

5 Steps for Streamlining Pre-retail Logistics

The must-read guide for delivering retailer satisfaction, cost savings and eliminating waste. How to get orders to retailers right first time and on time

The pre-retail opportunity

Pre-retail logistics are a crucial part of retail supply chains. Success and challenges at this stage can quickly ripple effect upstream and downstream, impacting time to market, stock availability and, ultimately, shopper satisfaction. It's for these reasons that both retailers and brands are prioritising improvements throughout pre-retail processes and compliance.

Optimising pre-retail performance to adhere to supplier manuals and satisfy retailers' standards can prove tough. We surveyed 200 senior key decision makers involved in pre-retail and found the three biggest compliance challenges include delivery deadlines, quality and labelling.

Exacting standards are reflective of the increasingly competitive markets facing retailers – and, by default, the brands supplying them. Retailers must work increasingly harder to win each sale and know that meeting shoppers' demands for convenience, speed and quality are critical to building brand loyalty and repeat purchasing.

Pre-retail logistics is a trigger point for driving success, which is why 93% of businesses are considering ways to improve this part of their supply chains. They realise there's a significant opportunity to unlock the full potential of pre-retail operations to tackle inefficiencies and wastage that cause bottlenecks, delays and margin dilution.

For suppliers, avoiding non-compliance can boost retailer satisfaction and lay the foundations for long-lasting relationships. Improving pre-retail practices can also reduce carbon footprints and packaging material usage. This can support retailers' sustainability goals and regulatory requirements, such as Scope 3 emissions and the planned Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging.

Retailers expanding sales channels and markets, and brands aiming to sell through more retailers will drive continued interest in optimising pre-retail logistics. Advanced's Retail Ready is experiencing growing demand and a fifth of businesses currently looking for solutions to improve pre-retail compliance are focused on outsourcing. With this in mind, we've pulled together this Buyer's Guide to help suppliers ask the right questions to find the best solution solving pre-retail challenges and boosting compliance.

Ben Balfour, Managing Director

Advanced Supply Chain



Top Compliance Challenges:



44% say retailers are placing most pre-retail emphasis on time to market

Costs of Non-Compliance:

51%

have incurred penalties from retailers for non-compliance with supplier manuals

£1,658

average value of penalties over the past 12 months



1/3

have paid penalties in the past 12 months

20%

20% have lost business with a retailer

Reasons for Outsourcing Pre-Retail Solutions:



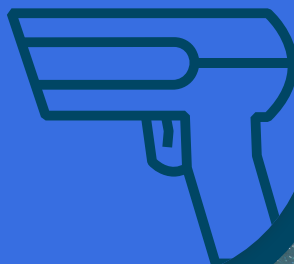
52% are aiming to grow the number of retailers they work with.

About the research

SAPIO Research surveyed 200 senior key decision makers with responsibility for pre-retail logistics and compliance. Interviews were conducted online in April 2024 and carried out among key decision makers working for businesses with an annual turnover of £10million+ across the UK.

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Automate
and digitalise
labelling



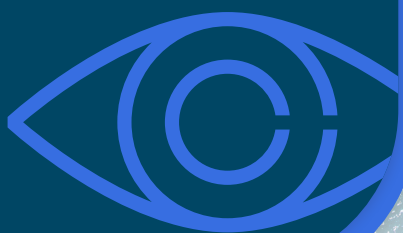
2

Optimise
delivery
efficiencies



3

Enhance
visibility



4

Improve
packaging



5

Improve
in-pack
labelling



Automate and digitalise labelling

The challenge

In many instances, labelling during pre-retail logistics is extremely manual. It relies on people writing and filling-in forms.

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Handwriting slows down labelling | Manual data input is prone to errors, with hard-to-read handwriting leading to misunderstandings and mistakes | If labels aren't easy to read, they are more likely to be rejected by retailers | Manual processing of labels also slows down the overall flow of supply data and limits visibility of stock inventory |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|

Further inefficiencies are caused by manually creating and filling out labels because the data will also be inputted into a supply chain management system. Writing the information out and then typing it into a network is a needless duplication of effort.

The solution

Replace manual processes with touchscreen kiosks in warehouse and fulfilment centres, which are connected to a web-based supply chain management system.

Kiosks can be used to create and print labels on-demand, with templates designed according to formats provided by retailers or easily configured to their specifications. This means that the right label for the right retailer can be quickly produced at the right time.

