130, 779
Implementation Guide, 38
Inbound delivery, 40, 355, 365, 783
  Item type, 374
  Splitting, 350
  Type, 374
Index

Inbound delivery item, 370
Inbound delivery notification (IDN), 308, 346, 355, 760, 783
  Activation, 308
Inbound processing, 556
Incompleteness profile, 429
Incompletion check, 347
Incompletion profile, 357
Indirect activities, 687, 701
  Entering, 702
Indirect activity types, 701
InfoCubes, 576, 578, 579
InfoPackages, 578
InfoProviders, 576, 578
Initial extraction, 581
Inspection
  For returns, 760
  Sample, 376
  Visual, 370
Inspection decision, 402
Inspection document, 372, 376, 401, 402, 403
  Mixed, 78
Inspection document items, 403
Inspection frequency, 402
Inspection object, 376
Inspection object type, 372, 376, 402, 404
  Activation, 405
Inspection procedure, 402
Inspection rule, 376, 401, 402, 404, 408, 518
Inspection status, 376
Integrated product and process engineering (iPPE), 196, 679
Integration model, 126, 331
  Activation, 128
Interim bins, 57
Interleaving, 728
Intermediate document (IDoc), 126, 130, 779
Internal consumption, 772

Internal process code, 391, 586
Internal Warehouse Movements, 483
International article number (EAN), 141
Internet Transaction Server (ITS), 741
Intrastat declaration, 766
Inventory, 343
Inventory management, 41
  Integration, 768
Inventory procedure, 533
Invoice before goods issue (IBGI), 465, 467, 772
In yard, 376, 405
iPPE, 679
Item category, 356
Item category group, 119, 151
Item filter
  for warehouse order creation, 436
Item type, 356, 359, 428
determination, 413
ITSmobile, 713, 718, 740, 741, 748, 750, 751, 753, 780
  using with ERP, 742

K

Kanban, 496
Kit component, 667
Kit header material, 667
Kits disassembly, 684
Kitting, 157, 667, 420
  Movement type for kit header, 677
  Packaging specification for kitting, 673
  VAS order for kitting, 673
Kitting work center, 676
Kit to order, 668, 773
  Using CRM sales orders, 679
  Using ERP sales orders, 668
Kit to order during picking, 678
Kit to stock, 681, 764, 773
  Initiated from VAS orders in EWM, 682
  Using ERP production order, 681
L

Labeling, 381
Labor activities
  Direct, 698
  Indirect, 701
Labor factor, 222
Labor management, 156, 183, 555, 556, 574, 687
  activation, 688
  Deactivating external process steps, 689
  Employee performance, 708
  Performance data, 776
  Plan activity area for work center, 113
labor management data
  loading, 813
Large/Small
  stock removal strategy, 444
Last-in/First-out (LIFO), 444
Latest Start Date (LSD), 726, 727
Layout-oriented storage control, 372, 446, 457
Lead times, 192
  for route determination, 423
Legacy system migration workbench (LSMW), 808
Legs, 192, 423
Length, 119, 142
Length Indicator, 165
Level of available quantity, 59
License plate, 367, 462
LIME, Limit values
  for warehouse order creation, 436
LIST, 595
Loading, 413, 420, 460, 462, 464, 639
  task creation, 421
  maintain, 426
  RFID integration, 751
Logical System, 127
Logical transaction step flow, 737
Logistics Service Provider, 131
Logistics unit of measure, 124
Long material number (LAMA), 132
Lower threshold
  for alerts, 509
Low Stock Check, 545
Low-stock count, 540
  threshold value, 540

