
OPTIMIZATION OF WAREHOUSE FUNCTIONS, GOOD RECEIVING AND GOODS RETURN PROCEDURES

(study case: Assalam Hypermarket)

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ABSTRACT

Warehouses have an essential role in the sustainability of retail businesses. A warehouse is not only a place to store goods but also receives, distributes, and returns goods. Assalam Hypermarket is a retail business that still needs help maximizing warehouse functions. Assalam Hypermarket still has several obstacles that could be solved, such as fighting over goods between warehouse divisions, damage to goods, and distribution delays. This research aims to analyze the causes of problems and optimize the implementation of warehouse functions. This research was conducted by applying qualitative descriptive research methods to analyze the function of the warehouse at the Assalam Hypermarket shopping center. The research flow is carried out systematically, from determining the research design, determining research objects and subjects, collecting data and information, analyzing data and information, drawing conclusions, and providing solution recommendations. From this research, results were obtained in the form of factors that cause problems in carrying out warehouse functions. Therefore, Assalam Hypermarket can continue to provide regular outreach regarding SOPs for receiving and returning goods to warehouse staff. Assalam Hypermarket can also print SOPs for receiving and returning goods at the warehouse and implement a cross-decking model to run warehouse operations. Apart from that, Assalam Hypermarket can also improve the competency of warehouse staff by providing BIT training

Keywords: Warehouse, Optimize, Goods Receiving, Return Goods, Retail Business

INTRODUCTION

A warehouse is a container, place, room, or building specifically used to store goods (Putri & Nurcaya, 2019). The availability of a warehouse can help the owner to organize the goods he owns better. Although most warehouses are used to store items that are rarely used, warehouses also need to be maintained so that the items inside can last for a long time. In a company's business process, the warehouse is essential to ensuring the business's continuity (JSI, 2020). Warehouses are not only a place to store goods but also have a necessary function for the company. One type of business that depends on the existence of a warehouse is the retail business. According to (Goel, 2023), a retail business is a business activity carried out by a person or organization to provide goods and services in daily life through buying and selling transactions. In the retail business, the warehouse not only has the function of storing goods but also as a center for the circulation of goods that will be distributed to final consumers (Mohamud et al., 2023).

Rahmaningtias et al., (2020) state that the entry and exit of goods in the retail business must be managed well and centralized in the warehouse. All goods arriving from suppliers will be received by warehouse staff, who will then be sorted according to type and maintenance requirements and placed at the appropriate warehouse location. This is supported by the statement by (Larutama et al., 2022) that apart from storing stock of goods, the warehouse is also a center for distributing and packaging goods, which require different treatment according to the type of goods stored in them. The treatment applied can be one of the maintenance efforts carried out by retail companies to maintain the value of their merchandise and ensure that the value of these goods can last for an extended period (Sari, 2022). Apart from that, in the retail business, the warehouse is also the center for returning goods if damage is found to the goods received by consumers, which cannot be used properly (Ge et al., 2019).

The process of procurement, maintenance, and carrying out the return of goods in the warehouse should be carried out through appropriate systematic procedures to optimize warehouse function (Haris et al., 2020). Apart from that, standard goods return procedures can be applied to ensure that goods returns can be carried out well to minimize losses. (Herdianzah et al., 2022) states that returns of goods in retail stores usually occur because the goods are damaged or have expired, the number of goods in a package is not appropriate, and the type of goods sent is different from what was ordered. Maulidiyah & Kusuma (2023) also assume that goods returns include returning several goods because consumers change their minds and reduce the number of orders. Therefore, retail companies must establish appropriate procedures and policies in implementing goods returns so that consumers do more than return goods on their own (Johan & Sunardi, 2023). This is to minimize the loss that will result from returning goods because not all suppliers owned by retail businesses can accept returned goods if they do not comply with applicable regulations.

Assalam Hypermarket is one of the business units of PT Tiga Serangkai, which operates the largest Muslim retail business in the Solo area. Assalam Hypermarket, as one of the retail business examples, has a warehouse, the primary function of which is a storage, distribution, and goods return center. However, in its implementation, there are still areas for

improvement, so the function of the warehouse does not run optimally. Storage in the Assalam Hypermarket warehouse still needs to be better organized cause if not; it will result in fighting over goods between warehouse staff. Also, unorganized conditions in the warehouse cause problems such as work needing to be completed on time, difficulty retrieving goods required, and damage to goods.