Automation and digitalisation delivered by connected kiosks:

- Saves time manually writing labels
- Eliminates handwriting mistakes
- Reduces administration
- Enhances visibility and live tracking of stock inventory
- Maximises retailer compliance

Key questions to ask during outsourcing

Q. Will bar codes and scanners enable a direct data feed

Q. Are there any limitations in terms of setting milestones? How many stages of scanning will generate stock inventory visibility?

Q. Can the system be programmed to generate alerts and updates? For example, systems can be set to automatically send update emails to retailers at key milestones

Q. What search functionality does the system have to track specific POs and SKUs?

Q. Does the system have a query management function to highlight or report any enquiries?



Optimise delivery efficiencies

The challenge

'Unplanned' and 'under-utilised' are two big challenges facing fleet scheduling during pre-retail.

Unplanned

HGVs arrive at warehouses and fulfilment centres too early or late.

Idle vehicles clog-up loading bays, parking areas and turning circles, risking bottlenecks.

Under-utilised

HGVs transporting empty space add unnecessary costs, time and carbon emissions to supply chains.

Suppliers and retailers are keen to avoid this and must balance vehicle movements against stock availability and shopper demands for speedy deliveries.

The solution

- Integrate automated and digitalised labelling with capable IT systems and transport management systems. A connected system can enable a feed of data and live tracking of the 'in flight status of goods' to support effective and efficient fleet scheduling. This starts with reporting and communication generated via an online booking portal to:
- Enhance planning – restrictions at collection points can be easily identified and avoided
- Assign collection windows – unnecessary dwell time and idling vehicles can be minimised
- Organise load sharing – waiting time for vehicles to be loaded to capacity can be reduced, with opportunity to also consolidate loads
- Designate 'green lanes' – priority status can be assigned to loading bays and vehicle registration plates
- Meet deadlines – scheduling and route planning can be optimised to keep vehicles moving on time
- ✓ Maximise utilisation of vehicle space
- ✓ Reduce number of vehicles on roads
- ✓ Meet delivery deadlines, boost retailer compliance
- ✓ Cut costs, congestion and carbon emissions

Key questions to ask during outsourcing

Q. Will the system deliver detailed capacity planning information, right down to level of units and cartons?

Q. Can the system handle retail returns? Factoring in items coming back to warehouses and fulfilment centres further utilises vehicle capacity and optimises vehicle movements

Q: How agile is the system? Can it accommodate flexible cut off for planning of both collections and inbound deliveries?

Enhance visibility

The challenge

There are numerous stages of processing during pre-retail, along with many different products moving to a variety of locations for a multitude of retailers. This can quickly compromise the accuracy and availability of tracking information for each SKU, risking missed deadlines, incorrect and incomplete orders, and the wrong goods moving to the wrong locations.

A lack of visibility during pre-retail logistics can also mean that mistakes go undetected until they reach a retailer.

The Solution

Bar code technology and milestone tracking that's connected to the supply chain management system.

Bar codes

Serial shipping container codes can be applied to each unit / carton, with handheld scanners utilised to feed live data into the supply chain management system

Milestone tracking

Purchase Orders (POs) can be assigned to each individual barcode, with key points (milestones) programmed for bar code scanning

The bar codes and milestone tracking combine to provide a holistic view of the status of orders during pre-retail. This supports end-to-end visibility and drives compliance further up supply chains.

- ✓ Readily available and accurate data that can quickly pinpoint any errors for remediation
- ✓ Flow of data that can be used to update retailers about order status, creating the ability to manage shopper expectations
- ✓ Up-to-date information that supports overall planning and fleet scheduling

