



# THE ORDER ACCURACY PLAYBOOK: A STEP-BY-STEP PLAN TO REDUCE ERRORS, CUT COSTS, & IMPROVE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

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Every incorrect order costs you—returns, lost customers, and wasted time. These mistakes disrupt your supply chain, increase operational expenses, and erode customer trust. Yet, many businesses struggle to pinpoint where and why fulfillment errors occur.

If you manage order fulfillment, logistics, or warehouse operations—this guide provides a step-by-step framework to diagnose inefficiencies, implement best-in-class systems, and create an accuracy-focused fulfillment process that scales with your business.





## STEP 1

# ASSESS YOUR CURRENT FULFILLMENT ACCURACY

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The first step in improving order accuracy is understanding where your fulfillment process currently stands. Without a clear assessment, it's impossible to identify what's working and where inefficiencies are leading to costly mistakes.

By evaluating key performance indicators, tracking common fulfillment errors, and comparing against industry benchmarks, you can pinpoint areas that need immediate attention. Use the following assessment areas to get a clear picture of your fulfillment accuracy.

### Key Assessment Areas:

- **Order Accuracy Rate:** What percentage of orders are shipped correctly the first time?
- **Return Reasons:** Are returns related to fulfillment errors, such as incorrect items or mis-picks?
- **Warehouse Efficiency:** How long does it take to pick, pack, and ship an order?
- **Customer Complaints & Chargebacks:** How frequently do customers report order issues?
- **Comparison to Industry Benchmarks:** Is your accuracy rate above or below the 99.5% best-in-class standard?

# STEP 1: CONTINUED

## Action Steps:

- **Conduct a 30-day order accuracy audit.** Pull fulfillment data and analyze incorrect shipments. Categorize errors by mis-picks, mis-ships, damaged items, and incorrect labeling to determine trends.
- **Categorize return reasons.** Separate fulfillment-related errors from customer-related returns. Use return codes and reasons in your system to spot repeat issues. Determine if errors are consistently tied to the same SKU or order type. If a single product has recurring issues, investigate potential item setup problems, mislabeling, or system errors.
- **Measure order processing times.** Track the average time from picking to packing to shipping. Identify where delays occur and map out time-saving improvements in fulfillment workflows.
- **Set a baseline KPI for order accuracy.** If accuracy is below 99.5%, set improvement targets. Create a dashboard in your WMS to monitor performance daily.
- **Apply a root cause corrective action framework to solve fulfillment mistakes.** When errors occur, use the [“5 Whys”](#) method to track why and how they happen. Identifying the real cause of errors prevents costly repeat mistakes.



A photograph of a warehouse interior. In the foreground, a person wearing a bright pink safety vest with reflective yellow stripes is walking away from the camera down a long aisle. The aisle is flanked by high industrial shelving units filled with numerous cardboard boxes. In the middle ground, two blue automated guided vehicles (AGVs) are visible, each carrying a blue shelving unit with various items. Another worker in a yellow safety vest is visible further down the aisle. The warehouse has a high ceiling with exposed steel trusses and industrial lighting.

## STEP 2

# AUDIT & OPTIMIZE FULFILLMENT OPERATIONS

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The goal of fulfillment optimization is not just to catch mistakes but to prevent them at the source. Before making changes, assess whether errors are being flagged at audit checkpoints before leaving the facility. If mistakes are frequently corrected internally, this indicates a process breakdown that needs deeper investigation.

By addressing these gaps, you can enhance speed, reduce mis-picks, and establish a structured fulfillment process that scales efficiently.

### Action Steps:

- **Audit your current quality control process.** Are scanning and verification processes identifying errors before shipments leave the facility? If so, where are these errors occurring, and how can they be eliminated before reaching audit checkpoints?
- **Conduct a warehouse layout audit.** Walk through your fulfillment center and identify bottlenecks, slow-moving zones, and inefficient picking paths. Use warehouse mapping software to visualize areas that need restructuring.

## STEP 2: CONTINUED

### Action Steps (Continued):

- **Implement slotting strategies.** Use ABC slotting methodology to prioritize high-demand SKUs in accessible locations. Rotate products based on seasonality and sales data.
- **Standardize picking procedures.** Train staff to follow a one-touch picking method where each order is scanned and verified before moving to the next stage.
- **Install quality control checkpoints.** Set up scanning stations at the picking, packing, and shipping stages to catch errors before they leave the warehouse.
- **Upgrade inventory tracking systems.** Implement a cloud-based Warehouse Management System (WMS) that updates stock levels in real-time and integrates with your order management platform.