Meanwhile, when carrying out goods returns, work often experiences delays because standard operational procedures do not determine the return procedure, so it sometimes clashes with other warehouse activities. Warehouse staff responsible for carrying out goods returns also sometimes forgot one of the crucial requirements, causing losses for the company. This is because the process of returning goods can cause price changes in the types of goods returned by consumers. If the warehouse staff forgets to carry out one of the return conditions continuously, it can cause price destruction for the goods (Ferry Qadafi & Wahyudi, 2020).

Several previous studies have been carried out to analyze warehouse functions. Ismi (2019) researched to analyze the goods return system and goods risk management in a bakery. This research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive discussion method, and results were obtained in the form of an explanation regarding the risk management of the goods return process at the bakery. Another study was carried out by Riski et al. (2016), which researched to overcome obstacles related to delays in receiving and distributing goods at PT XYZ's warehouse. This research obtained results regarding factors that influence delays in implementing warehouse functions and provide solutions to optimize spatial planning in goods warehouses.

Based on the description and related research, researchers are interested in research to analyze the function of the warehouse at Assalam Hypermarket. The analysis is carried out to evaluate procedures for receiving and returning goods so that they can be optimized again to minimize existing errors and obstacles. From this research, we will know how effective the warehouse function management that has been implemented at Assalam Hypermarket is. This research will also provide recommendations for steps to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of warehouse management at Assalam Hypermarket.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this research is qualitative descriptive. However, a structured and systematic research flow is required to carry out all research methods. Figure 1 shows the flow used to implement the research method.

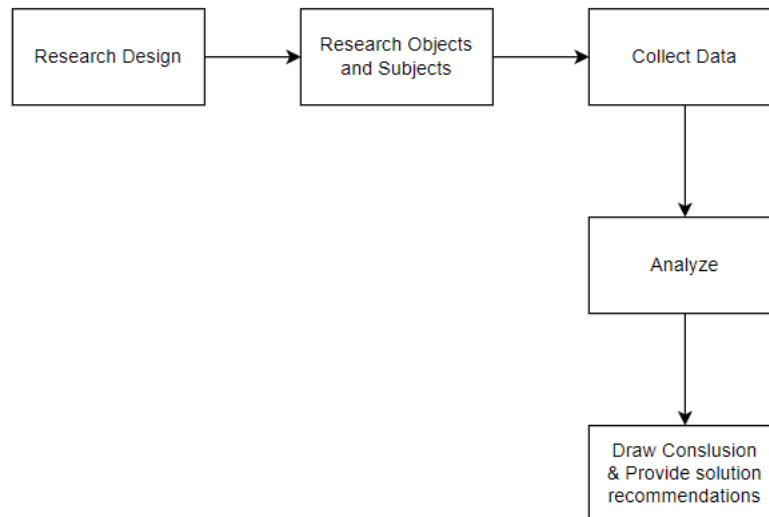


Figure 1. Research Methodology Flow

Source : Data processed by researchers, 2024

Determining Research Design

This research was conducted using a case study research design. (Priya, 2021) states that case study research is carried out by studying the conditions of the research topic and all the subjects and objects involved in it. According to (Asenahabi, 2019), a research object is defined as an attribute or activity being studied that influences the results and conclusions of the research. Meanwhile as (Rashid et al., 2019) explain, the research subjects are all parties involved in carrying out the research object. Researchers conducted a direct case study at Assalam Hypermarket for three months in this research.

Determining Research Objects and Subjects

The research object that will be analyzed in this study is related to the procedures for receiving, distributing, and returning goods at the Assalam Hypermarket warehouse. Meanwhile, the research subjects who helped researchers provide the data and information needed were assistant managers, admins, trading supervisors, supervisors, admins, and good receiving staff at Assalam Hypermarket.

Collect Data

This research uses primary data and secondary data needed to support the research. Primary data is the leading data used as a basis for analysis in achieving research objectives (Taherdoost, 2021). Primary data used in this research includes data from researchers' observations for three months at the Assalam Hypermarket warehouse. Apart from that, researchers also conducted interviews with related parties to obtain the required data and information. Apart from primary data, this research also uses secondary data. Secondary data is data that is not obtained directly from research objects and subjects but is obtained from other sources to facilitate the research process being carried out (Ajayi, 2023). Secondary data used in this research was obtained from journals, books, and other documents related to the research topic.

