



Flexe

Guide

Operate at Peak Performance in 2026 and Beyond



step one

Don't predict the unpredictable

Supply chain predictions inherently require forecasting future events based on past data. The problem: the past doesn't predict the future. Even pre-pandemic, the average forecast error stood at a significant 50%—effectively a coin toss for accuracy.¹

Years of constant supply chain disruption, especially since 2020, have only made historical data an even more unreliable source for future predictions. A staggering 99% of executives have seen their businesses face negative consequences due to decisions based on inaccurate forecasts.² This highlights the critical need for strategies that build resilience rather than solely relying on predictive perfection.

Forecast challenges

Forecasting during peak season presents unique and intensified challenges compared to regular periods.

- + Extreme volatility and unpredictable spikes in demand
- + Unreliable historical data due to constant disruption
- + Complex interplay of internal and external factors (and human bias)

step two

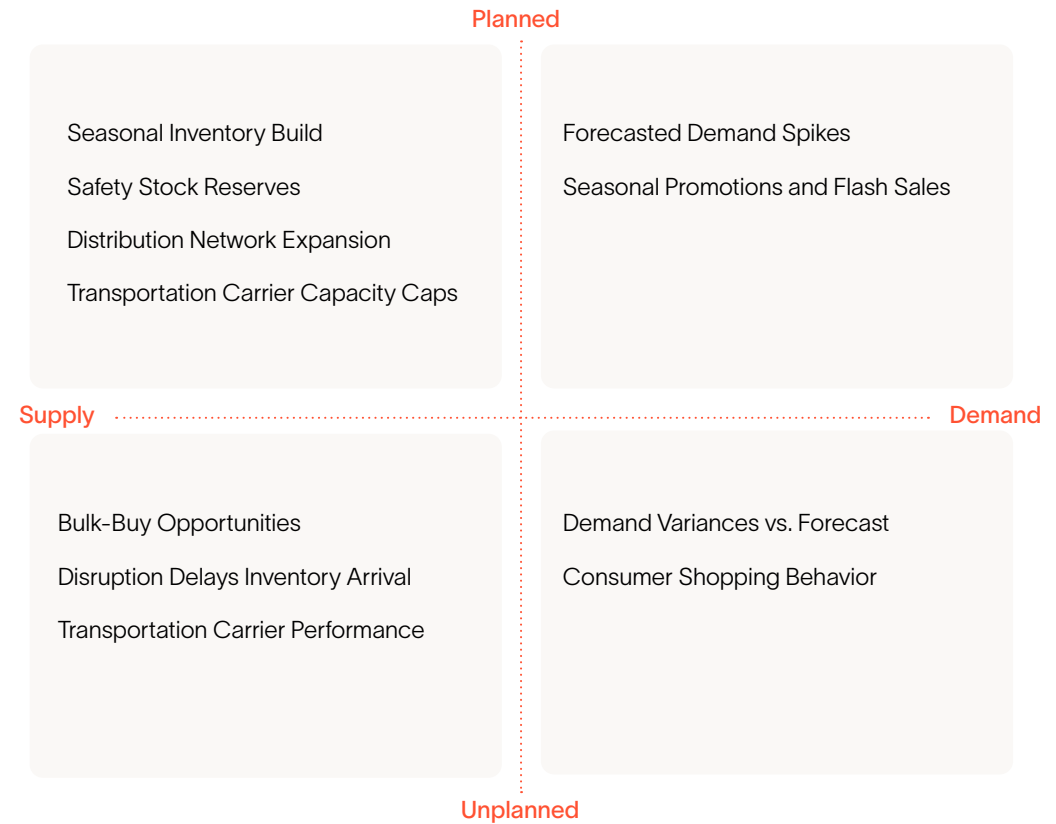
Rethink logistics strategies

Even in optimal economic and market conditions, retailers and brands face planned and unplanned peak challenges. These exist across the supply chain, affect customer experiences and limit revenue.

Repeatable, predictable and generally manageable planned challenges include pre-peak inventory builds, demand spikes and network capacity constraints. These challenges create risk, but there are accepted principles to manage them.

Unplanned challenges are largely outside logistics leaders' control—parcel carrier strike, consumer behavior changes or inventory in the wrong place at the wrong time.

