







# 25/26 Peak trends: What retailers need to know

## ► The 2025 peak challenge

Every peak season=a retailer’s ultimate stress test. Retailers now face higher volatility, tighter promises and surges that don’t wait for only Black Friday.


 <p>+68% spike in order volumes</p>	 <p>Shrinking delivery windows</p>
 <p>2x–3x surge in logistics costs</p>	 <p>0 margin for error in customer promise</p>

With tariffs, volatile consumer behavior, and global supply constraints, it will be the toughest yet as we expect multiple peak seasons and sharp spikes in volumes in a single year.

## ► 5 trends retailers can’t ignore


### 1 Inventory visibility gaps

Over 50% of retailers lack real-time omni-inventory visibility. → Customer promises are broken, cancellations and OOS rise, margins erode.

 Fix it: Getting a unified, millisecond-level available to promise (ATP) inventory across stores, DCs, in-transit, and returns.


### Forecasting falls apart under pressure

More than 58% of retailers miss peak delivery goals. → Live demand signals are missed because historical averages are not taken into consideration in real time. This leads to stockouts and overstocking, with inefficient planning.

 Fix it: Order-driven forecasting powered by real-time fulfillment data.


### 3 Managing returns surge is more important than ever

Returns can spike up to 40% in fashion during peak. → DCs overflow, capital locks up, margins erode.

 Fix it: Smart returns orchestration that routes to resale, restock or refurbishment to drive rapid resale recovery.

### Volatile order sourcing

Tariffs, strikes, and supply node delays trigger reactive, expensive fulfillment. → Every situation becomes reactive, resulting in costlier fulfillment modes like split shipments for instance.

 Implement AI-driven sourcing simulation to understand what-if scenarios, protect profit and improve SLA.

### 5 Falling behind without AI

If you aren’t adopting AI, you are already behind on driving accurate insights, achieving on-time delivery and managing fulfillment costs effectively during peak. With the right AI tools, retailers can scale faster, protect margin and maintain accuracy even during surges. → Incorporating the right AI tools in your daily tasks is essential, as manual decisioning simply can’t keep up with peak volatility.

 Cognitive AI agents embedded in your orders and returns systems to forecast, detect risk, and automate resolutions.

## ► Be peak ready always: The cognitive advantage

Go from reactive to resilient for every peak volume surges.



## ► Go live in as fast as three months.

## ► What winning retailers are doing now

- 1 Moving fast without compromising on customer promises, with AI-powered orders and returns system driving smart inventory and fulfillment decisioning
- 2 Prioritizing a smarter returns recovery to achieve your full inventory potential
- 3 Connecting planning, order and returns systems to remove silos end-to-end