

Preparing for Peak 10 top tips

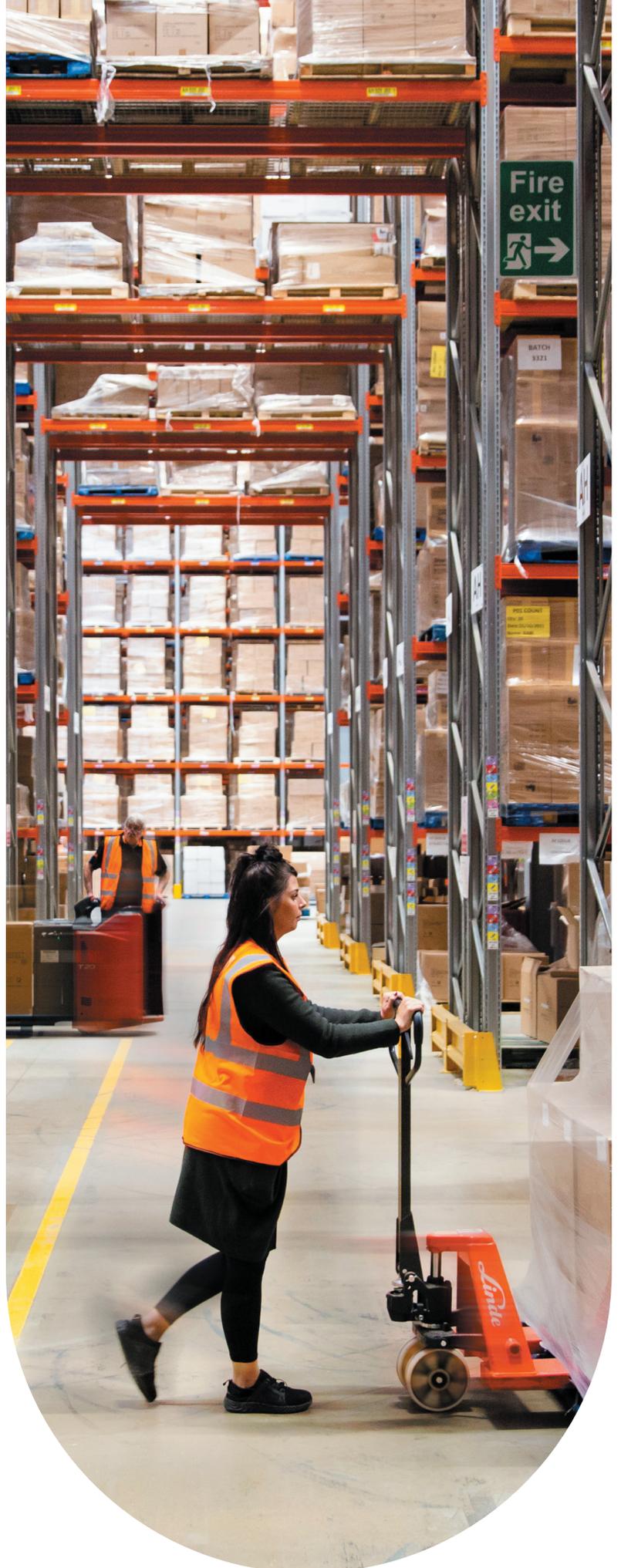


Getting ready for eCommerce peak season

As an established or emerging online retailer, capitalising on peaks in demand can make or break your business.

