10 points you can’t miss out on and without that knowledge DON’T BUY PALLETS!
When you think of pallets, the first thing comes into your mind also is “problem”? 

Do you know how to avoid unpleasantness?

**10 points you can’t miss out on and without that knowledge DON’T BUY PALLETs!**

I’m Csaba Pikó, Managing Director of Golden Pallet Ltd., pallet specialist.

I've been working with pallets for more than a decade, so I know exactly what kind of problems can occur at Companies when it comes to ordering pallets.

So I would like to share my experiences with you, and avoid to make the same mistake others make. In my study I’ve focused on **10 points**, where each points can save you and your Company unnecessary nuisance.

The most important points of pallets purchasing

All in all, pallets are necessary for Companies where there’s sales, where there is a product, sooner or later pallets do become necessary, for storage and transport purposes. These are the questions where you can’t avoid pallet solutions. But where can you buy pallets? Or even what kind of pallets does exist? For example, did you know, there in not only one type of pallet design exist?

**BUT begin at the beginning.**

Usually there are two ways of pallet purchasing. If you are a supplier, and you’d like to transport your goods to a big company, in most cases the specification of the pallets are described by the company. The other case, when you can decide the type, shape etc. of the pallet.

We describe these options, concepts in our documentation.

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1. Pallet Specification: what is it good for?

*What does a company describes usually for me, if I deliver products to them?*
In most cases a bigger company specifies the type of the needed pallet, or in a lot of cases they provide us with a pallet specification. In these cases –virtually–we need to deliver the product as the buyer requests them.
Then you need to find the ideal pallet manufacturer, who delivers on the best quality and price.

*But what is this specification?*
Actually, this is the pallet's technical documentation. In this documentation there are the sizes of the pallet defined, it's design, what sized elements is it made of and what sort of fasteners to be used during production? Furthermore it has a draught drawing and a completing description where they can describe other quality requirements (species, moisture content, carrying capacity, and weight, also descriptions of signs to be applied).

*But why do they describe standards? Wouldn’t it be better for them if we can provide a better solution?*
Essentially the standard pallets should be exchangeable all over the world, so it is solved straight away. On the other hand for automated lines-to be able to work perfectly – depending on specified tolerances and standardization.
So in many cases the international standards define this all.

2. Exchange pallets: with or without?

During the usage of standard pallets usually it's worth it to change or buy the pallet back for commercial reasons.
Basically it is not part of the bought product. But in many times the exchange pallet can cause lots of problems. Because our buyers, suppliers are not silly either…

In most cases the buyers, suppliers don’t return the good quality, new pallets, but the also standard but more used and contaminated pallets. Because the transport agreement only mentions “only” standard pallet or “wooden product for storage”, it's state, quality utilization not stated.
So people can take advantage of this-not just suppliers and buyers- that are just tangential involved in the business. For many years it was a very good sources for funds for transporters to deal with used pallets. If they had a mandate to transport
pallets, which looked fairly good quality wise, they have exchanged them on the go (for a suited price) for worst quality pallets.

These value decreased pallets cause significant costs to our company.

**But how can be avoid the exchange?**
Unfortunately on a very difficult way. Usually the exchange is for commercial reasons, so we have no option but go with it. Many companies' tries to avoid it by taking photos of the pallets handled over, that’s how they can prove their quality. Others keep checking staff especially to keep the quality of pallets.

**But what can we do about it?**
Very difficult situation, it’s very hard to prove of an average pallet (especially if it ‘s a bad quality one) that it is not from us. Except, if the pallet has a sign, unique marking of ours. How? Usually all pallets have a sort of marking on them, which shows their type, or different treatments. Of course these markings are standardized, but -in case of using individual pallets – we can put our own markings, even logo's on them. So virtually you can identify exactly the source of the pallet, and the buyer “has to” bring our own pallet back.

**This is a good idea, but is it expensive?**
Basically the marking or unique identification doesn't increase our expenses in case of one pallet. Even in many cases the individual pallets are less expensive, than the standard ones.

3. What shall we do with the used or damaged pallets?
In many cases it can cause a problem at companies the return of used and damaged pallets. We are not just loosing out on money, but the storage is a big question is also. Is it possible to repair pallets?

**What is the damage is still worth repairing?**
It is a different sector. (As a manufacturer we are not involved in repairing). But I’d like to mention that the simple,, maximum 3 elements worth of damage is repairable (worth repairing). That’s why many times it’s not worth it to have the pallets repaired, but purchase new ones.

**When is it necessary to (re-) change the damaged pallets?**
In case of minor damages the pallet is to be repaired or to be re-changed. But because it has a cost, everyone procrastinate it. Until it gets useless or local supervisors in Hungary MÁV-REC Kft.- warns the user to pull out of consumption.

Authorized members can do the correction of faults, which also affects the costs. The list you can hold of the list of authorized members at the Hungarian monitoring organization.

Important: to keep the good quality of our pallets for a long time and not to be exchanged to used pallets during usage.

4. **How can a pallet have better quality?**

The quality of the pallets depends a lot on the treatments during production. But is it possible to have the pallets to be produced better quality? The answer is Yes! When the quality requirements are higher, during the production of even standard or exchange pallets, it is possible to build in the pallets “compressed blocks”. This blocks-thankfully to their production technology- is pathogen resist and has less moisture content, than the traditional wooden ones.