M

MARA, 121
MARC, 121
Master data
  Automatic transfer to EWM, 335
  Integration, 330, 767
Material description, 119
Material flow system, 574, 575, 777
Material group, 119, 135
  Packaging materials, 119, 145
Material master (ERP), 117, 130
  Basic data, 119
  Foreign trade
    Export data, 136
  Plant data / storage 1, 119, 120
  Sales
    General/plant, 119, 120, 148
    Units of measure, 119
    WM execution, 121, 152, 154
    WM packaging, 124, 147
Material number, 119
Material requirements planning areas
  Supply chain units, 184
Material resource planning area, 183
Materials
  Transfer via CIF, 127
Materials Management (MM), 39
Material valuation, 775
Maturation time, 139
Maximum capacity, 125, 148
Maximum height, 149
Maximum length, 149
Maximum number of bins, 60, 168
Maximum number of occupied bins, 510
Maximum packaging height, 126, 149
Maximum packaging length, 126, 149
Maximum packaging width, 126, 149
Maximum quantity, 171, 489, 500
Maximum stacking factor, 120, 143
Maximum stock type quantity, 73
Maximum volume, 120, 147, 149
Maximum weight, 120, 147
Maximum width, 149
Means of transport, 187, 361, 364, 636
Menu Manager, 735, 739
Merchandise distribution, 153, 158, 623
Merchandise distribution cross-docking, 624
Methods, 558, 565
Minimum production quantity, 497
Minimum quantity, 171, 489, 500
Minimum quantity (as percentage of maximum quantity), 172
Minimum remaining shelf life, 120
Minimum Replenishment Quantity, 489, 493, 498, 500
Minimum shelf life, 137
Mixed inspection documents, 78
Mixed owners, 78
Mixed pallet, 378
Mixed parties entitled, 78
Mixed special stocks, 79
Mixed stock type, 77
Mixed storage, 70, 390
Mobile data entry, 450
Mobile devices, 449
Mode of transport categories, 187
Monitor
  Define, 564
Multi Providers, 578, 580

N
Near fixed picking bin, 383
Near to fixed bin, 169
Negative stock, 80
NetWeaver, 127
  Auto ID Infrastructure, 750
  Web Dynpro, 745
Net weight, 119, 142
New products introduction, 356
Node, 563
Node Hierarchy, 564
Node Profile, 563
Nodes, 574
  Hiding in the warehouse monitor, 559
No goods issue, 85
Nondependent stock type, 84
Non-location-dependent stock types, 349
No replenishment, 170
Numerator, 119, 140

O
Object, 572
Object class, 562
Object type, 571
Online support system (OSS)
  Note application, 799
Operational labor planning, 688
Operational planning, 707
Opportunistic cross-docking, 607
Optimal bin type, 506
Optimal location, 500
Optimal section, 506
Optimal storage bin, 505
Optimal storage type, 505
Optimum bin type, 504, 505
Order fill times, 483
Order item indicator, 398
Order-related replenishment, 484, 492, 494, 495
Order to Cash, 412
Orders, 757
Organizational Structure, 37
OSS note
836899, 762
958143, 121
Outbound delivery, 40, 411, 466, 757
Outbound delivery (ERP), 413, 416
create without reference, 413
Outbound delivery (final, EWM), 413
Outbound delivery order (ODO), 413, 416, 492, 783
creation from ODR, 425
maintenance, 418
route determination during, 424
Outbound delivery order item, 492
Outbound delivery orders (ODOs)
expected shipping time, 726
Outbound delivery request (ODR), 310, 413, 416, 772, 783
activation, 417
route determination during activation, 425
route determination during creation, 424
Outbound orders, 757
Outbound process
overview, 412
Outbound processing, 411, 556
Overcapacity tolerance, 125, 149
Owner, 244
assignment for physical inventory, 533
Mixed, 78