Performing Analysis

The analysis stage is carried out by studying the data and information obtained from the previous stage. The analysis was carried out by applying a qualitative descriptive discussion method. According to Shava et al. (2021), the qualitative descriptive discussion method describes or illustrates existing phenomena by examining the characteristics, quality,

and relationships between data. It can be said that the qualitative descriptive discussion method used in this research is mainly used to analyze data, events, and phenomena that occur in warehouse management systems. The purpose of descriptive information is to obtain an overview of certain situations and conditions within them. These data will be used to examine and draw conclusions and improve these conditions.

Conclude and provide solutions

After the data is analyzed, researchers will conclude the conditions for implementing the warehouse function at Assalam Hypermarket. In addition, this research produces recommended procedures related to receiving and returning goods at Assalam Hypermarket to optimize warehouse functions and minimize errors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Assalam Hypermarket, as a company operating in the retail business sector, is very dependent on the warehouse management it carries out. Assalam Hypermarket has four warehouses, two of which are central warehouses located next to shopping centers. In general, the warehouse at Assalam Hypermarket has the main activity of receiving goods from suppliers. Good Receiving division warehouse staff will receive goods arriving from suppliers to check whether the goods arriving match the data on the Purchase Order. Apart from receiving goods, arranging activities are also carried out in the warehouse. When arranging goods, the responsible staff will re-check the goods and then assemble them according to the purchase order data received from the trading division. Not only receiving and organizing, the warehouse at Assalam Hypermarket also carries out activities for returning goods from consumers.

Assalam Hypermarket divides the products that will be stored in the warehouse into three main categories, namely food, non-food, and fresh and frozen food products. Products in the food category include packaged beverage products, confectionery products, groceries, and essential commodities. Meanwhile, non-food products include household necessities, school equipment, cooking utensils, toys, etc. Fresh and frozen food products include vegetables, fruit, fish, meat, and other foods that cannot last long and require special attention, such as room temperature when caring for them.

Assalam Hypermarket has divided its warehouses into several types to accommodate all kinds of goods traded in shopping centers. Each warehouse has different functions according to the kind of transactions and goods carried out in it. The warehouse at Assalam Hypermarket is also extensive so that it can accommodate a lot of goods inside. Each warehouse is measured based on its capacity, known as pallets. The size of one pallet ranges from 120 cm x 100 cm and can hold around 90 cartons of goods. Each type of warehouse also has a different size according to its needs. Figure 2 shows the appearance of the operational warehouse at Assalam Hypermarket.



Figure 2. Operational Warehouse

Source : Researcher documentation, 2024

The operational warehouse is the central warehouse at Assalam Hypermarket to receive new products coming in from suppliers. This warehouse is also a storage center for raw materials from suppliers to be processed by Assalam Hypermarket into ready-to-consume products such as juices, salads, and others. The operational warehouse is large, with a capacity of around 500 pallets. Apart from the operational warehouse, Assalam Hypermarket has an equipment warehouse, as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Equipment Warehouse

Source : Researcher Documentation, 2024

An equipment warehouse is a warehouse whose function is to provide the goods needed to support all operational activities. All goods in this warehouse are managed by warehouse staff in the operational support division. This warehouse has a size that can accommodate up to 300 pallets of goods. The third warehouse owned by Assalam Hypermarket is called the departure warehouse with an appearance as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Departure Warehouse

Source : Researcher Documentation, 2024

The departure warehouse mainly functions as a place to send goods to consumers. Consumers using this warehouse service are usually small or medium retail stores, called assalam partners. The departure warehouse is the largest because it has a capacity of 900 pallets. The last warehouse owned by Assalam Hypermarket is called the seasonal warehouse. This warehouse is an additional warehouse whose use is seasonal. This warehouse will be used optimally in certain seasons, for example, when approaching Eid al-Fitr, Christmas, and Chinese New Year. Because it is only an additional warehouse, the size of the seasonal warehouse is the smallest among other warehouses, with a capacity of around 200 pallets. Figure 5 shows the appearance of the seasonal warehouse at Assalam Hypermarket.