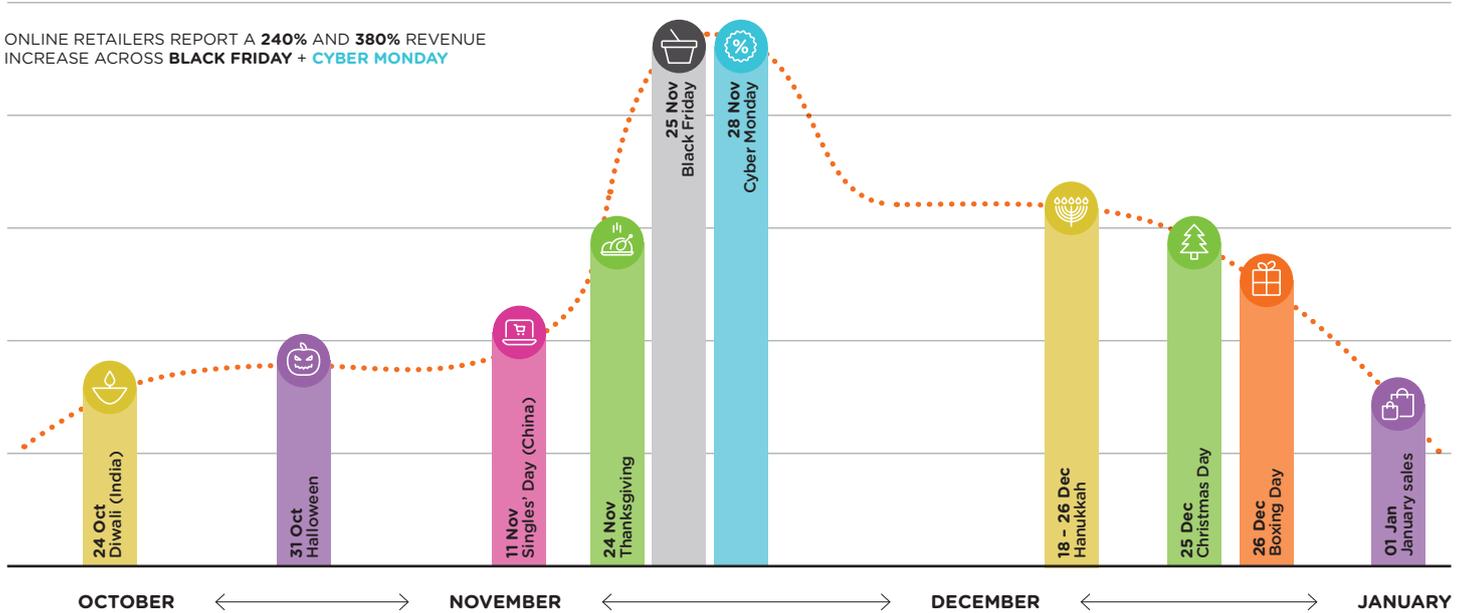
Here we discuss how you can best prepare each element of your supply chain for eCommerce peak season.

We also cover elements of the customer journey and the resources on offer to protect your business through times of volatile demand.



KEY ECOMMERCE PEAK POINTS

ONLINE RETAILERS REPORT A **240%** AND **380%** REVENUE INCREASE ACROSS **BLACK FRIDAY** + **CYBER MONDAY**



When is eCommerce peak season?

In the UK Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Boxing Day and January sales typically represent a large proportion of total annual sales and are the key eCommerce peaks; eCommerce retailers report up to a 240% and 380% increase in revenue on Black Friday and Cyber Monday respectively.

Globally, special occasions such as Singles' Day in China, Thanksgiving in the US and Diwali in India are fast-becoming events that UK online retailers are optimising their marketing and operations towards.

While often associated with special occasions, peaks aren't exclusive to events and aren't always periodical, they can be a one-off occurrence. DIY retailers, for example, experience summer peaks, while lockdown catalysed a surge in demand for automotive and cycling goods.

Now that you have an understanding of the opportunities that peak presents, we will cover ten different strategies you can implement to capitalise on these enormous revenue opportunities.

1. UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE



RESEARCH BY SALECYCLE FOUND THERE ARE TWO PEAK HOURS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING; 10AM TO 11AM, WITH A SECOND PEAK AT 8PM AND 9PM

By getting to know your customers' behaviours, quirks and media preferences, you will better understand how to stimulate sales from them during peaks in demand.



Customer analysis of metrics such as age, preferred sales channels, devices and social media consumption will help you develop customer personas to feed into your peak promotional planning. While some customers prefer shopping early in the morning, others enjoy spending late at night.

Research by SaleCycle found there are two peak hours for online shopping; 10am to 11am, with a second peak at 8pm and 9pm. By measuring your own customer base and target market you will be able to determine the most suitable advertising channels and allocate budgets according to their shopping patterns.

2. REVIEW YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN AND MONITOR INDUSTRY TRENDS



IT MAKES SENSE TO REVIEW THE BUSINESS CASE FOR OUTSOURCING ORDER FULFILMENT, CUSTOMER SERVICE AND DELIVERY MANAGEMENT

Preparing for peak means looking externally from your organisation. What is the current state of play with international commerce? By anticipating seasonal trends and monitoring changes in cross-border trade you will be able to minimise understocking of packaging, as well as your products. Historical patterns in your business's sales will also help you predict times of higher demand.

