

First-Attempt Delivery Success in 2026

A 40-Point Operational Checklist for Retailers

INTRODUCTION

Use this checklist to strengthen first-attempt delivery success across your operations. Each item reflects common delivery challenges identified in operational reviews and highlights what organizations should have consistently in place to reduce missed deliveries.

Failed first attempts can increase delivery costs by 15–30% due to reattempts and reverse logistics, while driving higher 'Where Is My Order?' (WISMO) inquiries, support costs, and customer dissatisfaction. Over time, these failures lower Net Promoter Score (NPS) and increase churn, making first-attempt success critical to both cost control and retention.

This checklist is designed for use in operational reviews or as a standard performance tool to identify opportunities, prioritize improvements, and strengthen first-attempt delivery success.

Why first-attempt success matters

- Failed first attempts to increase direct costs (reattempts, reverse logistics) and indirect costs (support/WISMO, credits, churn).
- Delivery misses damage customer experience, reduces NPS, and impact repeat purchase.
- Operationally, failures create rework (re-sorts, re-labels), capacity drag, and higher exception volume.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

- Review each item and check if it is consistently in place and functioning effectively.
- Use during weekly or monthly operational reviews.
- Focus first on recurring failure drivers (address, access, timing, visibility gaps).
- Use alongside performance data to guide continuous improvement.

PRE-DELIVERY PLANNING (8 CHECKS)

Ensure delivery success before fulfillment begins.



Customer address data is validated at the point of order capture (format, completeness, deliverability)

Delivery instructions are captured at order (access, drop preferences, restrictions)

Delivery promises are achievable based on capacity, geography, and cut-off times

Inventory availability is accurate at the time of order confirmation

Order data (SKU, dimensions, weight) is complete and consistent before label creation

Service coverage and delivery zones are documented and reviewed regularly

Order cut-off times are enforced across all order channels

Customer contact data supports real-time delivery communication (email/phone verified)

WAREHOUSE & INDUCTION EXCELLENCE (8 CHECKS)

Help reduce errors before parcels enter the network.



Orders are picked and packed accurately (no SKU, quantity, or variant errors)

Shipping labels match order data and are applied correctly (placement, orientation)

Packaging is appropriate for shipment size, fragility, and transit handling

Parcels are inducted with confirmed scan events before leaving the facility

Sortation processes minimize misroutes and handling errors

Handoffs to delivery partners are time-stamped and auditable

Daily shipment volumes are forecasted and communicated in advance

Orders with issues are identified and resolved before dispatch

MIDDLE MILE OPTIMIZATION (6 CHECKS)

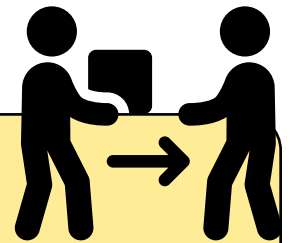
Maintain visibility and reliability across transit.



- Shipments are tracked at key transit milestones (departure, arrival, transfer)
- Transit delays are identified early and escalated appropriately
- Network nodes maintain high scan accuracy and low dwell time
- Handoff timing and routing plans prevent late injections against promised timelines
- Capacity plans account for peak periods and volume variability
- Performance data (delays, scan gaps, dwell time) is reviewed with actions tracked

LAST-MILE DELIVERY EXCELLENCE (10 CHECKS)

Strengthen performance during a critical stage of delivery.



- Delivery requirements (instructions, location constraints) are passed accurately to partners
- Route planning and sequencing support delivery timelines and geographic efficiency
- Proof of delivery (photo, timestamp, or signature) is consistently captured
- Deliveries occur within the communicated delivery window
- Location-specific challenges (e.g., apartments, gated access) are accounted for in processes
- Failure reasons are recorded using standardized, actionable categories
- First-attempt success rate is actively monitored by lane, region, or service level
- Reattempts are treated as exceptions, not standard practice
- Route- or region-level performance is reviewed to identify systemic issues
- Coverage and service days align with customer expectations and stated promises

CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION & CX (4 CHECKS)

Reduce WISMO inquiries and help prevent avoidable delivery issues.



Customers receive proactive updates
(confirmation, out-for-delivery, delivered)

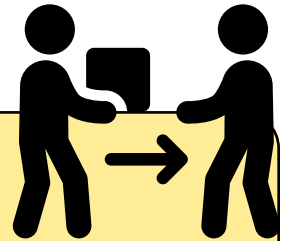
Delivery ETAs are dynamic and reflect real-time conditions

Tracking is accessible through a clear, self-serve experience

Clear options are provided for missed deliveries or delivery changes

EXCEPTION PREVENTION & RECOVERY (4 CHECKS)

Reduce repeat issues and resolve exceptions quickly when they occur.



Failed delivery reasons are tracked and analyzed for root cause

Recurring issues (address, access, timing) are systematically reduced

Exception workflows trigger timely resolution
(retry, reroute, customer contact)

Support teams have full visibility into delivery status and history

DELIVERY PARTNER EVALUATION FRAMEWORK (SCORECARD)

Use this scorecard to compare delivery partners against consistent operational criteria. It is based on the same performance standards used in PPS delivery audits, emphasizing measurable evidence such as scan compliance, failure reason codes, root-cause trends, and corrective action tracking.



First-attempt delivery success rate meets defined benchmarks

0 1 2 3 4 5



On-time delivery performance is consistent and measurable

0 1 2 3 4 5



Tracking and scan compliance meet visibility requirements

0 1 2 3 4 5



Exception rates and failure reasons are transparent and standardized

0 1 2 3 4 5



Customer impact metrics (WISMO, complaints, NPS drivers) are monitored

0 1 2 3 4 5



Reporting cadence supports performance reviews and corrective actions

0 1 2 3 4 5

Ready to improve your delivery performance?

Identify gaps and reduce missed deliveries with a structured audit.