The metrics, they are a-changin'

You can't manage—or improve—what you don't measure. That has long been the premise of our annual warehouse and DC metrics study. The survey, conducted among *DC Velocity* readers and members of the Warehousing Education and Research Council (WERC), asks respondents what metrics they use and how their facilities are performing against those measures, with the aim of helping DC leaders compare their own operations with others in their industry. Here are some highlights of the 17th annual study.
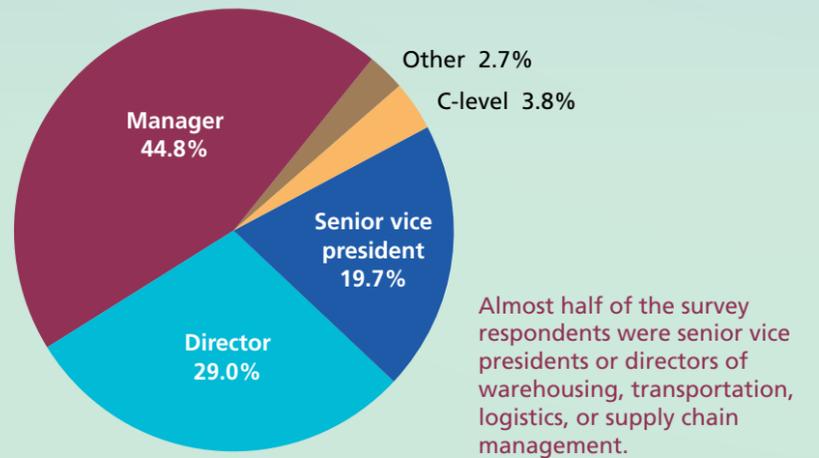
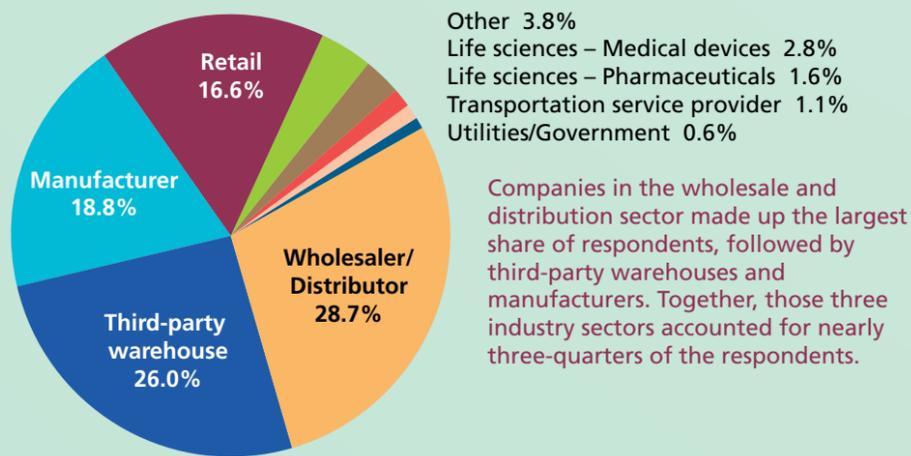## Top 12 most commonly used metrics, 2020

Metric	2020 rank	2019 rank	2018 rank
Average warehouse capacity used	1	2	1
Shipped complete per customer order	2	32	34
Order picking accuracy (% by order)	3	1	2
% of orders with on-time delivery	4	31	33
Peak warehouse capacity used	5	3	3
Shipped outbound orders damage-free	6	33	35
On-time shipments	7	4	5
Correct documentation	8	34	36
Inventory-count accuracy (% by location)	9	5	10
Dock-to-stock cycle time, in hours	10	9	16
Order fill rate	11	7	14
Part-time workforce to total workforce	12	11	7

