

Last Mile Delivery Technology

The Ten Commandments for Managing the Chaos of Last Mile Delivery

The meteoric growth in last mile home delivery has given rise to a whole new segment in the transportation and logistics industry. Whether you call it last mile, home delivery or white glove, this new segment is different from the delivery model of a decade ago. Long held beliefs and best practices are being challenged by a new level of customer and consignee expectations as everyone races to be the next Amazon. Without the proper technology, it is simply not possible to compete in this fast paced world.

As a last mile delivery company how do you focus your time, energy and capital to improve accuracy, efficiency and customer satisfaction while driving profitability to your bottom line? It starts with the 10 Commandments of Last Mile Delivery Technology.



The Ten Commandments for Managing the Chaos of Last Mile Delivery

Thou shalt automate data whenever possible. With multiple orders from multiple customers in multiple formats with multiple update requirements, it is essential to implement as much data integration as possible. Make sure your technology partner is ready, willing and able to dive into the details of complex data integrations.

Thou shalt track each unique piece through the entire delivery cycle. Last mile is fundamentally different from traditional e-commerce in that every item must be tied to a specific delivery order. Immediately identifying an item and having full visibility and audit trails is crucial to maintaining order accuracy.

Thou shalt efficiently route and dispatch your vehicle. The largest expenses in last mile delivery are people and vehicles. Your company's profitability depends on effective use of these assets. Make sure you invest and take full advantage of systems that ensure maximum utilization of available capacity as well as verify the efficiency of routing and delivery.

Thou shalt ensure accuracy in picking, loading and delivery. Bar codes have been used to drive inventory accuracy and worker productivity for more than 30 years. Make sure to utilize the inexpensive and ubiquitous bar code in warehouse operations, in truck loading and delivery, and in returns management.

Thou shalt make it easy for the end customer to schedule, track and receive their products. End user experience is the ultimate metric that your customers use to evaluate your performance. Commit to automating scheduling/rescheduling, call ahead and other customer communication to reduce the opportunity for human error and provide a full audit trail of customer interactions.

Thou shalt track and monitor the delivery process to ensure Commandment 5. Literally, the last mile in last mile delivery is critical. Making sure your dispatchers have visibility into changes that can impact a customer's delivery at the last minute can make the difference between good and bad customer reviews.

Thou shalt ensure the proof of delivery process is quick, accurate and complete through proper workflow. Many things can go wrong in a white glove delivery. Make sure your proof of delivery process is not one of them. Eliminating paper, automating checklists and customer forms, validating the delivery through photos, payment processing and signature capture are all steps to improve both customer and employee satisfaction.

Thou shalt manage returns quickly and efficiently. Returns are a daily fact of life in the last mile delivery industry and if you do not stay on top of them they can eat up valuable warehouse space, increasing labor costs and generally cluttering up your operations. Make sure you have a system that allows you to immediately record returns, communicate status to your customer and provide alerts when items stay in your warehouse past contractual terms.

Thou shalt update your business partners quickly and accurately. Updating customers on items received, damages, orders ready to be scheduled, delivery times, completed and missed deliveries, returns and rescheduled deliveries is a monumental task. Look to automate as many of these processes as possible by interfacing your technology to your customer's systems.

Thou shalt measure performance and reward top performers. Once you have implemented warehouse management and proof of delivery systems, you will have a gold mine of data available to you. Make sure you use your systems to accurately track performance and provide feedback to employees in real time. Let's face it, much of the time our business is organized chaos, at best. Make sure to recognize and reward your top performers.



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