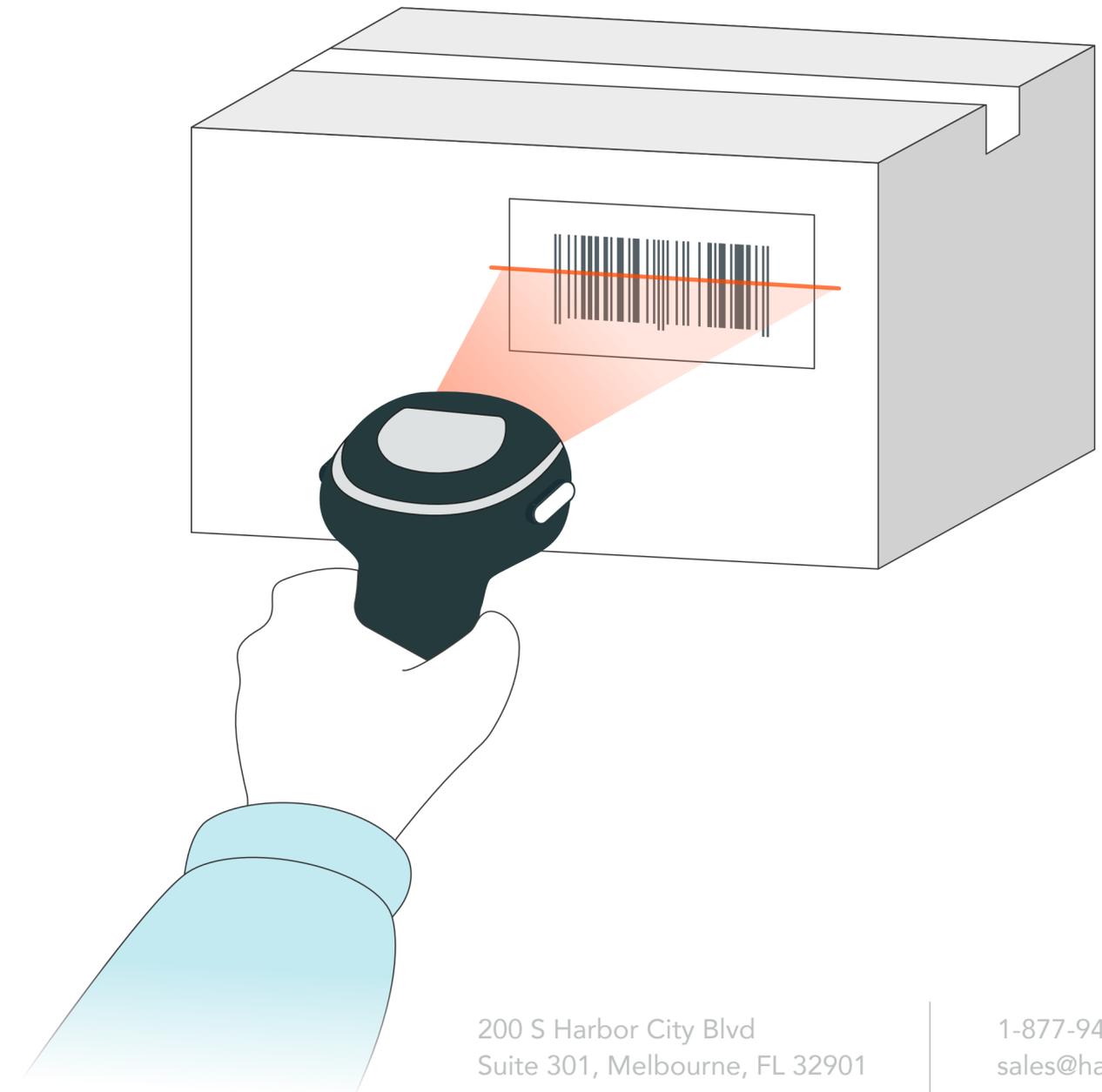




Best barcode barcode scanners for small inventory-centric businesses

It's been over 50 years since...