Figure 5. Seasonal Warehouse

Source : Researcher Documentation, 2024

Having four warehouses with hundreds of thousands of different types of goods and varying maintenance requirements is challenging for the Assalam hypermarket. Even though it has product categories in food, non-food, and fresh & frozen food, the arrangement of goods is often done without any restrictions. The position of goods that come in first must be

paid attention to so they will be located at the bottom of the back of the warehouse. This makes it difficult for warehouse staff to pick up goods. Figure 6 shows an example of the arrangement of food and fresh food (eggs) in the Assalam Hypermarket warehouse.



Figure 6. Arrangement of food items (left) and fresh & frozen food (right)

Source : Researcher Documentation, 2024

As seen in Figure 6, arranging goods vertically to approach the roof is not appropriate because it makes the picking process challenging to meet the needs of consumers who buy in large quantities. Based on an interview with Mr. Joko Sarwono, supervisor of the goods receiving division, it was found that due to inappropriate arrangement, goods were often fought over between parts of the warehouse, and sometimes, goods were lost. Loss of goods occurs due to incorrect implementation of procedures, so there is no good coordination between warehouse departments, causing them to have to work overtime looking for lost goods. This is supported by a statement from Mrs. Tin Listiyaningsih, warehouse admin, that the absence of benchmarks for implementing warehouse management causes inconsistencies in warehouse data from the goods receiving division and the trading division. This, of course, causes big problems if not handled immediately because it can hamper the distribution of goods from warehouses to shopping centers and final consumers.

Apart from problems with the arrangement and distribution of goods, problems with returning goods also often occur in warehouses. The absence of standardized operational procedures means that employees carry out procedures for returning goods according to their understanding. This causes several errors, such as forgetting to include a Credit Note (CN) and placing the returned item incorrectly, or forgetting to coordinate with other related divisions.

Based on these conditions, researchers provide solution recommendations as one of the efforts that Assalam Hypermarket can make to optimize the function of its warehouse. The first solution is to conduct a briefing every morning to provide direction regarding the implementation of the arrangement, distribution, and receipt of returned goods in the

warehouse. Apart from that, Assalam hypermarket can print the flow of procedures for receiving goods from suppliers, distribution, and receiving returned goods so that goods can be arranged properly to facilitate warehouse activities. Figure 7 shows the draft SOP for receiving goods from suppliers, which the Good Receiving Assalam Hypermarket division has approved.

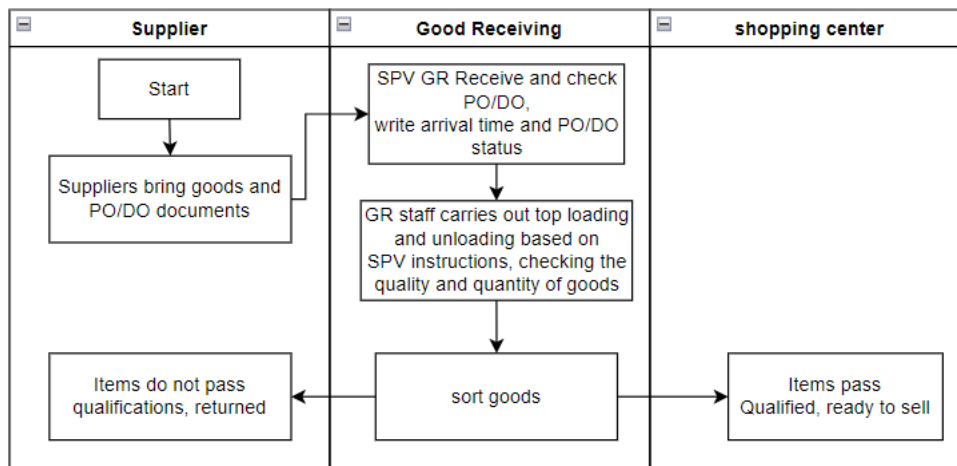


Figure 7. Goods Receipt SOP Flow

Source : Data processed by researchers, 2024

Figure 7 explains a clear SOP flow that can be followed by all warehouse staff involved in it, especially the goods receiving division from Assalam Hypermarket. The activity begins with the supplier taking the order number for unloading goods; then, the supplier provides purchase order data to the goods receiving division warehouse staff on duty. Next, the warehouse staff will check the purchase order status and adjust the data on the goods sent with the data in the purchase order on the Assalam Hypermarket computer. This is done to avoid errors in receiving goods that are different from orders made by the Assalam Hypermarket trading division.