Many retailers become unstuck due to staffing shortages, a lack of warehousing space and increased returns rates, so it makes sense to review your business case for outsourcing elements such as order fulfilment, eCommerce customer service and delivery management.



3. AVOID UNDERSTOCKING WITH EFFECTIVE INVENTORY MANAGEMENT



EFFECTIVE INVENTORY MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE WILL ANALYSE YOUR PAST TRADING PATTERNS AND HELP YOU DECIDE ON THE CORRECT AMOUNT TO PROCURE TO MAKE THE MOST OF SHARP RISES IN DEMAND



During peak trading times it becomes all the more important to increase your stock levels and accelerate throughput.

While impossible to predict, effective inventory management software will analyse your past trading patterns and help you decide on the correct amount to procure to make the most of sharp rises in demand. While overstocking can also be a concern, understocking will have a greater impact on your business. Your products' perishability should inform your attitude toward risk.

4. OPTIMISE YOUR TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE



SUITABLE SYSTEMS CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS RUN LIKE A WELL-OILED MACHINE

When did you last review your technology stack? Maintaining your stock level accuracy can improve the efficiency of your order processing.

Manual, legacy systems and processes can slow down your operations. Implementing the most suitable systems can help your business run like a well-oiled machine.

HERE'S A CHECKLIST OF EACH TECHNOLOGY TO STRESS-TEST IN PREPARATION FOR PEAK:

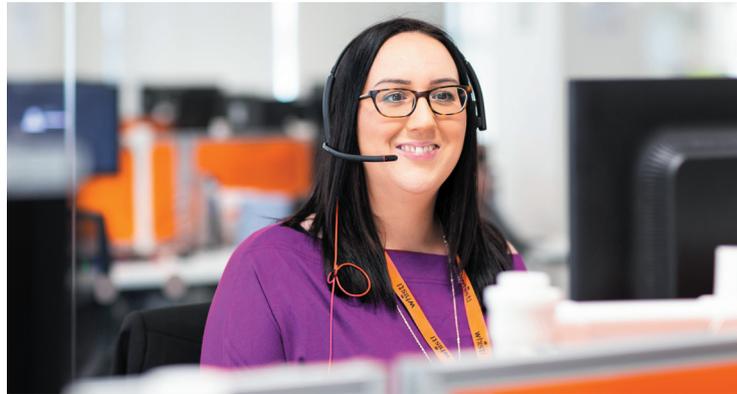
- *Inventory planning software (IPS)*
- *Order management system (OMS)*
- *Warehouse management system (WMS)*
- *Delivery management platform (DMP)*
- *Customer experience management platform (CEM)*



5. PREPARE YOUR MARKETING CAMPAIGNS FOR PEAK SEASON OFFERS



THE WHISTL GROUP CAN HELP YOU PROMOTE YOUR PEAK SEASON OFFERS VIA A RANGE OF CHANNELS



By mapping out the times of year that you expect sharp rises in demand to occur, you can conduct reverse promotional planning for campaigns.

At the Whistl Group, we can help you promote your peak season offers via a range of channels including contact centre, advertising, mail and now through product sampling.

6. ACCELERATE YOUR ORDER PROCESSING



DETERMINE WHICH PICKING METHOD IS THE MOST EFFICIENT ROUTE TO DISPATCH

The faster you can pick, pack, and dispatch your orders, the quicker you can respond to peaks in demand.

Reviewing your picking and packing methods outside of peak times will ensure you work more efficiently when times get tough. By determining whether zonal, batch, discrete or wave picking methods, or a hybrid setup, is the most efficient route to dispatch will help ensure you can meet the extra demand with haste.



7. DEPLOY A MULTI-CARRIER SHIPPING STRATEGY TO MINIMISE RISK



BENEFITS OF A DMP ARE ECONOMIES OF SCALE AND MORE FLEXIBLE COLLECTION TIMES, HELPING YOU OFFER LATER CUT-OFF TIMES FOR YOUR PEAK SEASON OFFERS



Just like political unrest and natural disasters, peak demand can impact logistical operations globally.

By working with a multi-carrier consolidator you will mitigate risk. If one carrier suffers service degradation, a delivery management company can seamlessly switch you over to another provider, minimising disruption to your business operations. Other benefits of a DMP are economies of scale and more flexible collection times, helping you offer later cut-off times for your peak season offers.

