



Sterling Store Inventory Management: Concepts Guide

Release 9.1



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IBM® Sterling Store Inventory Management

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Preface

This manual provides a brief glimpse into the IBM® Sterling Store Inventory Management and lists its various features.

Intended Audience

This manual is intended to provide assistance to all users of the Sterling Store Inventory Management.

Structure

This document contains the following chapters:

Chapter 1, "IBM Sterling Store Inventory Management Overview"

This chapter introduces the Sterling Store Inventory Management and provides an insight into the business challenges, benefits, and scope of the Sterling Store Inventory Management.

Chapter 2, "IBM Sterling Store Inventory Management Features"

This chapter provides a brief overview of the features of the Sterling Store Inventory Management.

Documentation

For more information about the Sterling Store Inventory Management components, see the following manuals:

- *Sterling Store Inventory Management: Release Notes*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Suite: Applications Installation Guide*

- *Sterling Store Inventory Management: Deployment Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Suite: Applications Reference Implementation Guide*
- *Sterling Store Inventory Management: Concepts*
- *Sterling Store Inventory Management: Implementation Guide*
- *Sterling Store Inventory Management: User Guide*
- *Sterling Store Inventory Management: Localization Guide*
- *Sterling Store Inventory Management: Javadocs*

For more information about the IBM® Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation components, see the following manuals:

- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Release Notes*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Installation Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Upgrade Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Configuration Deployment Tool Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Performance Management Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: High Availability Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: System Management Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Localization Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Customization Basics Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Customizing APIs Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Customizing Console JSP Interface for End User Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Customizing the RCP Interface Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Customizing User Interfaces for Mobile Devices Guide*

- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Customizing Web UI Framework Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Customizing Swing Interface Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Extending the Condition Builder Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Extending the Database Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Extending Transactions Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Using Sterling RCP Extensibility Tool Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Integration Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Product Concepts Guide*
- *Sterling Warehouse Management System: Concepts Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Application Platform Configuration Guide*
- *Sterling Distributed Order Management: Configuration Guide*
- *Sterling Supply Collaboration: Configuration Guide*
- *Sterling Global Inventory Visibility: Configuration Guide*
- *Catalog Management: Configuration Guide*
- *Sterling Logistics Management: Configuration Guide*
- *Sterling Reverse Logistics: Configuration Guide*
- *Sterling Warehouse Management System: Configuration Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Application Platform User Guide*
- *Sterling Distributed Order Management: User Guide*
- *Sterling Supply Collaboration: User Guide*
- *Sterling Global Inventory Visibility: User Guide*
- *Sterling Logistics Management: User Guide*

- *Sterling Reverse Logistics: User Guide*
- *Sterling Warehouse Management System: User Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Mobile Application User Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Business Intelligence Operational Reports Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Javadocs*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Suite: Glossary*
- *Parcel Carrier: Adapter Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Multitenant Enterprise Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Password Policy Management Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Properties Guide*
- *Catalog Management: Concepts Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Pricing Concepts Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Setting Up Quotes in Distributed Order Management*
- *Sterling Sensitive Data Capture Server, Release 1.0: Configuration Guide*
- *Sterling Sensitive Data Capture Server, Release 1.0: PA-DSS Implementation Guide*
- *Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation: Secure Deployment Guide*
- *Sterling Business Center: Item Administration Guide*
- *Sterling Business Center: Pricing Administration Guide*
- *Sterling Business Center: Customization Guide*
- *Sterling Business Center: Localization Guide*
- *Sterling Field Sales: Deployment Guide*
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- *Sterling Field Sales: Localization Guide*

- *Sterling Field Sales: User Guide*
- *Sterling Field Sales: Customization Guide*
- *Visual Modeler: Administration Guide*
- *Visual Modeler: Best Practices Guide*
- *Visual Modeler: Implementation Guide*
- *Visual Modeler: Installation Guide*
- *Visual Modeler: Tutorial Guide*

For a description of the various documents in the Sterling Store Inventory Management documentation set, see the Sterling Store Inventory Management documentation home page at:

`<YFS_HOME>/documentation/SOP_doc_home.html`

where `<YFS_HOME>` is the `/Runtime` directory under the folder where this application and Sterling Selling and Fulfillment Foundation are installed.