Furthermore, warehouse staff must also record arrival times, check the condition of goods randomly, and then change the purchase order status on the warehouse computer. This is done to facilitate the procedure for requesting accountability if undesirable things happen. If there are no problems, everything is by the data in the purchase order, and the goods sent by the supplier are in good condition. The warehouse staff will give instructions for unloading the goods and then print the supplier's CN to be informed to the returns division warehouse staff. Staff who receive goods also need to check the quality and quantity of goods to comply with the acceptance criteria at Assalam Hypermarket. CN informed the returns division that if damage is found to the goods in the future, Assalam Hypermarket can quickly process the return application to the supplier. Assalam Hypermarket can immediately take other actions to minimize losses if the supplier refuses to accept the return of the goods.

Meanwhile, the implementation of goods return activities at Assalam Hypermarket is divided into two types: returning Assalam Hypermarket stores and returning goods from Assalam partners (traders). Figure 8 shows the flow of goods return procedures at the

Assalam Hypermarket shopping center, which the Assalam Hypermarket trading division has approved.

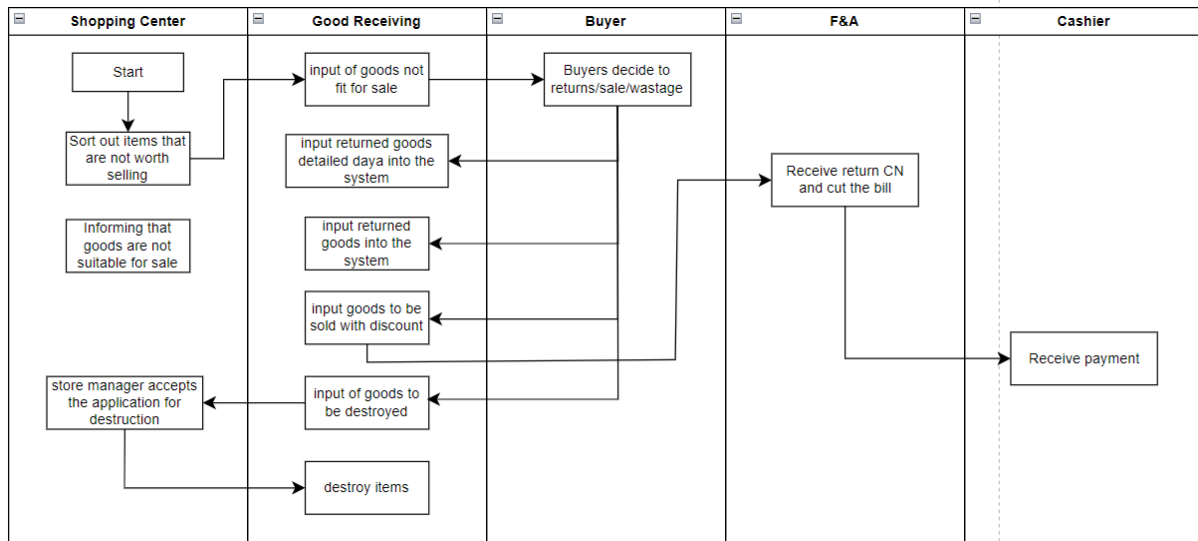


Figure 8. Goods return flow at Assalam Hypermarket

Source : Data processed by researchers, 2024

When returning goods at the Assalam Hypermarket store, the store division will accept goods for various considerations, such as goods that have not been sold for a long time, damaged goods, and goods that are nearing their expiry date. Next, the goods receiving division will record the returned goods. The good receiving division will propose treatment of returned goods to the buyer division, whether they will be returned to the supplier, sold on sale, or destroyed. If the buyer's division has approved the proposal, action will be taken immediately by the returns division. In practice, whether the goods will be returned to the supplier, sold, or destroyed, the good receiving division will print a CN to be forwarded to the trading division. This is done so that stock information and condition of goods for all warehouse staff between divisions is consistent and there are no differences.

Meanwhile, the procedure for returning goods from traders will take longer than returning goods from shops. This is because the warehouse staff in the goods receiving division have to check the goods and the delivery order data, purchase receipts, payment receipts, and the condition of the returned goods. When the Assalam partner returns the product, the goods receiving division warehouse staff will first make a return report to the trading division. Next, the trading division warehouse staff will check the returned goods and adjust them to all the data required at purchase and delivery. If the goods are inspected and comply with the applicable requirements, they will be returned to the warehouse. Returned goods will then be sorted to be returned to the supplier, sold, or destroyed. Next, the goods receiving division warehouse staff will reprint the CN for the returned goods. The trading division warehouse staff must also re-register the returned goods and report them to the finance staff so that the goods are not included in the payment bill to the Assalam partner concerned. The procedure for returning goods from Assalam partners is clearly shown in Figure 9.