## STEP 3

# IMPLEMENT A SCALABLE ACCURACY FRAMEWORK

Once inefficiencies have been addressed, the next step is to build a scalable accuracy framework that sustains high performance as the business grows. Many companies improve fulfillment in the short term but fail to implement systems that support long-term accuracy.

A scalable framework ensures consistent accuracy at every stage of fulfillment, regardless of volume fluctuations or operational changes.

The key to sustained accuracy lies in automation, predictive analytics, and real-time performance tracking. These tools allow fulfillment teams to proactively identify and resolve issues before they escalate into costly mistakes.

### Action Steps:

- **Automate scanning checkpoints.** Integrate RFID scanners, barcode readers, or vision-based AI at picking and packing stations to eliminate human errors.
- **Use predictive analytics.** Leverage AI-driven data analysis to identify error trends before they escalate. Implement automation to proactively flag high-risk orders for additional verification.



## STEP 3: CONTINUED

### Action Steps (Continued):

- **Set up real-time KPI dashboards.** Monitor fulfillment performance daily using warehouse analytics software. Track order accuracy rate, mis-pick rate, and cycle time per order.
- **Segment accuracy reports by SKU, order type, and fulfillment stage.** This allows teams to spot patterns and determine whether mistakes originate from product setup, system errors, or process failures.
- **Provide ongoing employee training.** Run quarterly accuracy workshops to reinforce best practices and ensure compliance with updated fulfillment procedures.
- **Apply root cause insights to long-term accuracy improvements.** Use fulfillment accuracy reports to pinpoint recurring issues and prevent repeat mistakes. When addressing an error, ensure corrective actions include:
  - Standardizing fixes for common fulfillment mistakes to prevent recurrence
  - Developing automated safeguards to reduce reliance on manual corrections
  - Refining workflows based on error trend data and fulfillment analytics



## STEP 4

# MAINTAIN & CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE ACCURACY

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Achieving high-order accuracy is not a one-time fix—it requires ongoing evaluation, adjustments, and improvements to prevent regression.

Many fulfillment operations experience accuracy declines over time due to seasonal volume spikes, workforce turnover, or changes in inventory levels. Without continuous monitoring and adjustments, businesses risk undoing their progress.

A proactive approach to fulfillment accuracy includes regular audits, AI-driven analysis, and direct feedback loops from customers and fulfillment staff. By constantly refining processes, businesses can ensure they stay ahead of errors and maintain high customer satisfaction.

### Action Steps:

- **Conduct quarterly accuracy reviews.** Set up a recurring audit schedule to inspect warehouse workflows, tracking systems, and fulfillment SOPs. Adjust processes based on findings.



## STEP 4: CONTINUED

### Action Steps (Continued):

- **Invest in AI-driven analytics.** Use machine learning algorithms to forecast stock fluctuations, optimize picking paths, and detect potential accuracy risks.
- **Gather and act on customer feedback.** Monitor return reasons, customer complaints, and chargeback claims. Use feedback loops to identify operational weaknesses and refine accuracy strategies.
- **Stay ahead of fulfillment technology.** Evaluate new automation tools, robotics, and AI-driven fulfillment solutions annually to maintain a competitive edge.

# **EVERY INCORRECT ORDER COSTS YOU—LOST REVENUE, WASTED TIME, FRUSTRATED CUSTOMERS.**

But accuracy isn't just a goal; it's a system you create.

First, you need to assess where errors are happening. Audit your fulfillment accuracy, returns, and warehouse efficiency to pinpoint the weak spots. Then, optimize every step—organize your warehouse, standardize picking and packing, and upgrade inventory tracking.

The next step is scalability. Automation, predictive analytics, and real-time tracking prevent errors before they happen. But even the best systems degrade over time. Continuous improvement is the only way to maintain accuracy, refine workflows, and stay ahead of the competition.

Most businesses try to fix order accuracy reactively. The smartest ones build systems that eliminate mistakes before they start.

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When you choose IDS, you're not selecting a vendor—you're gaining a partner who understands the high stakes of your operations. From proactive optimization and parcel costs to seamless technology integrations, every detail of our service is designed to keep your business running efficiently, without you even having to ask.

Don't let order errors cut into your margins. Take control of your fulfillment today and schedule a discovery call to explore how IDS can make your supply chain a driving force behind your success.

For immediate assistance, contact us directly at (866) 232-6533, or email at [sales@idsfulfillment.com](mailto:sales@idsfulfillment.com).