P

Packaging material, 194, 278, 365, 662
Capacity, 195
Closed indicator, 195
For transportation units, 636
Packaging material type, 120, 146, 195, 365
Packaging specification, 196, 351, 382, 385, 441, 518, 654
Activation, 200
Creation, 199
Determination, 202
Distribution, 201
Existence check, 652
Level, 655
Levels, 198
loading, 810
Printing, 660
Packaging specification procedure, 652
Packing, 369, 413, 420, 458, 751
Automatic, 351
Packaging group, 119, 145
Packaging list, 365
Pack station, 421
Pallet storage, 62, 383
Parking lot, 367
Parking spaces, 633
Partner profile, 357
Partial quantities
stock removal strategy, 444
Partner role, 652
Party entitled, 349, 385
Mixed, 78
Party Entitled to Dispose, 207, 246
assignment for physical inventory, 533
PD, 625
PDF form, 146
PDF form name, 146, 195
Pending claims quantity, 602
Percent remaining shelf life, 120, 139
Performance
Employee, 708
Performance levels, 222
Persistent staging area, 576
Personalization Profile, 720, 735, 736, 738, 739
Personnel number, 182
Index

Physical inventory, 531, 556
  Adjustments, 769
  allowing corrections, 533
  areas, 540
  counting, 534
  monitoring, 550
  Posting Differences Automatically, 544
  processing, 539
  Synchronizing with ERP, 769
Physical inventory area
  physical inventory status, 551
Physical Inventory Document, 535
  activation, 534
  creation, 534
  priority, 537
Physical inventory methods, 545
Physical inventory procedure, 538
  assignment to physical inventory area, 540
Pick-by-voice, 713, 719, 747
Pick Completion time
  for wave, 432
Pick denial, 391, 453
Pick execution
  via paper pick tickets, 419
Pick handling unit (HU), 421, 447
Pick point, 57, 456
  Active, 82
  HU from, 113
Pick tickets, 419
Pick, Pack, and Pass, 105, 453
Picker-directed replenishment, 451
Picking, 413, 420
Picking list, 447, 448
Picking path, 436
picker-driven replenishment, 499
Pick-up bin, 519
Pie chart, 566
Pilferable, 123, 153
Planned cross-docking, 607
Planned maximum number of bins, 168
Planned maximum quantity, 171
Planned minimum quantity, 171
Planned minimum replenishment quantity, 170
Planned putaway control indicator, 159
Planned putaway sequence, 172
Planned replenishment, 171, 484, 489
Planned replenishment task, 494
Planned shipment, 464
Planned skip putaway, 173
Planned storage bin type, 168
Planned storage section indicator, 167
Planned values, 393
Planned workload, 688, 704
  In warehouse monitor, 706
Planning activity area, 704
Planning and simulation results
  Loading, 708
Planning with shelf life, 137
Plant, 38, 39, 176, 183, 349
  Supply chain units, 184
  Transfer via CIF, 127
Ports
  Supply chain units, 184
Possible group types, 650
Posting change, 322, 483, 513, 768
  Bin, 84
    For production supply, 479
Post goods issue, 413
Post-Processing Framework (PPF), 107, 279, 350, 417, 513, 768
  action for wave assignment, 433
    for posing goods issue, 467
    for printing pick lists, 447
    for printing picking lists, 448
    Printing, 787
PPF actions
  Time of processing, 786
Preliminary inspection handling unit, 372, 401
Preliminary inspection inbound delivery, 401
Preprocessing, 705
Presentation Device, 226, 722, 734
   Sounds for messages, 226
Presentation device type, 226
Presentation profile, 734, 735, 736, 738
Preservation, 381
primary picking area, 483
Printing, 781, 787
   Determination procedure for work centers, 112
Printer determination
   for invoice printing, 466
priority index, 727
Priority points, 354
Process block profile, 156
Process code, 371, 596
Process indicator for determination of the warehouse process, 359
Process indicator, 428
Process integration (PI), 801
Process-Oriented Storage Control (POSC), 373, 420, 446, 459, 657
Process step
   External, 524
   Internal, 524
Process type, 156, 359, 492, 658
   For work centers, 112
Process type determination, 428
Process type determination indicator, 156
Processor, 183, 221, 690
   Defining application transactions, 224
Product description, 119, 132
Product determination, 135
Product freight group, 151
Product freight sets, 194
Product group, 651, 653
Product group type, 653
Product hierarchy, 119, 135
Production order, 345, 762
Production planning, 203, 469
   Integration, 773
Production supply, 157, 773
   BC Sets, 472
   Integration, 472
   Organizational structure, 472
   Picking for, 478
   Staging, 477
   Staging area determination, 208
Production supply area (PSA), 203, 469, 496
   Assigning bins, 206, 476
   Creation in ERP, 203
   In EWM, 474, 475
   Mapping, 205
   Transfer from ERP, 475
Product load category, 156
Product master, 117, 130, 359, 386
   classification, 143
   General data, 132
   Global data, 133
   Packaging data, 119, 120, 144
   Properties, 119, 120, 133
   rearrangement data, 505
   Slotting, 163
   Storage, 119, 150
   Storage type data, 165
   Units of measure, 119, 139
   Warehouse data, 133, 155
Product master decides, 170
Product master (ERP)
   Sales
      General/Plant, 147
      WM packaging, 149
Product number, 119, 130, 132
Products
   physical inventory, 531
   Product-specific physical inventory, 531
Product warehouse task, 312
   Nonactive, 519
Index