Conventions

The following conventions may be used in this manual:

Convention	Meaning
. . .	An ellipsis represents information that has been omitted.
< >	Angle brackets indicate user-supplied input.
mono-spaced text	Mono-spaced text indicates a file name, directory path, attribute name, or an inline code example or command.
/ or \	Slashes and backslashes are file separators for Windows, UNIX and LINUX operating systems. The file separator for the Windows operating system is "\" and the file separator for Unix and Linux systems is "/". The Unix convention is used unless otherwise mentioned.
<INSTALL_DIR>	User-supplied location of the Sterling Multi-Channel Fulfillment Solution installation directory and Sterling Store Inventory Management installation directory. This is only applicable for Release 9.1

IBM Sterling Store Inventory Management Overview

1.1 Introduction

The Sterling Store Inventory Management is tailored to manage operations in a store. Shipments may be shipped to consumers, retailers, or mom and pop stores. The key problems solved by the Sterling Store Inventory Management are shipment consolidation or transportation optimization, customer compliance, integration of the online and offline operations of retailers, instant gratification to customers, and productivity.

1.2 Business Challenges

Managing inventory across a network is fraught with challenges. Enterprise software systems must facilitate store inventory visibility and control, even when inventory is managed in a network of diverse and heterogeneous operating facilities. All too often, when selecting inventory management systems, business decision makers tend to compromise on a solution that can never achieve store inventory visibility and control. Software applications make businesses more productive by eliminating redundant data entry and potential errors. Software enables a business to scale operationally while facilitating high levels of customer service that are typical of the smallest organizations. However, for maximum efficiencies, multi-site businesses require software applications that:

- Do not force major changes to operating practices
- Take advantage of today's best practices

- Manage the complexities that are unique to how each particular business drives value for its customers

Increasing customer demands and an ever-changing environment drives businesses today. Some factors that influence business processes are:

- Mergers and acquisitions
- Introduction of new products or product lines
- Addition of new business channels
- Consolidation of facilities
- Business outsourcing
- Increasing transportation cost
- Poor utilization of resources such as labor, facilities, equipments, locations, and so forth
- Servicing new customers and fulfilling each of their unique compliance demands

Businesses must manage inventory in a variety of facilities that may include Plant Warehouses, Regional Business Centers, Stock Rooms, Stores, and Flow-through Distribution Centers.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management aids customers by providing them with immediate gratification the opportunity to view and buy additional items in a store and saving on shipping costs.

The increase in customer visits to a store is enhanced by stronger integration between the channels, which in turn increases the revenues and profits for the retailers. This also serves as a differentiating factor by increasing the retail customers' convenience.

In-store pickup is successful due to its effective coordination between a retailers' online and offline operations. Given the competitive pressures and customer benefits associated with this service, the in-store pickup is no longer an order winner for retailers, but a requirement for any successful multi-channel retailer.

1.3 Benefits of the IBM Sterling Store Inventory Management

The Sterling Store Inventory Management is designed to manage fulfillment and distribution across a network of facilities, including regional distribution centers, master distribution centers, fulfillment centers, stockrooms, repair centers, and more. With its high degree of configurability and service-oriented architecture, the Sterling Store Inventory Management enables responsive customer fulfillment, improved operational efficiency, greater flexibility for growth, and ultimately, a lower total cost of ownership in large scale, complex fulfillment environments.

In short, the Sterling Store Inventory Management enables you to:

- Make better decisions by automating business processes
- Reduce time-to-market by reacting quickly to market changes
- Increase revenue through effective collaboration

Rich in features and functionality, the Sterling Store Inventory Management provides:

- A Networked Solution
- Process Centric Configurations
- Comprehensive Product Management
- Complete Visibility
- Optimized Operations

1.4 A Networked Solution

The Sterling Store Inventory Management is unique in its architecture. It is built on a service-oriented, component-based architecture.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides lower cost of ownership, higher flexibility, and consistent customer service.