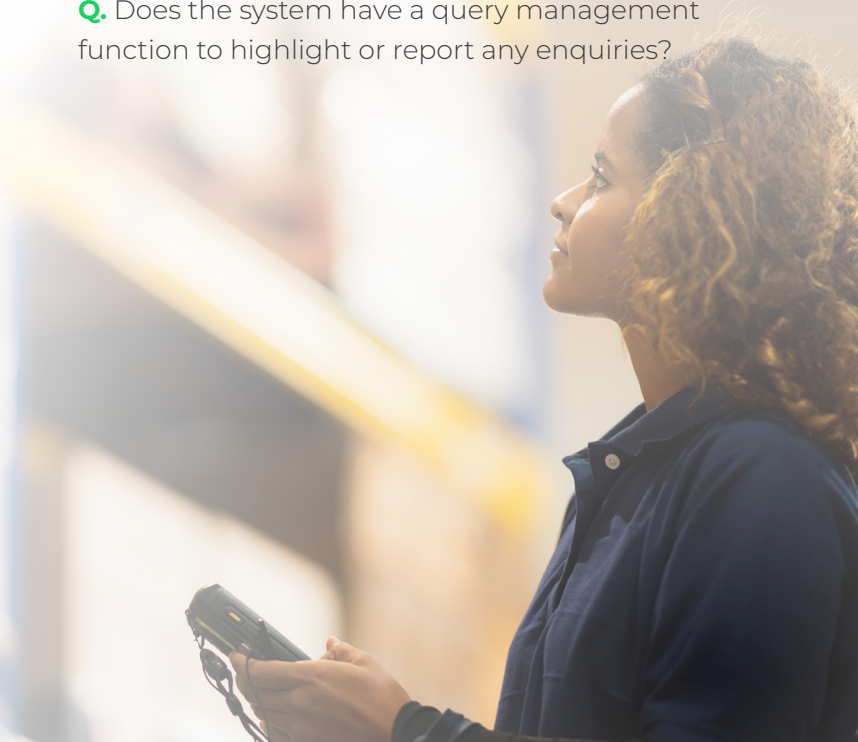
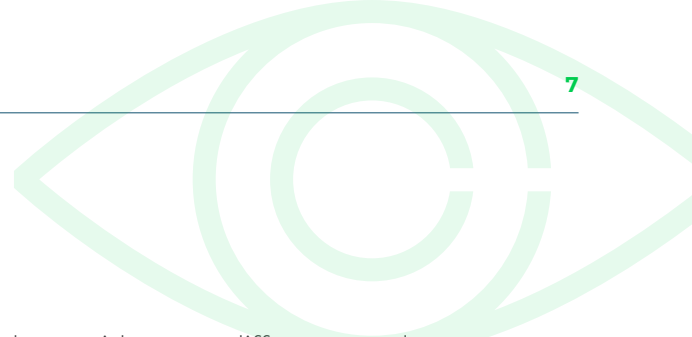
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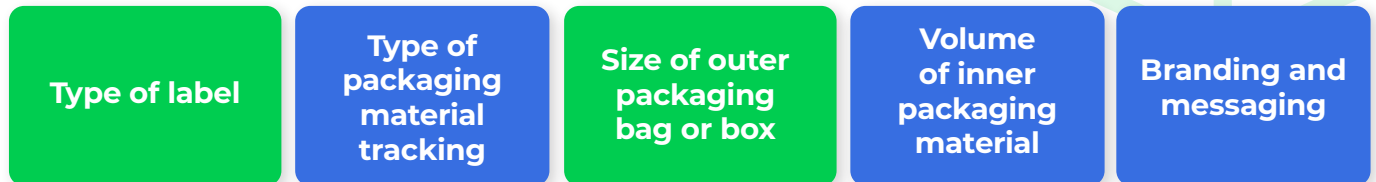
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Improve packaging

The challenge

Compliance with supplier manuals and retailers' specifications for packaging can cover a number of different standards.



Packaging standards are becoming more exacting as retailers – and their partners – strive to fulfil sustainability goals, meet regulatory requirements, satisfy shopper demands for resourcefulness and lower environmental impact, and cut costs.

The solution

Quality control for packaging must factor in specific rules and checks, with these defined and agreed with retailers. The rules should also provide a 'blueprint' for any re-packing and re-labelling, and de-branding and re-branding work.