Profile, 355, 356
Programmable logic controllers, 777
Project stock, 305
Pull extraction, 581
Purchase order, 343, 345, 365, 762, 771
Purchasing
   Integration, 771
Push back racks, 57
Push extraction, 581, 582
Putaway, 343, 505
   bin determination, 352
   Confirm putaway, 66
   Execution, 382, 391
   Preparation, 382
   Putaway control, 65
   Split during, 68
   Storage control, 69
Putaway control indicator, 158, 343, 385, 396, 397, 505
Putaway delay, 627
Putaway PI Physical Inventory, 546
Putaway quantity class, 76
Putaway quantity classification, 172
Putaway rules, 66, 390
Putaway sequence, 172
Putaway strategy, 382

Change attributes, 231
Display, 231
Quantities fixed, 172
Quantity adjustment, 371
Quantity class
   Putaway, 76
Quantity classification, 63, 158, 172, 385, 441
Quantity interval, 407
Quantity offsetting, 357
Quarantine period, 123, 152
Queries, 576, 578
Queue, 722, 213, 556
Queue access sequences, 214
Queue Assignment, 390
Queue determination, 213, 391, 418, 722
Queue remote function call (qRFC), 346
Queue sequence, 723, 215
Queue types, 216, 728
Queue type sequences, 216
Quicksizer, 801

R

R/3 add-in, 130
R/3 plug-in, 126
Radio Frequency (RF), 803
   Auto logon, 217
   transactions for picking, 419
Radio frequency identification (RFID), 141, 713, 749
Rearrangement, 483, 500, 505
   configuration, 502
   execution, 507
   in background, 507
Reason code
   physical inventory, 537
Received on Dock (ROD), 40, 41
Recommended storage quantity, 164

