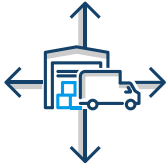# Peak Prep Warehouse Checklist to Increase Efficiency

A quick reference guide for ecommerce leaders preparing for peak season operations.

Optimize Warehouse Layout

- ☐ **Stage fast-moving SKUs near packing stations** - Pick orders faster.
- ☐ **Add pick face breaks in aisles** - Reduce walking time by creating shortcuts.
- ☐ **Define clear zones for receiving, picking, packing, and dispatch** - Be organized.
- ☐ **Set up staging areas** - Use rolling carts for packed orders and courier pickups.
- ☐ **Designate a returns processing area** - Receive and re-list items quickly.

Ensure Inventory and Supplies Availability

- ☐ **Forecast inventory according to past and projected trends** - Informed decisions.
- ☐ **Inform suppliers about projected demand in advance** - Ensure stock availability.
- ☐ **Flag SKUs that may face supply chain delays and order early** - Avoid stockouts.
- ☐ **Utilize barcode-based inventory putaway** - Speeds up item location/retrieval.
- ☐ **Stock up on packaging, labels, and supplies** - Prevent shipping delays.

Configure and Test Warehouse Technology

- ☐ **Update and configure your warehouse management system (WMS)** - Be ready.
- ☐ **Set up barcode scanners; check hardware readiness** - Prevent scanning issues.
- ☐ **Prepare fallback shipping options** - Anticipate carrier capacity issues.
- ☐ **Test batch picking and dispatch label workflows** - Uncover and fix bottlenecks.
- ☐ **Configure dashboards to track daily warehouse performance** - Ensure visibility.

Hire and Train Temporary Staff (if needed)

- ☐ **Forecast staffing needs based on projected peak volume** - Know what you need.
- ☐ **Prep standard procedures and visual aids** - Set clear expectations and workflows.
- ☐ **Recruit and schedule temporary labor** - Avoid last-minute staffing issues.
- ☐ **Assign onboarding leads or buddies for new hires** - Provide help and oversight.
- ☐ **Train seasonal staff using mobile WMS (target < 1 hr.)** - Ensure ease of use.

Peak Execution Readiness

- ☐ **Finalize shift schedules and break coverage** - Reserve everyone's time.
- ☐ **Prepare escalation plans for delayed shipments or low stock** - Minimize stress.
- ☐ **Set communication cadence with daily huddles or dashboards** - Align the team.
- ☐ **Run tests with new staff, SOPs, and warehouse layout** - Find potential issues.
- ☐ **Review test results** - Analyze pick rates, order accuracy, and labor efficiency.
- ☐ **Troubleshoot and adjust operations** - Optimize your warehouse for success.

Descartes ecommerce solutions are here to help you prepare warehouse operations for peak season.

Talk to an expert today