- + U.S. Inflation rose to 4.2% in May 2026, its highest level since April 2023, driven by an energy shock stemming from the Iran conflict. Elevated and accelerating inflation increases the risk of demand forecast variance heading into peak season.³
- + Consumer sentiment ticked up in early June 2026 after hitting an all-time low of 44.8 in May, but remains 19% below a year ago. Consumers continue to cite inflation and energy costs as top concerns, creating meaningful uncertainty for peak season and demand forecasts.⁴
- + Flexe analysts describe current U.S. warehousing conditions as "Warehousing Stagflation", where vacancy rates have grown for 16 consecutive quarters while lease rates have grown 25% in the same period. Rising vacancy alongside rising costs make securing flexible peak capacity more critical than ever.⁵



step three

Create an adaptable peak season plan

Peak season perpetually stresses logistics leaders. But brands and retailers continue to improve peak season plans. The following timeline and checklist illustrate how to craft and adopt a peak season strategy when specific challenges hit.

Q1: Analyze	Q2: Align	Q3: Assess	Q4: Action
<p>Review peak season performance across supply, demand, planned and unplanned quadrants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What went well? What should the business continue?2. What didn't go well? Where can the business make trade-offs to improve performance?3. Where are direct improvements to make?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Align internal teams.2. Identify scenarios and create plans to address them.3. Put necessary executional foundation in place (tools, systems, processes, partnerships, etc.) then implement and test.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Re-assess business, market and customer context.2. Identify new opportunities.3. Identify potential threats.4. Prioritize 'must dos' and identify trade-offs.5. Identify which actions to take as peak scenarios unfold.	<p>October 31st: Halloween kicks off holiday peak season</p> <p>November 27th: Black Friday</p> <p>November 30th: Cyber Monday</p> <p>December 25th: Christmas Day</p> <p>December 25th-January: Post peak promotions and reverse logistics peak season</p> <p>(and the cycle repeats)</p>

step four

Offset peak season challenges with Flexible Warehousing

While peak season generally means high overall volume, intermittent demand implies unpredictable spikes and lulls for specific products, making it incredibly difficult to optimize operations. Flexible warehousing, using fractionalized warehouse space and [transactional pricing](#), provides [on-demand access to storage space](#) and logistical services, allowing businesses to scale their operations precisely to meet fluctuating demand. Here's how flexible warehousing directly addresses the challenges of peak season:

- + Forward Deploying Inventory for Seamless Replenishment
 - ✓ Benefits: Strategic placement, faster fulfillment and reduced transportation costs.
- + Building Resilient Safety Stock and Seasonal Buffer
 - ✓ Benefits: Buffering against uncertainty, 'just-in-case' inventory and seasonal builds.
- + Optimizing Distribution into Owned or 3PL Networks
 - ✓ Benefits: Overflow and surge capacity, optimizing 3PL relationships and consolidation and cross-docking.



Peak season logistics checklist

Here is a granular look at how businesses can prepare for peak season in 2025:

Supply

- Do Once**
- Work with parcel carriers to align forecasts/determine caps
 - Add additional carriers if demand forecasts exceed parcel caps
 - Determine how to fast-track distribution networks if stockouts arise
 - Work with warehouse providers to align forecasts with space/labor
 - Secure additional warehouse and transportation capacity if needed

- Continuously Monitor**
- Determine high priority SKUs for in-stock promotion and prioritization
 - Place SKUs strategically for fast replenishment

Demand

- Warehouse, transportation, labor capacity
 - Inventory arrival and availability across the network
 - Sell-through and in-stock rates of high priority SKUs
 - Supply chain bottlenecks
 - Bulk-buy opportunities
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- Inventory location and proximity to demand channels
 - Trends that affect sell-through and in-stock rates
 - Macroeconomic conditions

Sources

1. "The 2022 e2open Forecasting and Inventory Benchmark Study", <https://www.e2open.com>, e2Open, Jan. 2022 2. When forecasts fail: The high cost of inaccurate forecasting <https://www.anaplan.com/blog/high-cost-of-inaccurate-forecasting/> January 2025 3. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index May 2026 — <https://www.bls.gov/cpi> 4. University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers, June 2026 — <https://www.sca.isr.umich.edu> 5. Flexe Market Insights Q1 2026 <https://discover.flexe.com/market-insights/report>

About Flexe

Flexe is the pioneer of **Flexible Warehousing Infrastructure**, providing the data intelligence and network scale enterprises need to transform fixed real estate liabilities into variable, strategic assets. Through its proprietary **Spot Warehousing Index** and the **Flexe Discover** platform, Flexe provides a centralized gateway to 800+ warehouse operators and 3,000+ locations across the U.S. and Canada.

Founded in 2013 and headquartered in Seattle, Flexe combines deep logistics expertise with enterprise-grade technology to deliver inventory storage and distribution solutions to Fortune 500 enterprises.

Learn more at www.flexe.com

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