Q

Q-inspection product/batch inbound delivery, 402
Q-inspection product/batch warehouse-internal, 402
Q-inspection returns delivery, 402
Quality inspection, 343, 374, 375
Quality inspection engine, 372, 760
Quality inspection group, 123, 152
Quality management, 375
Quant, 230, 443
   Adding to existing quants, 231
Recounting
  physical inventory, 534
REC storage groups
  Assigning to storage bins, 220
Reference document profile, 357
Reference product for packing, 145
Register, 350
Release method, 431
Release strategy
  for wave, 432
Relevant for hazardous substance, 123, 154
Remaining volume after nesting, 120, 143
Remanufacturer, 183
Remote function call (RFC), 127, 202, 713
  for third part mobile integration, 746
Repackaging, 381
Replenishment, 86, 170, 171, 483
  planned, 489
  Tolerance, 86
Replenishment at a storage type level, 485
Replenishment level, 86, 485
Replenishment quantity, 489, 495
Replenishment strategy, 499, 522
Reports (BI), 576
Request for calculation of maximum quantity in storage type, 165
Request Types
  for route determination, 423
Request types (for transportation), 187, 192
Required minimum shelf life, 120, 138, 139, 157
Requirement indicator, 396, 398
Requirement quantity indicator, 398
Requirement type, 398
Reserve area, 483
Resource, 209, 227, 556, 574, 720, 721
  Current storage bin, 217
  Default bin, 700
  Execution priorities, 211
  Stock on, 80
Resource Execution Constraints (REC), 219, 729
Resource execution constraint storage group, 91, 220
Resource group, 212, 722, 723
Resource management, 391, 531, 556, 713, 720
  integrating physical inventory, 548
Resource type, 210, 700, 722, 724, 727
Retail, 153
Retention period, 355
Return material authorization, 760
Return order, 758
Returns
  Inspection, 760
Return to vendor, 773
Reverse Goods Issue, 468
Reverse kitting, 684
RFC destination, 127
RF Cookbook, 736
RF Framework, 713, 715, 718, 719, 731, 739
  Best Practices, 732, 736
  enhancing, 735
RFID tags, 719
RF Menu Manager, 721, 735
Roles, 790
  Delivered, 792
Rough bin determination, 82, 492
Rounding
  After split, 77
  Whole units, 83
Rounding rule, 120, 138
Rounding rule SLED, 120
Route determination, 417, 422
Routing Guide Engine (RGE), 422
Route, 422, 458, 460, 636
  Cross-docking route, 611
maintain, 427
simulation, 427
Stop, check when repacking, 114
Routing guide engine (RGE), 187
Routings, 203
Rule Engine
   for Auto ID Infrastructure, 753

S

Sales BOM, 773
Sales orders, 411, 757, 772
   outbound processing for, 412
   Status, 758
Sales order items, 164
Sales order stock, 304
Sample, 403
Sample inspection, 376
Sampling procedure, 402
SAP
   Business Intelligence, 29
   Customer Relationship Management, 29
   Enterprise Resource Planning, 30
   ERP, 29
   Extended Warehouse Management, 29
   Extended Warehouse Management 7.0 enhancement pack 1, 29
   History, 29
   R/1, 28
   R/2, 28, 29
   R/3, 28, 29
   R/3 Enterprise Extension Set 1.1, 33
   R/3 Enterprise Extension Set 2.0, 33
   Service and Asset Management, 30
   Supply Chain Management, 29
SAPConsole, 713, 739
SAP Developer Network, 786
SAP ERP, 126
SAP NetWeaver Mobile, 716
Schedule condition, 785, 786
SCM basis, 201
Scrapping, 406
Screen sizes
   for RF screens, 733
SDP relevance, 137
Search rule, 390
Search rule for empty bin, 74
Seasonal demand, 501
Section indicator, 505
Selection variants, 559
Semi-system-guided processing, 729
Serial number, 49, 369
   Automatic creation, 269
   Creation by template, 269
   For outbound delivery processing, 270
   In delivery processing, 266
   In EWM monitor, 274
   In warehouse tasks, 272
   Length, 276
   Profiles, 261
   Provisional, 271
   Serial number requirements, 259
Serial number management, 258
Serial number profile, 122, 150, 152
Service parts management, 30, 48, 413
Service parts planning, 30, 201
   Integration, 761
Service provider, 570
Set to checked, 135
Shelf life, 120, 137, 138
Shelf-Life Expiration Date (SLED), 444
   In GI process, 290
   In GR process, 288
   Master data, 287
   Monitoring, 290
Ship HU, 457
Shipping and Receiving (S&R), 421, 462, 781, 783
Shipping conditions, 187, 192
   for route determination, 423
Shipping points
   Supply chain units, 184
Shipping zones
Supply chain units, 184
Ship-to party, 181, 458
Shortcut
for RF presentation devices, 734
Shrinkage, 153
Simple loading, 462
Simple unloading, 369
Simulation
Labor planning, 705
Single roles, 790
Sizing, 798, 801
Skip during putaway, 173
Slap and ship
RFID support, 751
SLED, 286
Slotting, 143, 159, 171, 393, 398, 500, 505, 761
Activating planned values, 393
Slotting index, 503, 505
Slow mover, 501
Smart forms, 146, 279, 448
Sold-to party, 181
Sort fields
assignment to stock removal rule, 444
Sort rule
for warehouse order creation, 436, 437
Source system, 575
Special stock, 304
Mixed, 79
Speedometer, 566
Split during putaway, 169, 170
SPL_MAT_FIELDS_CORRECT_T130F, 121
S&R activity, 636
Stacking factor, 137
Staging, 413, 420, 460
Staging Area Group, 460
Staging area, 57, 108, 364, 370, 520
Assign to doors, 109
determination, 421, 460
Staging area determination, 208
Staging area / door determination group, 162, 351, 364
Staging bay, 462
determination, 460
Standard bin, 217, 722
Standard carrier alpha code, 636
Standard HU type, 122, 125, 145
Start bin, 217
Start condition, 785, 786
Start time, 698
States
for RF Framework, 736
Status profile, 356
Status slotting, 164
Steel containers, 149
Step flow
for RF Framework, 737
Steps
for RF Framework, 736
Stock
Blocked, 242
Custodian, 249
From one plant in EWM, 247
From several plants in EWM, 249
Incoming and outgoing, 238
On resources, 233
On transportation units, 234
Owner, 244
Party entitled to dispose, 246
Physical and available, 236
Quality inspection, 242
Valuation, 303
Visibility, 233
Stock category, 349, 531
Stock Comparison between EWM and ERP, 544
Stock data
loading, 812
Stock determination, 300
Stock determination has priority, 302
WM has priority, 303
Index