Not negligible, that they are sustainable and environmental friendly.

**For who are these pallets suitable?**
Mainly for users who aim better quality (e.g. food and medical industry)

5. **Pallet dictionary: F as Fumigation**

The rules of standards, at pallet specification fumigation come up a lot. Bu what this word means?

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What is fumigation?
It’s a sort of heat treatment; which was created for wooden packages to kill all fungi’s in them (for sterilization). To make sure the pallets don’t transfer any pathogens abroad.
Standard FAO ISPM 15 specifies fumigation.

Recommendation: Please make sure before transport that the country to be transported to requires fumigation.

Fumigation can be done by accredited manufacturers -like Golden Pallet Ltd.- and the Hungarian Soil and Plant Health Protection can provide the list of these manufacturers..

Important detail, fumigation doesn't equals with drying method, because the 2 treatments are for different reasons. So fumigated pallets doesn't mean dry pallets also.

How can you check that the pallets are fumigated?
Basically it's proofed by the heat marks.
6. What sort of marks needed to be imprinted on the pallets?

In case of standard pallets, there are mandatory ones. According to the Hungarian Standards (MSZ 9710:1996) marks must be imprinted in cases of the European, plain, exchange pallets (EUR pallets). On the fumigated pallets the proof of fumigation also has to be indicated.

During the production of individual pallets virtually any kind of logo’s marks can be placed on, which makes the traceability easier.

7. Individual pallets: do I’ need them?

As previously mentioned it is a possibility to use individual shapes and forms, material etc. So a pallet can be assembled which is perfectly suitable for the conditions of transport, so the most effective. Even if we talk about price, added space, or even quality.

What points of view need to be kept in mind, when designing individual pallets?
Most important point of view: the goods should define the storage and not the given storing facilities. So the most important is: the weights of the goods to be packaged, size, resistance to moisture content to be the curtail fact – mainly depending on the parameters of the goods to be packaged.

8. The points of views of designing individual pallets

The design of individual pallets virtually not depending on anything, the possibilities of it’s design are unlimited. But what points shall we taking into consideration, which options defines, or influence the price?
In case of individual pallets- as mentioned- we have to start at the product, we need to know the exact specifications, for the pallets to be prepared.

Well, have a look, which questions are to be answered at the design of individual pallets:

**How and how many times it is planned moving the goods?**
If we are planning to use the pallets only a few times (handling 2-3x) we can achieve our target by using less good quality material and simpler bonding’s.

The question of handling influenced by the size. If the goods will be handled manually or by machines, it does matter, how big is the size you can fit on the machine. So it’s important to choose the simplest design and try to avoid the oversized ones.

**During usage do the goods get wrapped manually or on an automated line?**
If the pallets are going to be used on an automated line, it's important to know the wrapping line’s parameters. In case of manual wrapping we need to judge the opportunities from the given space to the position of our colleagues. Many things.

**Is there a size limitation, when it comes to individual pallets?**
No, there isn’t. Virtually any size can be assembled, of course within reality.

**Who can design individual pallets?**
Anyone. There are no rules. Obviously it’s worth it to coordinate with a pallet assembler about the needs, and design the perfect shape together, which will be excellent for the purpose.

**How long do I have to wait for my individual pallets to be made?**
It is depending on the design of the pallets, amount and the time of assembling. In case of a smaller amount (under 500 pcs.) 2-3 days is the average production time. In case of bigger amount and at the time firs ordering max 1 week. So basically the production of individual pallets doesn’t take long, but they are ahead of their traditional fellows.

9. Is the individual pallet worth it?

**Why is it worth it to be deviant from standard pallets?**
Can’t be said obviously, that it is better in every cases to use individual pallets. There are goods, which are only stackable on standard pallets, because of their nature and usage. Practice shows that special pallets can be used more cost efficiently, which usually don’t get reused. Because at their usage demands the design and not the other way around.
10. Ready pallet, how does it get to me?

After the pallets being ready we’re getting to an important point. We know what kind, how many pallets we have ordered, but what sort of problems can occur during transport? Most manufacturers deliver as well of course, but transport should be just as efficient as the making of the pallets.. Here are a few points to have “problem less” deliveries.

**What gets delivered?**
We have to clarify with the Quotation releaser, what’s the smallest quantity. Meaning if we only need a few pallets then we need to discuss the opportunities of delivery.

**Make the delivery time punctual!**
When creating a delivery time, the schedule of our packaging duties needs to take into consideration. So ask for delivery time, when we really need the pallets. In most cases the pallets need quiet a big space also, and it can’t be always solved to store them.

With well-organized deliveries we can reduce our stock, which also resolves further cost reductions.
Summary...

Here is a checking list, which collects all information’s to be able to order pallets. If you answer this question you an make your pallet purchase more accurate

1. Do you have a pallet specification?

2. How many do you need from the certain type?

3. Do you need special treatment (fumigation and/or drying)?

4. In case of individual pallets is the pallet's size specified, function, etc.?

5. At what rate would you like the deliveries?

We hope that we've managed to put together those points of views, which will make your pallet purchase choice easier.

Sincerely:

Csaba Pikó
Managing Director
Golden Pallet Ltd.

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