8. OUTSOURCE ECOMMERCE FULFILMENT FOR EXTRA SCALE



BETTER VISIBILITY OF YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN PROCESSES AND YOUR CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Outsourcing the storage and distribution of your finished goods will help you better handle large order volumes.

It's also less capital-intensive, the last thing you want to do is invest in a new warehouse for it to only be required during peak trading times. Furthermore, if you work with a forward-thinking eCommerce fulfilment company you will benefit from better visibility of supply chain processes and your customer journey, by integrating the fulfilment house's WMS with your OMS and CEM platforms.





OVERFLOW CALL CENTRES CAN HELP ONLINE RETAILERS DEAL WITH RISES IN CALL TRAFFIC THAT ARE EITHER PRE-PLANNED FOR CAMPAIGNS, OR DURING UNANTICIPATED GROWTH SPURTS

9. GET YOUR CONTACT CENTRE READY FOR PEAKS AND TROUGHS IN DEMAND



Like fulfilment, growing your call centre operations is highly capital and time intensive.

By analysing your business growth and how it has handled peak volumes historically, you may determine that it makes sense to work with a business process outsourcer (BPO) that specialises in overflow call handling and/or out of hours call handling. Overflow call centres can help online retailers deal with rises in call traffic that are either pre-planned for campaigns, or during unanticipated growth spurts. Another way to better deal with demand is to widen your operating hours and introduce out of hours call handling.

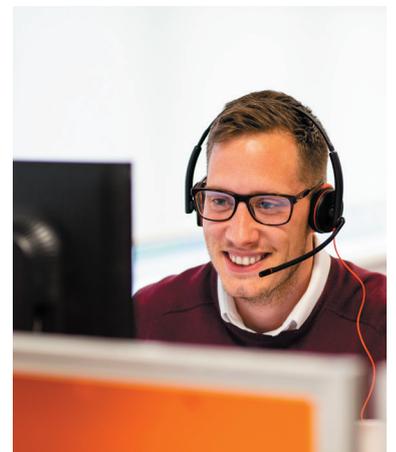
10. LEVERAGE PROACTIVE AND REACTIVE TECHNOLOGY TO MINIMISE DELIVERY FAILURES



FIX THE ISSUE BEFORE IT IMPACTS THE CONSUMER AND YOUR BOTTOM LINE

Failed deliveries have a significant impact on customer retention, loyalty, and brand perception, and during the most emotive times of year (peak season), bad experiences will be etched in your customers' memories. Redeploying resources and working with a proactive tracking support specialist can help you minimise the likelihood of deliveries failing.

Parcelhub, part of the Whistl Group, does exactly that and monitors parcels throughout the delivery journey to identify potential delivery failures. When an incident is identified, their team of specialists step in to fix the issue before it impacts the consumer, and your bottom line. For instances when a delivery failure can't be saved, Parcelhub's enhanced delivery management team is there to handle consumers' 'Where is my order?' queries (WISMOs).



Whistl helps online retailers prepare for peak season trading with end to end logistics management.

At the Whistl Group we help online retailers optimise their supply chain, systems, and processes to make the most of peak trading opportunities.

Our dedicated account management team will review your technical infrastructure, helping you get the most out of Parcel Delivery Management, Fulfilment and Contact Centre solutions.



Whistl is the UK's leading logistics company, uniquely placed to help businesses effectively manage their e-commerce supply chain.



Customer acquisition



Fulfilment



Delivery management



Contact centres



Returns

For more information

Call us **01628 918 921** | Visit us **www.whistl.co.uk/peak**



The Whistl Group

The Whistl Group is the UK's leading logistics specialist, operating under the Whistl brand across six core sectors:

Fulfilment

Parcels

International

Mail

Contact Centres

Doordrop Media

Our portfolio also includes:

leafletdrop.co.uk

target | print | distribute

Leafletdrop is an online tool providing a leaflet delivery service with access to over 28 million homes, helping SME's create brand awareness and find new customers.

parcelhub

Part of the Whistl Group

Parcelhub offers a unique portfolio of bespoke multi-carrier management, outsourced tracking support, bulk mail and fulfilment solutions that are flexible and scalable.

posthub

Part of the Whistl Group

Posthub provides consultative and hands-on support, for impactful direct mail campaigns, helping businesses manage all steps of the direct mail process.



Relish are a FMCG product sampling specialist, enabling brands to target consumers through matching them with synergistic partners.

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