1.5 Process Centric Configurations

The Sterling Store Inventory Management is process centric, making it highly configurable. Traditional store solutions are services intensive, and provide data-centric configurations.

The process management model in the Sterling Store Inventory Management is optimized for supply chain operations, and integrates monitoring with event and task management.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management is adaptive to changes in facilities and operations. It also provides the ability to configure business processes.

1.6 Inventory Management

Inventory management delivers one of the most powerful, scalable, flexible, and stable solutions for store execution.

This module provides the following key capabilities:

- Setup of store layout
- Adjusting the inventory
- Comprehensive control of the movement of inventory
- Cycle Count generation
- Physical Count generation
- Comprehensive inventory audit trail

1.7 Outbound Planning and Execution

Outbound Planning and Execution is the process taken from the point of shipment creation up to the point when the shipments are picked up by or delivered to the customers. The Sterling Store Inventory Management supports customer pick up of shipments from stores or delivery of shipments to the customer. Shipments can be delivered through a load or manifest.

1.7.1 Shipping

Store pickup in the Sterling Store Inventory Management enables a store associate to manage customer pick up of items from a store.

1.7.2 Shipout

Delivery is the process taken from the point when pick tickets are generated for an outbound shipment up to the point when the packages are loaded into trailers or added to a parcel manifest.

1.8 Alert and Event Management

A store dashboard lists all alerts generated by the system. This needs manual intervention.

1.9 Comprehensive Product Management

The Sterling Store Inventory Management is built to track and control inventory of products or items across an organizational network. The various parameters and granular definitions bundled into the Sterling Store Inventory Management ensures consistent handling and measurement of inventory, and accurate handling of variable goods.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides the capability to improve inventory accuracy by tracking various inventory attributes such as the Unit Of Measure (UOM).

1.10 Complete Visibility

The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables effective management of store operations by providing wall-to-wall visibility of all critical information about inventory or shipments. A store operation benefits from visibility of into this information. By leveraging the Sterling Store Inventory Management's Alert Framework, the information regarding shipment and inventory processes is proactively monitored for potential problems, thereby enhancing productivity levels.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management raises proactive and reactive events, and raises appropriate exceptions through the Event Management layer.

1.11 Optimized Operations

The Sterling Store Inventory Management offers real-time, constraint-based optimization of processes in stores, thus improving productivity and reducing labor costs, cost to customers, and shipping costs.

1.12 Radio Frequency Identification

The Sterling Store Inventory Management is designed to enable for adoption of Radio Frequency (RF) technology, allowing the definition of new RFID-driven business processes in store operations.

1.13 Return On Investment Driven by the IBM Sterling Store Inventory Management

The Sterling Store Inventory Management solves business challenges and provides solutions, thus driving new levels of Returns On Investment (ROI).

The following table describes the ROI driven by the Sterling Store Inventory Management:

Table 1–1 The IBM Sterling Store Inventory Management ROI

To solve...	Sterling Sterling Store Inventory Management makes it possible to...	Driving a new level of ROI by...
Problems associated with locally deployed applications that are not integrated	Share inventory and order data between stores and other business entities such as supply chain and merchandising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowering IT costs with centralized deployment • Lowering inventory with visibility • Increasing asset utilization • On boarding utilities - designed for a phased roll out not a big on-time bang go live
Operational inefficiencies and the lack of best practices in inventory management in retail stores	Offer capabilities to the retailer to rollout best practices at the store level to optimize customer service, shelf availability, and productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing customer service level attainment • Enforcing corporate cycle count regimes • Increasing productivity • Reducing receiving and handling errors
Problems associated with the introduction of new initiatives to improve the customers' experience	Integrate the store into other channels for "buy anywhere-return anywhere" strategies as well as endless aisle, special orders, and home delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing product availability • Allowing retailers to compete and perform new levels of operations • Reducing costs and errors associated with "work around solutions" • Increasing sales through better visibility