Stock determination group, 162
Stock identification, 74, 283
  Creation, 284
  Deletion, 285
  Split, 286
  Usage, 285
Stock on resource, 80
Stock posting
  physical inventory, 534
Stock removal control, 79
Stock removal control indicator, 161, 418, 441
Stock removal rule, 82
Stock removal strategy, 436, 440, 443, 521
Stock transfer, 322, 406
Stock transfer order
  Discrepancies, 598
Stock transport order, 40
Stock type, 41, 239, 349, 359, 385, 514, 653
  Definition of new stock types, 243
  For production supply, 474
  Non-location-dependent, 359
  Role, 359
  Role for storage type, 85
Stock type role, 350
Storage behavior, 61, 390
Storage bin, 88, 582
  assignment to production supply area, 496
  Creation, 89
  display physical inventory information, 550
  Generating, 97
  Labels, 102
  Mass change, 98
  rough bin determination, 493
  Sorting, 98
  Structures, 94
  System status, 93
  tracking for resource, 722
  Type, 91
  User status, 93
Storage Bin Check, 547
Storage bin level for fixed bins, 485
Storage bin–specific physical inventory, 531
Storage bin sorting
  loading, 810
Storage bin type, 160, 167, 388, 393
Storage bin type sequence, 387
Storage concept, 500
Storage control, 66, 372, 517
  Layout-oriented, 375, 517, 522
  Process-oriented, 517, 524, 527
Putaway, 69
Storage group, 91, 529
Storage location, 39, 40, 349
  creation, 40
Storage percentage, 120
Storage process, 525, 526
Storage section, 87, 387
  Check, 68
  For yard management, 632
Storage section check, 387
Storage section indicator, 159, 167, 386, 387, 393, 504, 506
Storage section search, 159
Storage section search sequence, 167, 384, 386, 504, 505
Storage type, 56, 165, 166
  determination for picking, 440
  for production supply, 474
  for work centers, 111
  for yard management, 632
  Level, 65
  primary picking (or forward picking), 484
  replenishment strategy, 499
  reserve, 484
Storage type determination
  access strategy, 442
Storage type group, 499
Storage type role, 58
Storage type search sequence, 159, 161, 384, 385, 394, 418, 440, 441, 505
Store-and-forward, 780
Stringent FIFO
Suboptimal storage type, 505
Subtotal filter
   for warehouse order creation, 436
Supplier cross-docking, 608
Supplier Network Collaboration (SNC), 307, 344
   Return processing, 758
Supply chain unit, 52
   Assign to warehouse, 185
Support pack, 799
System-guided by Queue , 450, 726
System-guided execution, 391
System-guided processing, 724, 726, 729
System-guided selection, 450