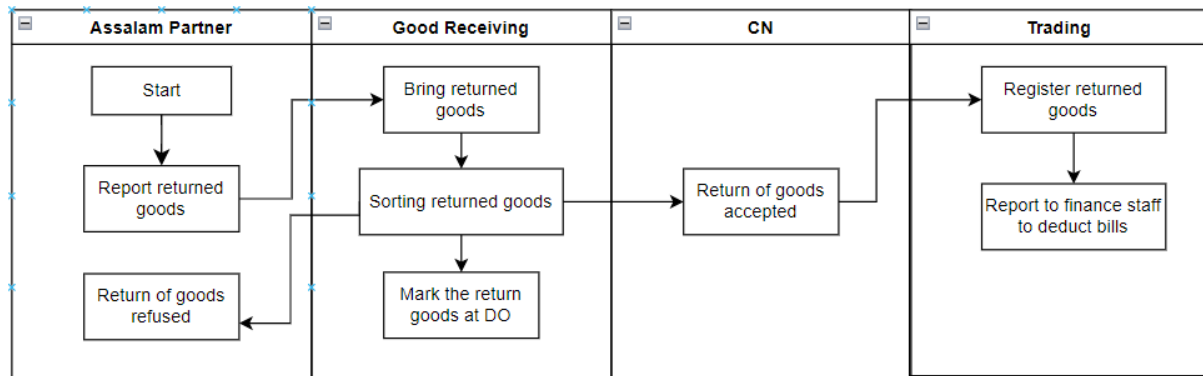


Figure 9. Assalam partners goods return flow

Source : Data processed by researchers, 2024

Apart from printing and briefing employees regarding procedures for receiving and returning goods. Assalam hypermarket can also optimize warehouse functions by carrying out precise inventory planning daily to facilitate coordination between warehouse divisions. Apart from that, periodic checks and spatial planning in the warehouse also need to be carried out to streamline the process of picking up goods when they are needed for distribution to shops and partners of Assalam. Assalam Hypermarket can also re-cluster each category of goods into fast-moving, middle-moving, or slow-moving to make organizing goods in the warehouse easier. Assalam Hypermarket can also implement cross-docking to move products directly from the operational warehouse to the departure warehouse to reduce the time goods are stored in the warehouse.

Assalam hypermarket can also provide Built-in training (BIT) to all its employees to maximize potential and increase understanding of procedures for correctly implementing an activity. BIT training can be carried out in every implementing unit, including technical, branch, or divisional representatives, which is coordinated directly by the human resources division. BIT material submitted to warehouse staff may cause problems related to procedures for receiving, distributing, or returning goods that must be fixed. BIT training has flexible times because it can be carried out during working hours, and its implementation can take little time. Material and practice can be done in just 30 minutes to 120 minutes. Assalam Hypermarket can ask employees to come in one hour earlier on certain days each month to carry out this training. BIT participants can directly include all employees in all existing divisions or focus according to their respective divisions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of this research, warehouses play an essential role in maintaining the stability of retail business companies' profits. At Assalam Hypermarket, the warehouse has three main functions: receiving, distributing, and returning goods. Implementing the warehouse function at Assalam Hypermarket itself still needs to be improved in terms of arranging goods in the warehouse and recording ownership of these goods between divisions in the warehouse. Therefore, optimizing warehouse functions needs to be carried out immediately.

Assalam Hypermarket can arrange the warehouse using the cross-decking technique to arrange the position of goods to make it easier to pick up goods. In carrying out the goods

distribution function, the warehouse can implement a periodic briefing and evaluation process so that the distribution can run smoothly. Briefings can also be carried out to ensure that company policy carries out goods returns. In addition, Assalam Hypermarket can print standard operational procedures for receiving and returning goods so that responsible warehouse staff have guidelines for carrying out warehouse functions. Meanwhile, Assalam Hypermarket can continue to improve staff competency by implementing BIT training to enhance the capabilities of warehouse staff.

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