



5 Questions to Answer Before You Choose RFID or Barcode

Before you book a vendor demo or approve a budget — work through these five questions. They will tell you whether your operation is ready.



Vishal Singh

Business Development Manager • Markss Infotech Ltd

hello@vishalsinghrfid.com

vishalsinghrfid.com

01 What is your current source labelling coverage?

The single biggest predictor of RFID success or failure in Indian retail and warehouse deployments.

READY IF:

85%+ of your suppliers label at source with EPC-compliant tags before shipping.

NOT READY IF:

Under 70% of suppliers label at source. Items arrive untagged and get labelled at your dock — encoding errors, slow receiving, and read rate problems follow.

ACTION: Run a supplier audit before signing any RFID contract. Ask each supplier: can you label with EPC Gen2 tags at your factory? What timeline?

02 How clean is your item master and WMS location data?

RFID reads a tag and looks up what it represents. If your master data has duplicates, stale location codes, or gaps — every read becomes an unresolved issue.

READY IF:

Your item master was audited within the last 90 days. EPC cross-references are mapped. Location codes in WMS are current and accurate.

NOT READY IF:

Items created years ago, never cleaned. Location codes reference racks that were moved. EPC-to-SKU mapping has never been done.

ACTION: Dedicate 4 weeks to a master data audit before any RFID pilot. The audit will find problems that will surface at go-live — better to find

03 Has RFID been tested in your actual physical environment?

RF performance in a vendor demo room is not the same as in your facility. Metal shelving, EMI from machinery, dense product, and layout all affect performance.

READY IF:

A vendor has conducted a live RF site survey in your facility with your actual product. Read rates were tested at the locations where readers will be deployed.

NOT READY IF:

You have seen a demo at the vendor office. No real-world test has been done in your facility with your product types.

ACTION: Require any serious vendor to conduct an on-site RF survey before finalising specifications. If they resist, that tells you something.

Questions 4 & 5 — Process Readiness

Complete these alongside your site survey and vendor proposals

04

Do you have a defined, documented process today — before RFID?

RFID makes existing processes faster and more accurate. It cannot create a process where one does not exist.

READY IF:

Your receiving, put-away, cycle count, and dispatch processes are documented. Staff follow them consistently across all shifts. Variations are exceptions, not the norm.

ACTION: Spend 6-8 weeks documenting and enforcing process consistency before the RFID pilot. The pilot results will be meaningless if the underlying

NOT READY IF:

Process depends on which shift supervisor is on. Different staff do the same task differently. Cycle counting happens when someone has time, not on a schedule.

05

Is your IT infrastructure and team aligned for this integration?

RFID middleware needs to connect to your WMS or ERP in real time. Who builds that integration, maintains it, and supports it when it breaks?

READY IF:

Your WMS vendor or IT team has confirmed the integration approach. A middleware vendor has been scoped. You have a named IT contact who will own this through go-live.

ACTION: Get your WMS vendor on a call before signing anything. Ask them: what is the RFID integration pathway for our version? What does it

NOT READY IF:

IT was not involved in the initial RFID evaluation. No one has asked the WMS vendor about RFID integration. The budget is for hardware only — software costs are unknown.

What Your Score Means

5 of 5

Go ahead.

Evaluate vendors, r

3-4 of 5

Proceed carefully

Finalize integration p

1-2 of 5

Not yet.

Get budget, align with the RFID dosad.unr

Not sure about your answers? Book a Clarity Call.

30 minutes. Process-first. I will tell you directly where you stand and what to address first.

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Quick reference: Barcode vs RFID cost in India (2026)