...the first scanning system was installed. In 1967, a Kroger store in Cincinnati started testing barcode scanners during checkout. Barcoding technologies have come a long way since then. Surprisingly, some small businesses are still a little slow to adopt this time-saving tool. If you set out to automate and streamline your inventory processes, **barcoding your inventory is the #1 thing to do.** HandiFox and Barcodes Inc., a leading provider of barcode, mobile computing, and RFID solutions, teamed up for this rundown on what having barcoded inventory achieves for your business and how to choose from a wide assortment of barcode scanners on the market.



What can one barcode scan tell you?

To transition to automated barcode-enabled inventory management, you will need a barcode scanning system that can read and record the information encoded in a barcode. Software systems with such functionality give you the speed and accuracy to efficiently carry out backend business functions, like receiving, counting and selling products. They either use a mobile's device camera or external barcode scanning hardware to accomplish this. Here is what you can achieve by scanning a product's barcode

1

You can use barcode scanning as a way to **search for a specific product** on the item list in your inventory app. If scanning doesn't bring up this item on the screen, most likely it hasn't been checked into the system.

2

When receiving an order from a supplier, incoming products' barcodes are scanned to **check if they match the original order**. This creates an extra layer of verification before products enter your warehouse.

3

Product name, supplier name, sales description, purchase price, sales price are all encoded in a barcode. By scanning in a product's barcode, you can **auto-fill this item's product info and description** in your inventory management system (as long as the latter provides this sort of functionality).

4

Before shipping an order to the customer, you can **verify its content through a pick/pack procedure** by scanning in the items' barcodes.

5

Scan in products' barcodes while doing a cycle count or physical inventory to **know how much is on hand** and whether any quantity adjustments need to be made.

Things to consider when choosing a barcode scanning system



What types and models does your inventory management system work with?



What are the barcode types you need the scanner to read(1D, 2D)?



Does this barcode scanning hardware require a lot of attention from your IT team, like taking care of upgrades, etc?

When shopping for a barcode reader, there are a lot of factors you need to consider:



What's the average scanning distance you are looking for?



Is battery life a consideration?



Do you work in rugged conditions?



What's your budget?

Expert advice on barcode scanner models

HandiFox and Barcodes Inc. came up with a short-list of the best picks for barcode scanners to help small business owners navigate through an overwhelming number of options.

Best introductory barcode scanner

For those who are just starting to integrate barcodes into their business and are on a tight budget, **Zebra LS2208** or **Honeywell 1950G** could be the way to go.



 ZEBRA

Zebra LS2208

has been Zebra's best-seller for years on end. It's a durable, easy-to-use **1D barcode scanner** with a **decent scanning range** and the ability to **scan high-density barcodes**. Keep in mind that it is **corded**, so if you need something more portable, you should consider wireless options.



Honeywell

Honeywell Xenon XP 1950G

is a basic corded barcode scanner with a higher price tag but **a more superior scanning performance and durability**, as well as the capability to scan both **1D and 2D barcodes**. Such models are indispensable on high volume days when warehouses operators have to quickly scan in a lot of products.

Expert advice on barcode scanner models

Best industrial barcode scanner



Zebra DS3600/DS3678

Zebra DS3600/DS3678 series are **ultra-ruggedized 1D/2D barcodes scanners** with an **extended scanning range** from 3 to 70 ft., built for extreme conditions. These cordless Bluetooth models give you the freedom to move around while also holding the battery to allow **over 70,000 scans per charge.**



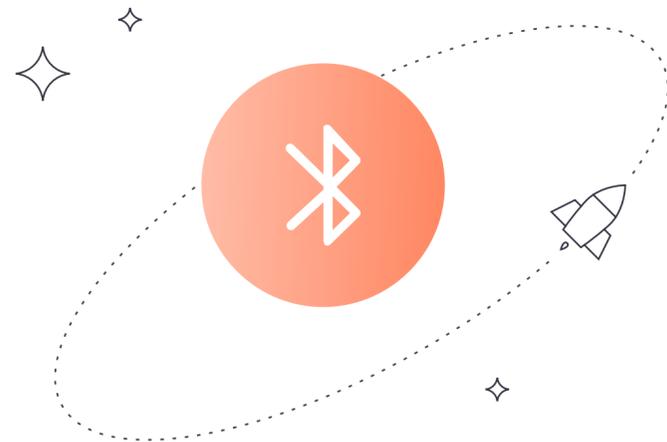
Honeywell Granit XP

When it comes to **durability and superior scanning performance**, the new Honeywell Granit XP (long range options) Bluetooth and corded models are **a viable alternative** to Zebra's ultra-ruggedized scanners.

