

10 Tips for Seasonal Peaks and Unpredictable Volume Surges

1. Start Planning Earlier Than Ever

Maintain access to scalable labor through a mix of full-time associates, cross-trained employees, and contingent resources that can ramp up quickly.

2. Use Data to Forecast Multiple Demand Scenarios

Use historical volume trends, promotional calendars, pipeline data, and market signals to model both best-case and worst-case surge scenarios.

3. Audit Your Warehouse

Map and stress-test every node and every piece of technology, from receiving through to shipping, to identify potential bottlenecks before they break.

4. Pre-stage Equipment and Space

Ensure your physical spaces are prepared for volume surges with mobile racking, temp storage, backup MHE, and a smart yard management plan.

5. Standardize Processes

Have documented SOPs, safety procedures, embedded quality checks, and decisive leadership in place so that operations can execute consistently at speed when needed.

6. Invest in Cross-Training

Cross-trained associates can provide built-in surge protection, especially when standard processes are in place and associates have clear procedures to follow.

7. Strengthen Your Workforce Strategy

Ensure pay structures reward productivity, safety, accuracy, and attendance so that your associates are motivated to succeed when chaos strikes.

8. Bolster Visibility

Dashboards and operational KPIs must be updated frequently — or even better, in real time — to ensure success and head off any problems before they cascade.

9. Pressure-Test Your Partners

Your carriers, 3PLs, technology providers, and staffing firms must also be able to scale. Validate partner backup plans, experience with volume surges, and SLAs.

10. Create a Peak Season Playbook

Every surge is a goldmine for data and insights. Capture your successes and breakpoints when surges strike to better prepare for the next one.



Prep Checklist For Seasonal Peaks

90+ Days Out

- ☐ Forecast Demand Scenarios
- ☐ Book Flexible Labor Capacity
- ☐ Audit Inventory Visibility Systems

60 Days Out

- ☐ Secure Transportation Capacity
- ☐ Plan Contingency Labor in High-Risk Markets
- ☐ Test WMS & Automation Systems

30 Days Out

- ☐ Deploy Training for Surge Labor
- ☐ Stage Fast-Moving SKUs for Min-Peaks
- ☐ Finalize Carrier and Parcel Cutoff Dates

During Peak

- ☐ Monitor KPIs Daily
- ☐ Redeploy Labor as Demand Shifts
- ☐ Communicate Proactively with Partners

