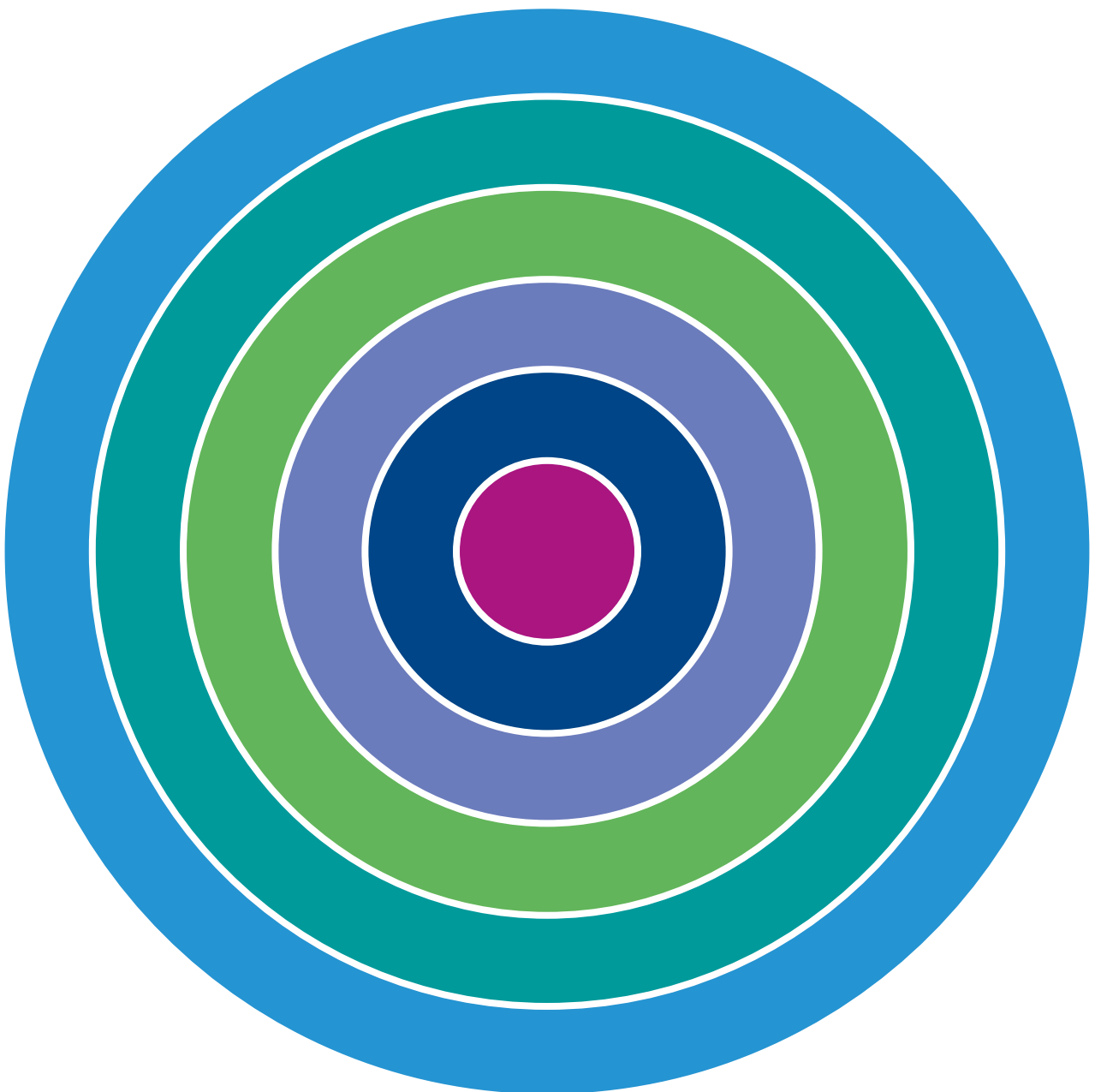




## Prepare for Peak

6 ways to prepare your  
packaging operation for peak



# Prepare for Peak – 6 ways to prepare your packaging operation for peak

The growth of online retailing has enormous implications for distribution and 3PL specialists.

Smart planning before the peak will help to ensure that your packaging operation delivers maximum throughput with minimum labour.

Large businesses plan for the peak season months in advance, especially now that Black Friday has become a fixed part of the retail calendar.