Table 1–1 The IBM Sterling Store Inventory Management ROI

To solve...	Sterling Sterling Store Inventory Management makes it possible to...	Driving a new level of ROI by...
The use of multiple store systems	Use the same processes for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receiving DC shipments and vendor shipments • customer pick up or home delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing training costs • Reducing errors • Increasing Higher productivity
Problems caused by different store layouts and sizes	Offer four different modes of inventory and task control: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no locations • one location • 3 locations • many locations Which lets retailers incrementally improve operations by allowing stores to move from one mode to another.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding roll-outs • Reducing implementation and training costs • Reducing costs and time associated with phased operational changes

1.14 IBM Sterling Store Inventory Management Users

The Sterling Store Inventory Management can be used by any customer who has one or more facilities in the supply chain network.

Retailers are the most potential users of the Sterling Store Inventory Management. They use the Sterling Store Inventory Management to manage operations in their distribution centers, ship to stores, or fulfillment centers for their direct-to-customer channels.

Retailers may be:

- Traditional retailers who use the Sterling Store Inventory Management in their distribution centers to manage shipping to stores.
- Online or catalog retailers who use the Sterling Store Inventory Management to ship directly to customers.

IBM Sterling Store Inventory Management Features

2.1 Overview

The Sterling Store Inventory Management helps a store manager to set up a store and streamline business processes to meet specific needs of a store. The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables a store associate to design, execute, monitor, and analyze programs and processes performed for inventory management in the stores. This Sterling Store Inventory Management delivers one of the most powerful, scalable, flexible, and stable solutions for store operations.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides the following key capabilities:

- Setup of store layout
- Adjusting the inventory
- Comprehensive control of the movement of inventory
- Industry standard count procedure
- Comprehensive inventory audit trial

2.2 Store Configuration

The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables a store manager to set up a store and modify its processes.

Configuring a store involves:

- Creating a Store

- Modifying a Model Store
- Modifying Store Processes
- Store Layout

2.3 Create a Store

When you create a new store, it is either created according to an existing model store or as a new model store. A model store is a store from which processes are inherited by additional stores. The impact of where and how inventory is stored in a store directly influences the time taken to putaway, replenish, or pick inventory. The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides comprehensive functionality to effectively manage the layout of a store.

A store can be modelled as:

- No location — In such stores, the user cannot track inventory using the Sterling Store Inventory Management.
- A single location — In such stores the user cannot perform inventory move operations. However, the user can perform all other inventory operations such as receiving, adjusting, and so forth.
- As three locations — In such stores, one location is designated as the customer service area, one as the receiving or shipping dock, and one as the back room.
- With multiple inventory tracking locations — In such stores, one location is designated as the customer service area and one as the receiving or shipping dock. Other multiple locations are designated as back rooms.

Once on board, you can designate any store as a model store or a follower store.

A store can be modelled as a seller where the user can define the Inventory and Catalog Organization code for a store. However, the store always uses the Inventory and Catalog Organization code of the enterprise.

2.4 Modify a Model Store

Administrators can change processes in a model store. Once changes are done, the follower stores are synchronized with the model store. Synchronization ensures that the follower stores have the same processes as that of the model store. For example, consider a model store with multiple locations. In the Sterling Store Inventory Management, an administrator can model the entire store configuration as one location. If this store is designated as a model store, even the follower stores are modelled as a single location store.

2.5 Modify Store Processes

In the Sterling Store Inventory Management, an administrator can change some processes in a particular store. This process change is specific to a particular store. The allowed changes are usually those that are specific to each individual store and are not generic enough to be a part of the model store.

It is also possible to change a store to follow another model store. For example, consider a small store modelled as a single location. If it needs to be upgraded to track inventory by multiple locations, administrators need to change the model store to a multi-location model store.