T

Tag and ship
   RFID support, 751
Tag commissioning, 752
Tailored measurement services, 567
Tare weight, 195
Tare weight variable, 147
Target stock indicator, 398
Task and resource management, 33
Task and Resource Management (ERP WM), 720
TCD process number, 615
Telegram, 777
telnet, 740
Terminals
   Supply chain units, 184
Text-based RF devices, 739
Text profile, 357
Theft, 153
Third-party clients, 716
Third-party integration
   for mobile devices, 746
Third-party logistics, 180
Third-party suppliers, 176
Threshold addition, 69, 169, 170
Thresholds, 566
Time of last slotting run, 164
Tolerance
   Replenishment, 86
Tolerance Check
difference analyzer, 543
physical inventory, 534, 536
Tolerance Groups
   physical inventory, 536
Top warehouse order
   for pick, pack, and pass, 454
Total shelf life, 120
Traffic lights, 566
Trailer
   loading, 462
Transaction code, 38
Transaction data layer, 762
Transformation (BI), 580
Transportation, 462
Transportation cost profile, 425, 427
Transportation costs, 194
Transportation cross-docking, 610
   For contract packagers, 617
   Without storage control, 616
   With storage control, 616
Transportation group, 120, 187, 136, 192, 194
   for route determination, 423
Transportation hierarchy, 188
Transportation lane, 188
Transportation modes, 187
Transportation Request, 464
Transportation route, 191
   Legs, 192
Transportation service providers
   Supply chain units, 184
Transportation Unit, 344, 462, 464
Index

Activity, 369
Checking in, 638
Creating, 635
including in storage type search for picking, 441
Transportation zone, 189
Travel distance, 700
Travel distance calculation, 574
Travel time, 700
Two-step picking, 162

U

Unassigned bin quantity, 602
Unchecked delivery, 680, 48
Unit of dimension, 119, 142
Unit of measure category, 120, 143
Unit of measure for maximum packaging, 126
Unit of measure for maximum packing length/width/height, 149
Unit of volume, 142
Unit of weight, 119, 142
Universal product code (UPC), 141
Unloading, 343, 350, 639
Complex, 369, 370
RFID integration, 751
Simple, 369
Unloading list, 367
Unplanned replenishment, 484
UoM category, 120
Upper threshold
for alerts, 509
User, 217, 720
User group
for assignment of personalized menus, 739
User master record, 790
User name, 182
UTF-8 code page, 740
Utilization, 710

V

Validation profiles, 737
Valuation measured, 294
Valuation quantity, 295
Value-added service order, 519
Value-added services, 33, 157, 343, 381, 420
Configuration, 650
Determining relevance, 651
Inbound processing, 664
Internal processing, 665
Master data, 653
Order creation, 656
Outbound processing, 657
Packaging specifications, 654
Settings for the warehouse, 652
Work center, 660
Value interval, 408
Value interval for counting, 152
Variable tare weight, 126
Variant GTIN, 141
VAS billing, 649
VAS order, 382, 665
End time, 661
Execution, 660
Start time, 660
VAS order for reverse kitting, 684
Vehicle, 361, 364, 462
Creating, 639
Vendors, 175, 182
Supply chain units, 184
Transfer via CIF, 127
Verification field, 94
Verification profiles, 739
Voice HTMLB generator, 749
Voice picking
Integration, 780
Voice XML, 748, 749
Volume, 119, 137
Volume indicator, 165
Volume unit, 119
VT220 terminal emulation, 740