The 2020 survey revealed a shift in the type of benchmarking metrics most commonly used. In the 2019 report, five of the top 12 metrics focused on employees, while this year's study found that operations are now prioritizing capacity and quality.
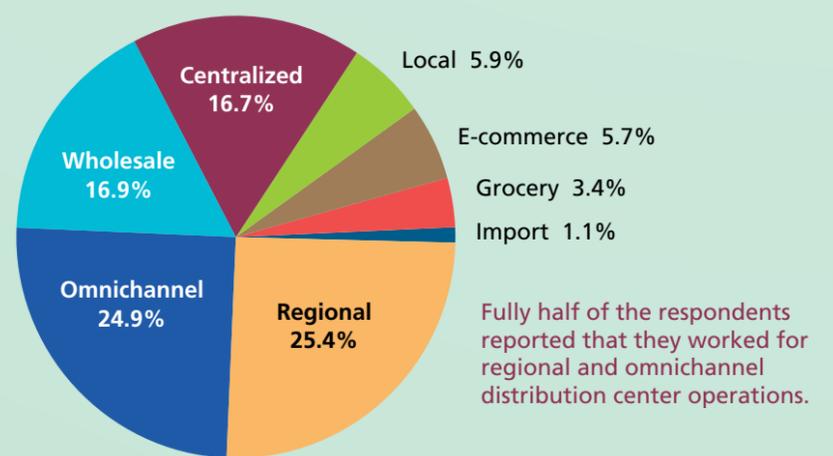
Survey respondents by title

Other 2.7%
C-level 3.8%

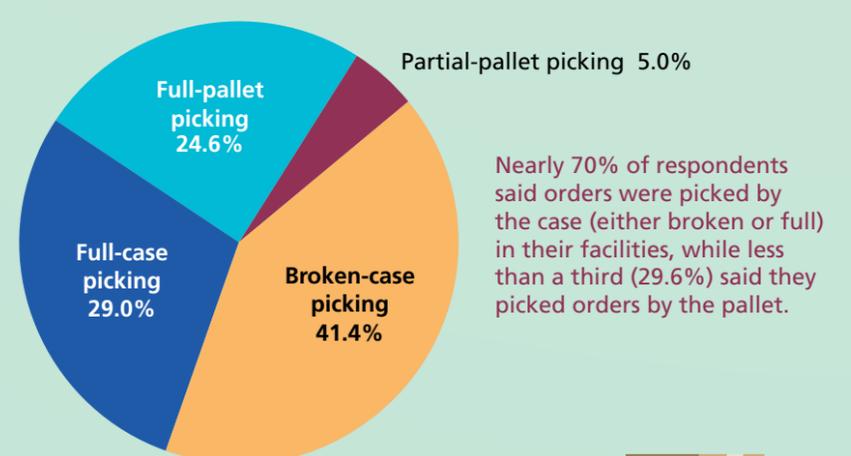Manager 44.8%
Senior vice president 19.7%
Director 29.0%

Almost half of the survey respondents were senior vice presidents or directors of warehousing, transportation, logistics, or supply chain management.

Survey respondents by industry

Other 3.8%
Life sciences – Medical devices 2.8%
Life sciences – Pharmaceuticals 1.6%
Transportation service provider 1.1%
Utilities/Government 0.6%

Retail 16.6%
Manufacturer 18.8%
Wholesaler/Distributor 28.7%
Third-party warehouse 26.0%

Companies in the wholesale and distribution sector made up the largest share of respondents, followed by third-party warehouses and manufacturers. Together, those three industry sectors accounted for nearly three-quarters of the respondents.

What type of DC do you operate?

Local 5.9%
E-commerce 5.7%
Grocery 3.4%
Import 1.1%

Centralized 16.7%
Wholesale 16.9%
Omnichannel 24.9%
Regional 25.4%

Fully half of the respondents reported that they worked for regional and omnichannel distribution center operations.

Who is your customer?

Manufacturer 18.4%
Wholesaler/Distributor 31.3%
End-consumer 25.7%
Retail firm 24.6%

More than 50% of the respondents said their customers were either end-consumers or retailers.

How are orders picked in your DC?

Partial-pallet picking 5.0%

Full-pallet picking 24.6%
Full-case picking 29.0%
Broken-case picking 41.4%

Nearly 70% of respondents said orders were picked by the case (either broken or full) in their facilities, while less than a third (29.6%) said they picked orders by the pallet.