2.6 Store Layout

The impact of where and how inventory is stored in a store directly influences the time taken to putaway, replenish, or pick inventory.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides comprehensive functionality to effectively manage inventory in a store. The store infrastructure comprises of:

- Defining Locations
- Devices

2.7 Define Locations

A location in a store is a space where inventory is stored.

In the Sterling Store Inventory Management, a store can be modelled as:

- No inventory control — In such stores, the user cannot track inventory using the Sterling Store Inventory Management.
- Entire store is modelled as a single location — In such stores the user cannot perform inventory move operation. The user can perform all other inventory operations such as receiving, adjusting, and so forth.
- Store modelled with three locations — In such stores, one location is designated as the customer service area, one as dock, and one as back room.
- Store tracks inventory in multiple locations — In such stores, one location is designated as the customer service area and one as dock. Multiple locations are designated as back room.

2.8 Devices

Using the Sterling Store Inventory Management, a store associate can configure printers to print labels or reports.

2.9 Inventory Item Setup

In the Sterling Store Inventory Management, a store associate can define the attribute of each item. In any store, inventory is stored in Stock Keeping Units (SKU).

The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides the ability to define UOM for each item. A single item may have several UOMs associated with it. An item may have alternate UOMs defined, which can be used to record inventory operations in a store. In the Sterling Store Inventory Management, an item can have only one base UOM and product class.

2.10 Inventory Control

Once inventory items have been set up for a store, the Sterling Store Inventory Management enables store associates to perform the following inventory tasks:

- Inventory Adjustments
- Inventory Searches
- Inventory Moves

- Inventory Audits
- Counts
- Managing Locations

2.11 Inventory Adjustments

You adjust inventory in a store when the quantity of items in a location is not the same as the quantity of items recorded. This can occur for a number of reasons. For example, if products in a store are damaged, the amount of inventory available must be adjusted to reflect that situation.

Inventory adjustments are either initiated manually, or as part of a cycle count or physical count process. When performing inventory adjustments, you must enter an appropriate reason code to indicate why the modification was made. For example, if the reason code is entered as "Scrap", the system automatically reduces the on-hand quantity.

Examples of inventory adjustments are:

- Adjusting on-hand quantity — Based on the reason code entered by the store associate, the system automatically increases or decreases inventory at a location. For example, if an item is damaged, the system allows the store associate to reduce the on-hand quantity for the item.
- Adjusting multiple items — A store associate can select multiple items and perform an inventory adjustment.

2.12 Inventory Searches

The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides extensive search capabilities for a store associate to search for specific items and their locations. Based on the search criteria, the Sterling Store Inventory Management provides visibility to item attributes. In the Sterling Store Inventory Management, different attributes are configured for different items. For example, when you search for a digital camera, the attributes such as choices for resolution and zoom range choices display. The same attributes do not display when you search for a television. The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables you to search inventory using mobile devices.

The Available to Promise (ATP) rule enables you to set up a monitoring system to track the availability of an item for current and future demand.

This determination makes the most efficient use of inventory so that items are not set aside for future orders when they can be used to fulfill more immediate demands.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management also provides additional information such as item accessories, kit components of an item, item specifications, and up sells and substitutions for an item, if any.

2.13 Inventory Moves

The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides the ability to track the movement of inventory from one location to another in a store. This process is applicable only to stores that track inventory in multiple locations within the store. A store associate tracks inventory moves on paper and later enters them into the system. You can also track inventory moves through mobile devices.

Using the Sterling Store Inventory Management, a store associate can view the inventory quantity for an item that is currently available in a particular location. The Sterling Store Inventory Management does not allow you to track tag controlled items.