**We have outlined 6 ways that you prepare your packaging operation for peak:**



## 1. Ensure your packing area is ergonomic

A well laid out packing station will ensure your packers are achieving maximum throughput

It's important to make sure packaging materials are easily accessible for the packer and that they have enough packaging to fulfil an entire day of packing

Packers should be well trained. To ensure that items are being packed quickly and efficiently, you might want to consider implementing a standard set of packing operating procedures ahead of peak.



## 2. Optimise your packaging range

**Less is more.** When it comes to shipping, using the right amount of packing materials will save you money.

Using too much and overpacking adds expense and can even lead to damage. If the sides of the box are puffing out, it's overpacked. If your packing material spills out of the box as you're trying to seal it, it's overpacked.

Consider rationalising the range of different packaging materials you have on hand to save on space and cost.



## 3. Optimise your storage space

Faced with the demand for operational excellence in a very competitive market-place, logistics providers need to take every opportunity to reduce picking times and increase the capacity of their warehouse space.

One option is to use bespoke pick bins, which have been introduced by several operators and are proving to be effective tools to achieving these goals, without the need for significant capital investment.

For temporary use, pick bins are easily erected and provide a flexible and cost-effective response to peak demands and increasing SKU storage needs. When not required, they can be easily dismantled, and stored for future use.

### Keep control of your packaging

Make sure that you have just the right amount of stock in the warehouse and consider using a stock and drip feed service to ensure you are never out of stock during the unpredictable peak period.





## 4. Increase packaging throughput

There are many different ways to automate your packaging operation - whatever the budget.

Simple tools such as tape machines, stretch machines and automatic void fill dispensers can help your packers get more parcels out of the door- without compromising on quality.

Another way of speeding up your packaging operation is to consider using crash lock cartons. These self-erecting boxes eliminate the time consuming effort of taping the bottom together.



### Macfarlane Packaging e-trading

Ordering and controlling your packaging inventory online makes it easy for packaging managers who are responsible for multiple sites to monitor all packaging spend and usage.

Macfarlane Packaging's Simplicit.e allows managers to: add purchasers; set spend levels; and determine products each purchaser can order – it can even send all orders to the purchasing manager to approve before processing order, allowing ultimate control of packaging spend and usage.

## 5. Reduce costs involved in forward logistics

There are many ways to improve carriage costs by using more efficient packaging. Making sure smaller **letterboxable** items fit through the customers letterbox, first time, will not only delight them but will also reduce carrier tariffs and increase transport yield.

Consider optimising your box sizes for better pallet utilisation. This will not only save costs, but also contribute to reducing your carbon emissions.



## 6. Improve the overall customer experience

The customer is king and it is really important to deliver the 'WOW'.

**Make sure that parcels are presented to customers and not just delivered.**

Your packaging should reflect your brand. Why not consider printing your branding on the inside? This way, you lower the risk of pilferage and still delight the customer when they receive their item.

**Make parcels easy to return.**

If the customer changes their mind and wants to return the item, it's really important make the returns process as simple as possible. Make sure it is easy for the customer to seal up the package so that it arrives back safely.

**Make sure items arrive securely**

There is nothing worse than a customer opening an item to realise that half of it has been taken out of the box. Consider using Tamper Evident solutions.



## BE PREPARED

**1. Ensure your packing area is ergonomic** – make sure staff have enough packaging materials to see them through a full day of packing.

**2. Optimise your packaging range** – consider reducing the number of packaging materials you have such as different sized boxes, to speed up the packing process.

**3. Optimise your storage space** – temporary pick bins can be used in your warehouse to make room for those additional SKUs. Use a stock and drip feed service to ensure you have just the right amount of packaging.

**4. Increase packaging throughput** – there are a wide range of automation solutions available such as automatic void fill solutions to increase the speed of packing. Alternatively, you could consider using self-erecting crash lock boxes in your manual packaging operation.

**5. Reduce costs involved in forward logistics** – reducing the size of a pack by just a couple of centimetres can help to reduce carrier tariffs and increase transport yields.

**6. Improve the overall customer experience** – the most important of them all. Deliver the 'WOW' every time the customer re-ceives a parcel. Make sure that parcels are presented to customers and not just delivered.

## How Macfarlane Packaging can help your business

- National Network of Regional Distribution Centres
- Specialist eCommerce and 3PL Team
- Market leading IT systems with fully integrated 24/7 online ordering / reporting suites
- Flexible, just-in-time stock holding, to make sure you have the right amount of packaging during peak

To find out more about how we can help you save costs and improve your packaging operation call **0800 2888 444** or email [contactus@macfarlanepackaging.com](mailto:contactus@macfarlanepackaging.com)