Expert advice on barcode scanner models

Best Bluetooth scanner

Bluetooth-enabled scanners are the obvious choice for those who have to do a lot of scanning on the go.



Zebra CS3070

is an ideal solution for doing 1D barcode scanning on the road, in the field, wherever you are and whenever you need it. It's an **affordably-priced, portable, lightweight** scanning device that can be **easily paired** with a wide range of smartphones.



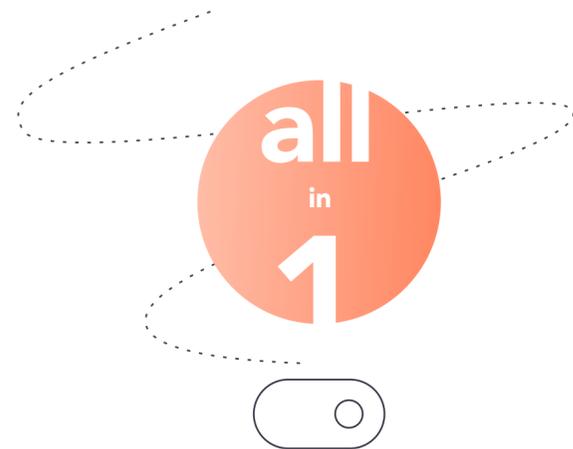
Zebra DS3678

The ultra-ruggedized Zebra DS3678 (see the overview on page 6) is a **great bang for the buck**, although it's way more expensive than the teeny-tiny CS3070. This barcode scanner has a much **longer life-cycle** which makes it a worthwhile investment.

Expert advice on barcode scanner models

All-in-one

A handheld mobile computer is a pricier but more practical option for those who don't want to hold a phone with the inventory app in one hand and a barcode scanner in the other to go about their daily warehouse tasks.



Cipherlab RS35, RK95

The new Cipherlab RS35 is a **ruggedized Android**-based handheld computer with **1D, 2D** barcode scanning, **HF RFID** and **NFC** capabilities. The Cipherlab RK95 model is another great option from Cipherlab which has both a **touch screen and a physical keyboard**. Having any one of those in your warehouse steps up your personnel's productivity and mobility, and reduces the learning process to a minimum.



Honeywell

Honeywell CK65

compares favorably with Cipherlab's RS35, RK95. This ruggedized handheld offers the new FlexRange imager for **advanced data capture**. The CK65 has an **extended battery** that allows warehouse operators to actively use it for up to 28 hours.

Expert advice on barcode scanner models

Best for Android



Handheld computers



Android phone + barcode scanner



Scanning with phone's camera

If you are an Android person, you could go with some of the above-mentioned all-in-one models, like Honeywell CK65, also CT40/CT60 or Cipherlab RS35. In case you have Android phones, you could just spare yourself the trouble and avoid overspending by purchasing **any Bluetooth barcode scanner with the SPP (Serial Port Profile) connection**. There is always an option of **scanning with your phone's camera** which is, of course, a lot slower.

Best for iOS



Sleds



MFi-certified barcode scanners

If you stick with iOS, you might want to check out **Honeywell sleds** or **Linea pro sleds** which feature an **integrated scanner** (1D, 2D barcodes) and an optional encryption-ready magnetic card reader. Otherwise, you can pick an **MFi-certified barcode scanner** to pair with your iOS device - check out portable **Socket** mobile solutions.

Conclusion

Today's market of barcode reading solutions is huge, so this rundown is intended to help you navigate it and shortlist the most suitable models. But what you really should start off by is making sure your inventory management software is compatible with these. Otherwise, having a barcode scanner won't make a difference. It might be a good idea to get a bundle - inventory software and a barcode scanner to go with it. Interested to learn what your options are? Reach out to us →

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