2.14 Inventory Audits

The Sterling Store Inventory Management audits all inventory transactions that occur in a store. Audits are written in the Sterling Store Inventory Management for each transaction along with appropriate reasons and item attributes for tracking purposes. The combination of item attributes tracked for audits are better illustrated through the following examples:

- View all transactions for a particular modification type:
Criteria used include modification type and date range.
- View all inventory adjustment performed based on cycle count:
Criteria used include reason and date range.
- View all transactions performed by a user for a specified date range:
Criteria used include user identifier and date range.
- View all items in a particular location:

Criteria used includes location identifier and date range.

- View specific item details:

Criteria used includes item identifier and date range.

2.15 Counts

The accuracy of inventory levels is critical to a store. The inventory level is the key to customer satisfaction, demand planning, and labor costs. For example, if the system assumes that there are 100 pieces of an item on the shelf, when there are only three pieces available, the system does not replenish inventory when needed or order the right quantity.

The count system provides vital in-house cross checks on inventory in the store. It identifies quantities on hand and matches them to the current records catching any discrepancies that may exist. The count system allows you to execute count in a planned or ad hoc manner. A common type of count employed is year-end inventories. While this is exhaustive, it is also time consuming and does not ensure accuracy throughout the year. The other method to adopt is to count items every quarter based on velocity or price. However, the best method to adopt is to count items periodically.

2.16 Cycle Count

To ensure accurate stock level information, the Sterling Store Inventory Management provides the ability to count a small subset of inventory on a regular basis. It is a method of inventory auditing that supplements the annual physical counting. This can be ad hoc or system generated. Counts can be performed either through paper-based or mobile devices.

By counting items more frequently, you can improve inventory accuracy and avoid costly errors in material planning and scheduling.

Count requests can be automatically generated by setting up a cycle count program and strategy. The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides a list of items that need to be counted every day. Counts that are not performed on a particular day are carried over to the next day. A store associate may select all items or a subset of items from the list, which need to be counted for that day, and print count worksheets for the selected items. For count sheets that are pending entry in the

system, a store associate can either choose to reprint all count sheets or a selected count sheet.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables you to count items on an ad hoc basis.

After completing the count process, a store associate enters the count quantity for each item in the count worksheet. A store associate can also record any quantity found at additional locations, which were not part of the count sheet. The count quantity recorded is compared against the inventory to display any potential variance. When a store associate finds variance, the store associate reviews the inventory audit for specific items to analyze the cause for the variance.

A store manager can cancel all pending counts at the end of every month. Based on the input criteria, a store manager can view archived count sheets. The input criteria can be date range, items, or the status of the count task.

The summary of count activities performed in a day is also available. Details include the number of counts requested, the number of counts performed, the number of counts cancelled, and total variance for the day.

2.17 Physical Count

Outstanding customer service and optimum inventory management require accurate, up-to-date inventory information. A physical count provides comprehensive reports that details the store's physical inventory.

During a physical count, every item in the inventory is counted, and the balance is adjusted to reflect the actual quantity on the shelf. Inventory transactions are not performed during the count process, except for recording the count quantity.

Using external systems, you can print blank count sheets to record the count quantity. After completing the count process, you enter the item and its count quantity in the system.

In the Sterling Store Inventory Management, a store manager can view the missing count sheets based on the count sheet numbers.

You can view the variances at any point during the physical count process. A store manager can view the variance of count quantity with the quantity of items.

- If the variance is due to a data entry error, a store manager can change the count quantity.
- If the variance is due to a counting error, a store manager may want to recount selected count sheets.

All unresolved variances require manual acceptance to complete the physical count.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables a store manager to view count sheets and variances for the last physical count that was performed. A store manager can also cancel a physical count.

2.18 Manage Locations

The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables a store manager to manage back room locations in a store. This process is applicable only to stores that track inventory in multiple locations within the store.

A store manager can view all back room locations available in a store. The Sterling Store Inventory Management allows a store manager to delete existing locations to be one by one. Before deleting any location, the store manager must clear inventory in that location. A store associate can add new back room locations, when needed.

2.19 Receive Inventory

Many stores track their inbound receiving in an attempt to reduce costs and save time. This is enhanced by providing better visibility to both on hand inventory and expected inventory. The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides real-time visibility of the incoming inventory and facilitates accurate inbound planning.