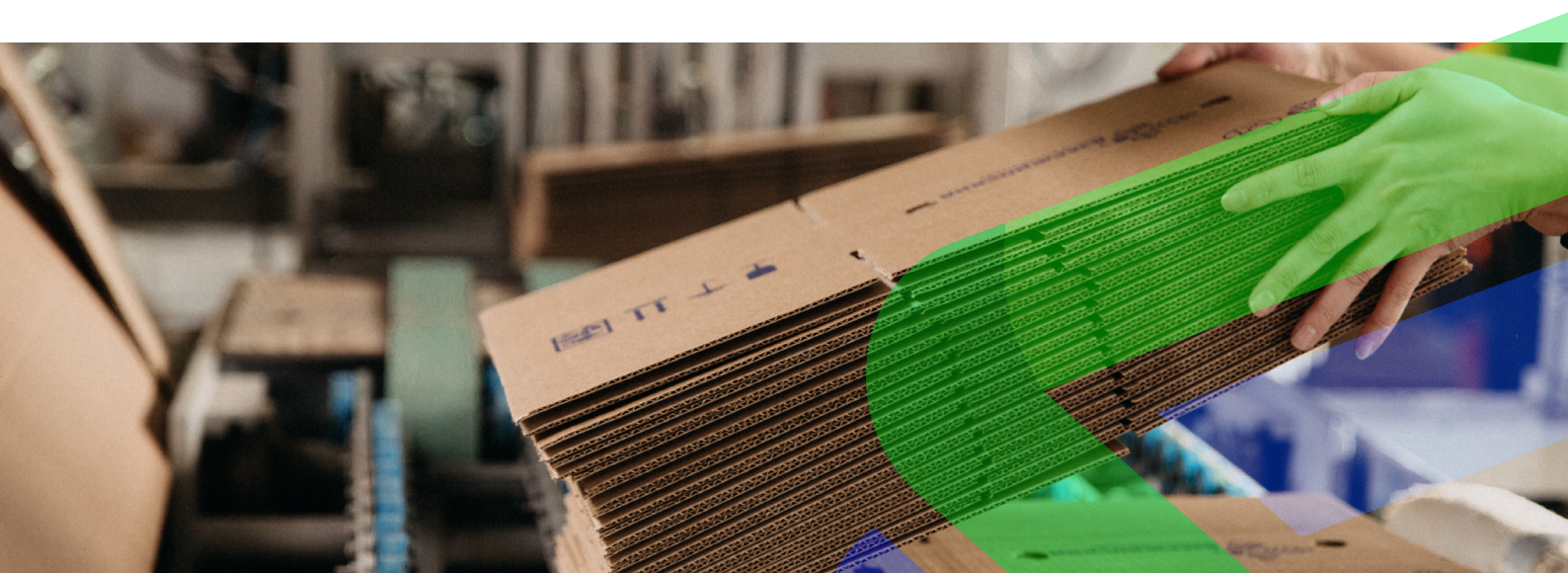
Rules can be used to set a guided system, which is activated via a touchscreen kiosk (the same kiosk which is used to generate on-demand labels). The guided-system provides operatives with a visual example of what best-practice looks like and a straightforward checklist for inspecting all key areas.

Bar codes and milestone tracking can support the effectiveness of packaging quality control and can be configured to incorporate image capture of orders. Images enable remote spot checks of packaging and can also be linked to specific POs.

- Improved consistencies and higher levels of quality
- Reduces risk of non-compliance and errors going undetected
- Enhanced retailer compliance
- Lower levels of wastage
- Packaging material efficiencies

Key questions to ask during outsourcing

- Q. Does the logistics provider source packaging materials?
- Q. Is the logistics provider experienced in fulfilment and packing?
- Q. Is the logistics company familiar with changing legislation impacting packaging and circularity?



Improve in-pack labelling

The challenge

In-pack labels must contain the right information, be placed in the right place within the package and be recognised within the stock inventory management system.

Quality control of in-pack labelling and compliance KPIs will often rely on core labelling details matching those of customer-facing sales channels. Information displayed at the point of sale on websites must be the same as what's in-pack.

The solution

Replace manual processes with touchscreen kiosks in warehouse and fulfilment centres, which are connected to a web-based supply chain management system.

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Key questions to ask during procurement

Q. Can the logistics provider integrate image capture into guided systems for quality control?

Q. What's the process for updating guided systems? How quickly can they be configured to remain consistent with point-of-sale information?





Pre-retail logistics, how Advanced Supply Chain can help

From fashion and footwear to home furnishings, hanging garments and packaged goods, Advanced Supply Chain's (ASC) Retail Ready is designed to improve lead times, quality and stock visibility.

The service covers all key areas of pre-retail compliance including:

**Tag, bag, re-pricing
and care labelling**

**Re-pack and
re-labelling**

Flat processing

**De-branding and
re-branding**

It's also supported by Value Added Services that handle returns rectification and repair, including ozone mould and odour treatment.


The technology-led Retail Ready provides total control and visibility of stock inventory management. It enables the flow of data throughout pre-retail logistics to improve speed to market and enhance retailer compliance.

Retail Ready has:

- Slashed processing lead times for a major fashion retailer from 6 days to 3 days, while also cutting dwell times at the retailer's fulfilment centres by 48 hours
- Enabled a luxury fashion brand to achieve 100% retailer compliance with individual labelling requirements across 10 – 15 different retailers

- Improved speed to market for the luxury fashion brand by cutting the average time to market of the brand's deliveries to retailers from 7-10 days to 1-2 days

Better still, ASC is part of Reconomy – an international circular economy specialist. Sitting within Reconomy's Re-use Loop allows ASC to partner with experts spanning packaging and material management, environmental compliance, waste and resource management and recycling. Combining this expertise with ASC's in-depth knowledge and experience of end-to-end supply chain management optimises pre-retail logistics for leading brands and retailers across the UK and internationally.



To find out more about Retail Ready and how ASC can
optimise your pre-retail processes and compliance,
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