



Is it time to consider a new
fulfillment partner?



Rethinking your *fulfillment strategy?*



For ecommerce brands, fulfillment is often the difference between success and costly setbacks. From inefficient returns processes and long-term storage fees to limited transparency and rising costs, many businesses find fulfillment to be a consistent pain point.

According to our latest [State of Fulfillment Report](#), just 25% of respondents say their current returns process is extremely or very efficient. This highlights how challenging it can be to optimize even a single part of the fulfillment puzzle.

Brands are also contending with new and evolving obstacles. [Two-thirds of surveyed businesses](#) report increased costs and complexity from Amazon's latest inbound placement fees. And starting [January 1, 2026](#), [Amazon will end FBA prep services](#). While these changes are specific to Amazon, brands across all marketplaces are facing shifting requirements and growing hurdles.

That's why choosing a proactive, adaptable fulfillment partner matters more than ever. In this ebook, you'll learn how to spot common fulfillment pain points, recognize when it's time for a change, and choose the best path forward for your business.



Common fulfillment *pain points*

Spotting issues with your fulfillment strategy or partner is vital to protecting your brand and supporting business growth.

Here are several warning signs that may indicate deeper operational challenges and opportunities for improvement:

1

Shipping delays

If your delivery speeds lag behind competitors, you risk losing customers. For brands selling on Amazon, long check-in times can delay product launches and contribute to missed gift-giving occasions, canceled orders, and lost repeat business.

2

Poor data visibility

Without accurate, timely data, you can't make informed fulfillment decisions. Missing or delayed information on inventory levels, order status, and shipment tracking often results in errors, shipment delays, and inefficient resource allocation.

3

Opaque or rising costs

Unclear fees make predicting and managing fulfillment costs difficult. A lack of transparency around pricing structures, surcharges, and variable costs leads to budgeting challenges and unexpected increases in operational expenses.



Pain points *continued*

4

Scaling challenges

Inability to handle spikes in demand causes stockouts and lost revenue. Without adaptable systems and processes that scale, rapid changes in order volume strain operations, leading to fulfillment delays, unsatisfied customers, and operational bottlenecks.

5

Order errors and inaccuracies

Repeatedly sending customers the wrong products or facing lost and damaged shipments can quickly undermine trust, leading to costly returns, negative reviews, and long-term harm to your brand's reputation.

6

Damaged orders

When products arrive in poor condition, customers are left frustrated and your team must manage the additional burden of returns and replacements.





What fulfillment model *works best for you?*

There are two main options when it comes to fulfillment: manage it in-house, or work with a third-party logistics provider (3PL).

Each approach offers its own set of advantages and challenges, and the best solution often depends on your stage of growth, operational complexity, and long-term strategy.

In-house

In-house fulfillment allows brands to maintain total control. You direct how orders are processed, packed, and shipped.

This hands-on approach can be essential for companies that want a highly curated customer experience or have highly specific packaging requirements.

However, it also requires an ongoing investment in staff, warehousing space, and technology to process and track orders efficiently.

3PL

On the flip side, partnering with a 3PL means entrusting fulfillment to a specialized provider.

Here, you benefit from scalability, efficiency, and access to the provider's technology and logistics network. For many brands, this means faster delivery, flexible capacity, and reduced operational headaches.

But it also means giving up some direct control and relying on your partner's capabilities to deliver the service your brand promises.



In-house fulfillment:

benefits and drawbacks

Benefits

- Full control over operations and branding
- Consistent, hands-on quality and order oversight
- Ability to design unique unboxing experiences
- Fast feedback and direct customer interaction

Drawbacks

- Order growth quickly increases staffing, space, and tech needs
- High fixed costs can outweigh benefits
- Scaling often leads to inefficiency
- Managing logistics and tech takes focus from core business

Partnering with a 3PL:

benefits and drawbacks

Benefits

- Access to established infrastructure, staff, and technology
- Frees up your team to focus on product, marketing, and customers
- Easily scales to handle sales spikes or growth without sacrificing speed or quality

Drawbacks

- Possible communication gaps and limited visibility into operations
- Service quality and flexibility can vary. Choosing the right partner is crucial



What sets the best *3PLs apart*

Choosing the right 3PL partner can make a significant difference for your business, as the top providers consistently deliver value through advanced technology, reliable service, and a deep understanding of the fast-changing ecommerce landscape.

However, not all 3PLs invest at this level; some rely on basic setups and manual processes, which can limit efficiency and scalability.

The most effective 3PLs stand out through:

Advanced
warehouse
technology

Operational
transparency

Proactive,
flexible service

Experienced
teams

Minimal need
for manual
oversight

Reliable
speed and
cost control



Advanced warehouse technology

They use automated conveyance systems, real-time integrations, and robust inventory management for fast, accurate fulfillment.

Operational transparency

Brands can easily track orders, monitor returns, and access up-to-date performance data at any time.

Proactive, flexible service

Leading 3PLs adapt to each brand's workflow, maintain open communication, and recommend ways to improve processes and control costs.

Experienced teams

Leading 3PLs adapt to each brand's workflow, maintain open communication, and recommend ways to improve processes and control costs.

Minimal need for manual oversight

Leading 3PLs adapt to each brand's workflow, maintain open communication, and recommend ways to improve processes and control costs.

Reliable speed and cost control

Leading 3PLs adapt to each brand's workflow, maintain open communication, and recommend ways to improve processes and control costs.



When traditional fulfillment isn't enough: *meet Pattern*

The ecommerce landscape is changing fast. Just keeping up isn't enough. Your fulfillment partner should help you get ahead. Pattern was built to fill these gaps, combining advanced data and analytics, proprietary technology, and deep marketplace expertise.

Our large-scale, tech-forward warehouses and seasoned teams keep your operation moving. We handle returns, navigate shifting fee structures, and maintain cost control, so you can focus on your core business. Pattern helps customers reduce costs and adapt quickly to new requirements, delivering the speed, accuracy, and peace of mind you need to confidently scale your brand.

With Pattern, fulfillment is no longer a headache. Instead, it becomes a competitive advantage that drives growth and frees your team to focus on what matters most.

Discover a better future *for your fulfillment*

Holding onto outdated processes or partnerships can slow your growth, raise costs, and hurt your customer experience.

Pattern's innovative approach transforms fulfillment, delivering cost savings, greater agility, and better customer satisfaction. [Contact Pattern](#) to see how a smarter strategy can unlock your brand's potential.