Inventory can be received against an order or a shipment. An order is not closed until the receiving process is complete. The inventory information is updated upon recording each receipt. The Sterling Store Inventory Management supports receiving inventory through paper-based and mobile devices.

2.20 Inbound Planning

The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides visibility to inbound inventory upon creation of transfer orders, purchase orders, or advanced ship notices. This provides specific information regarding SKUs or quantities ordered, and when the shipment is scheduled to arrive. The Sterling Store Inventory Management maintains and tracks shipment details from various sources.

2.21 Inbound Execution

The receiving process in a store involves the acceptance of goods from the carrier, the physical process of checking the inventory received, and receipt of the inventory. A store receives inventory from various sources, which includes inventory received from other stores, distribution centers, or vendors. The process of acceptance is to verify the quantity received against the bill of lading (BOL) or packing slip that the carrier provides. A receiving worksheet is printed for the shipment received to record its contents.

Recording inventory received is an offline process. In the Sterling Store Inventory Management, a store associate can select the expected receipts and print receiving worksheets for the expected inventory. Along with the receiving worksheets, sales order labels are also printed. These labels can be used to identify inventory assembled for sales orders.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management also supports blind receiving. Blind receiving is the receipt of inventory when no BOL or order number exists in the system.

Once inventory is received, a store associate records inventory details in the receiving worksheet. After recording, a store associate enters data from the receiving worksheet into the system.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables a store associate to enter quantity up to two alternate UOMs.

A UOM translates to the type of packaging of a SKU. For example, consider inventory being received, procured, and ordered. Typically, inventory is also received in multiples of inventory UOMs such as a case of 4-pack batteries or a pallet of milk cartons. These measures define alternative methods of addressing an inventory UOM. They have a direct relationship to the inventory UOM. In the Sterling Store Inventory

Management, these UOMs are called as alternate UOMs. Alternate UOMs are case pack of 20 6-pack batteries, a half-pallet of 1 gallon cartons of milk, or a pallet of air-conditioners.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables a store associate to record discrepancies against the shipment, if found. The discrepancy can be overages, shortages, or damages.

2.22 Manage Users

User security enables a store manager to ensure that users have access to information that is appropriate for carrying out their tasks. Users can access only those system resources for which they have permissions.

A store manager can search for users, assign user groups, or transfer a user to another store.

Users

A user is an individual who can perform certain tasks such as Hub Administrator or Store Manager, depending on what role the user plays in the organization. Each organization has its own users. The Sterling Store Inventory Management does not allow users to manage their own credentials.

User Groups

A user group is a collection of users who perform a similar task. For example, a group of store associates may be collectively placed under a store associate user group. A single user can belong to multiple user groups. Each user group has a set of assigned permissions. If a user belongs to multiple user groups, the user retains the permissions set for all user groups.

2.23 Shipping

Shipping is the process followed from the point when shipments are created up to the point when shipments are picked up by the customers, or delivered to the customers. The Sterling Store Inventory Management supports customer pick up of shipments from stores or delivery of shipments to the customer. For shipping, a store is modelled to perform both back room pick and customer pick, or only customer pick. During customer pick or back room pick, the Sterling Store Inventory

Management allows you to scan items using a UPC code. The user can also print a BOL for a particular load.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables you to perform the following tasks:

- Printing Pick Tickets
- Searching Shipments
- Recording Back Room Pick
- Recording Customer Pick
- Creating Bill Of Lading
- Adding Shipments to Manifest

2.24 Print Pick Tickets

Pick ticket is a sheet containing the list of items that need to be pulled from inventory to fill an order. You can print pick tickets manually for a specific shipment, all pending shipments, or shipments of a particular order. Based on the generated pick ticket, you can pick items from the back room.