W

W3C, 748
Warehouse
assign in ERP, 42, 45
define in ERP, 42
Model the structure, 56
physical inventory settings, 532
Supply chain units, 184
Warehouse cockpit, 566
Define, 573
Enhancing, 567
Layout, 569
Warehouse control unit, 777, 779
Warehouse document types, 307
Warehouse doors, 632
determination, 460
Supply chain units, 184
Warehouse management engine, 783
Warehouse management monitor, 555
Categories, 563
Creating nodes, 561
Hiding nodes, 559
Methods, 558, 559, 565
Node, 563
Node hierarchy, 564
Node profile, 563
Object class, 562
Personalizing, 559
Selection variants, 560
Warehouse material group, 122
Warehouse monitor, 343, 366, 391
assigning warehouse orders, 726
display variants, 730
managing resources, 729
Posting changes, 479
selection variants, 730
Warehouse number
definition in EWM, 50
Warehouse order, 582
assignment to queue, 722
assign / unassign, 730
change latest start date, 730
change queue, 730
Creation, 315, 413, 419, 435
Creation rule, 315
confirming / cancelling, 730
for physical inventory, 548
for physical inventory documents, 318
for picking, 450
locking / unlocking, 730
Printing, 787
prioritization, 724
re-sorting WTs, 438
selection for system-guided processing, 725
sorting during creation, 728
sorting, 437
sorting for system-guided selection, 727
Warehouse Order Creation Rule (WOCR), 419, 435, 728
customizing, 439
for pick, pack, and pass, 456
Warehouse process type, 214, 351, 359, 370, 374, 385, 406, 460, 474, 487, 519, 527, 529
determination, 417
determination for delivery line, 427
Determination for production supply, 474
For repacking, 112
in queue determination, 723
Warehouse product group, 150, 151
Warehouse request, 451, 493, 494
document type, 488
item type, 488
Index

rearrangement, 502
Warehouse storage condition, 122, 151
Warehouse subsystems
Integration, 779
Warehouse Tasks (WTs), 312, 413, 582, 718
creation, 418, 495
creation for ODO, 418
Generic, 70
Statuses, 312
Warehouse task confirmation
RFID integration, 751
for rearrangement, 508
Wave, 318
assign/unassign, 434
block/unblock, 434
creation, 418, 429
delete, 434
for replenishment, 488
merge, 434
release, 434
split, 434
Wave category, 431
Wave completion time, 431
Wave Cutoff time, 432
Wave management, 556
Wave Release time, 432
Wave start time, 431
Wave template, 318, 431
Wave type, 431
Web Dynpro, 745, 751
Web Dynpro Java, 713
Web SAPConsole, 713, 740, 748, 780
Web Services, 713
Weight indicator, 165
Weight unit, 119
Wide area network (WAN), 803
Width, 119, 142
Width indicator, 165
Windows CE, 743
Windows Mobile, 743
Windows Terminal Server (WTS), 747
WM execution, 121
WM packaging, 124
Work center, 57, 110, 195, 203, 376, 408, 657, 660, 663
deconsolidation, 379
Deconsolidation, 523
Determination, 114
for packing, 458
for pick point, 82, 457
for production supply, 474
Inbound section, 112
layout, 377, 408
Layout, 112, 381
Outbound section, 112
Quality inspection, 518
Worker
As resource, 209
Workflow, 781
Workload
Actual, 688
Calculation for planning, 703
Planned, 688
Work steps, 695

X

xCelsius, 583
XML browser, 748
XYZ coordinates, 92, 574, 575, 700
Origin, 93

Y

Yard, 344
Yard management, 33, 360, 364, 421, 462, 631
Index

Monitoring, 646
Storage bins, 57
Yard move, 362
Yard movements, 643
Creation, 643
Yard warehouse tasks, 314

Z
Zero stock check, 546
Zero-stock count, 540
Zone
  maintain, 427