2.25 Search Shipments

The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables extensive search capabilities for a store associate to search for specific shipments and their status. The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides visibility to the list of shipments that are yet to be shipped depending on the search criteria. You can also view the details for a particular shipment and the line price of each item in the shipment.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables you to undo backroom pick, if required, which changes the status of the shipment. For example, consider a store where a store associate has performed back room pick for an order and the customer cancels the order. Now, the items need to be moved to back room and status of the shipment needs to be changed.

Once a shipment has been added to load, you can Undo BOL, if required. This changes the status of the shipment. For example, consider a store where a store associate has added a shipment to a load but later decides

to add the shipment to a different load. The user can remove the shipment from the load by performing Undo BOL.

Using the Sterling Store Inventory Management, you can add, delete, or modify the container information for any shipment. It also enables you to remove any shipment from the manifest.

2.26 Record Back Room Pick

Back room pick is the act of pulling inventory from the back room of a store to fill an order. You can pick items from the back room based on the pick ticket and move them to the customer pick location. The store associate records information such as the quantity ordered and pick quantity in the pick ticket. The information is later entered in the system.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management also allows a store associate to record any shortage of items and enter appropriate reasons for their shortage.

2.27 Record Customer Pick

Customer pick is when customer visits a store to pickup a product that has been previously ordered. If shipments are not available in the customer pick location, the store associate prints a pick ticket for the order and ensures that the shipment is made available to the customer. The store associate can apply the latest store prices to the order. The customer can choose to pick an entire order or a part of an order. The customer can pick the remaining items of an order later.

The Sterling Store Inventory Management also enables you to cancel an entire order or a part of an order, as per the requirements of the customer.

2.28 Create Bill Of Lading

In the Sterling Store Inventory Management, shipping facilitates the shipping of products ordered by a customer. Less-than-Truck load (LTL) or Truck Load (TL) shipments are delivered as load and parcel shipments as a part of a manifest.

A store associate can print a Bill Of Lading (BOL) for a load. The shipment number from the pick ticket or the order number is used as a

reference to create a load. The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides visibility to other shipments that have common customers or destinations. This enables you to consolidate shipments. When shipments are chosen for consolidation, the system updates the cumulative weight or volume of the load. The store associate can determine the weight and volume of the load.

You can create a new load from the consolidated shipment, or merge the shipment with the existing load. After creating the load, you can modify it. After confirming the load, the system generates a BOL number and prints it for that load. Upon confirming the load, all shipments that are added to the load are shipped. Once a load is confirmed, the store associate cannot modify that particular load.

2.29 Add Shipments to Manifest

The Sterling Store Inventory Management enables you to add shipments to an existing manifest or a new manifest. The shipment number or order number is used as a reference to open a manifest. You can enter the shipment container details and the appropriate carrier needs to be selected. If a manifest is already open for the selected carrier, the store associate can add the current shipment to the open manifest. If the manifest is not open for the carrier, the store associate can create a new manifest for the shipment. However, if a manifest is already open for a carrier, the store associate cannot create a new manifest for that carrier. Upon closing the manifest, all shipments that are added to the manifest are shipped. Once a manifest is closed, the store associate cannot modify that particular manifest.

2.30 Alerts

The Sterling Store Inventory Management provides an underlying mechanism for setting and monitoring alerts that enables store managers to respond quickly to unplanned events. The system raises alerts when specific events occur. For example, if inventory adjustments over a threshold value occur, the system generates an alert.

An alert is a message directed to a user or queue about a transaction that may need manual intervention or manual review. If an alert is directed to a user, only that particular user can handle the alert. If it is assigned to a queue, all users subscribed to the queue are able to view

the alert. Queues are configured to distribute alerts to users. The administrator can set up alert priorities and raise certain actions when specific conditions are met for the alert.

Additionally, unresolved alerts can be escalated to different queues when a specified number of unresolved exceptions are reached, or the exceptions have not been resolved within a given time frame.

Different queues are configured depending on the type of alerts. For example, all inventory related alerts are assigned to one queue, and sales order related alerts are directed to another queue.

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