Zebra
Workcloud
Inventory Ordering™

Make Smart Inventory Decisions

Pinpointing On-Shelf Availability to Empower Successful Direct Store Delivery Teams

Despite the post-pandemic shift from "just-in-time" to "resilient" supply chain management, companies still struggle with unexpected interruptions in the supply chain and volatility in consumer demand that can lead to inventory shortages and the inability to fulfill orders on time and in full (OTIF). In addition, consumers are especially hard to satisfy when it comes to products they buy repeatedly and consider substitutable. To ensure customer satisfaction, Consumer Products (CP) and Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) companies—especially providers of perishable foods and other time-sensitive goods—have embraced DSD (direct-to-store) business models that take an end-to-end approach to achieving customer loyalty by assuming full responsibility for product availability all the way to the retail shelf.

The benefits of this model lie in ultimate control over the right SKUs appearing on the right store shelves at the right time, but with that comes the responsibility of coordinating a large network of store delivery teams with up to tens of thousands of routes. Consumer products companies also need to win the business trust of retail customers who may have conflicting shelf-stocking obligations to other CP and CPG competitors with substitutable product. And in the case of perishable products with limited shelf-life, the imperative to minimize waste makes this model especially valuable but challenging. A first-come/first-serve approach benefits partners who come first but may not be what is best for the business overall, and typical spreadsheet-based tools are too time-consuming and inflexible to deliver timely order adjustments.

To succeed in today's dynamic shifting markets, consumer packaged goods and consumer products companies need to maximize their market position by prioritizing, promising, and placing their inventory across orders for all sales channels, including direct store delivery. Accurately forecasting the perfect order for each product location and then successfully coordinating the execution of each order between planners and route managers, at scale, is the ultimate goal.

Zebra Workcloud Inventory Ordering Solution

The Inventory Ordering Module, composed of Order Promising and Predictive Ordering is an orchestrated inventory ordering solution that achieves greater precision for on time fulfillment, reduction of out-of-stocks, and alignment to consumer demand for your allocated shelf space. With Zebra Workcloud Inventory Ordering, Planners can drive perfect orders aligned with best-in-class forecasting to reduce lost sales, returns and waste, and front-line sales staff can benefit from an efficient ordering experience to stay ahead of industry trends.

Workcloud Order Promising—Delivering the Added Precision of AI to Available-to-Promise

AI-infused Order Promising is the evolution in the machine learning world of what is known today as Available to Promise (ATP). It uses a combination of demand sensing, to anticipate the near-term demand from each retailer's ship-to location, and AI/ML modeling, that incorporates retail customer attributes, including service level targets, profitability, volume growth, and potential OTIF fines.

These attributes define the significance of each retailer partner, providing the ability to optimize for two key outcomes:

1. Allocated Inventory—determining what is the ideal fixed quantity that should be apportioned to customers based on the segmentation strategy in times of a SKUs scarcity.

2. Unallocated Inventory—at those times when supply and demand vary to such a degree that it creates an inability to fulfill all quantities requested across the firm orders for that SKU.

Zebra Workcloud Order Promising enables a streamlined handling of order fulfillment adjustments for complex supply chain situations. The solution also builds a direct bridge between strategic segments, business goals, and day-to-day execution, and can adapt immediately when those strategic goals change.

Using data and models to help make sense of short-term demand volatility, Order Promising helps planners react quickly by automating the prioritization of order fulfillment. The net result is better management of on-hand and inbound supply in a way that respects the customer segmentation strategy that best achieves your business KPIs.

Zebra Workcloud Predictive Ordering—Providing Optimal Order Recommendations to the DSD Frontline

Zebra Workcloud's direct-store-delivery (DSD) Predictive Ordering module ensures that your sales team and route operators meet consumer needs every time. The module recommends orders considering base and promotional demand and all operational constraints, including case rounding, availability days, service days, and display builds. As part of its process, the module leverages current orders, shipments, inventory, and promotion plans while providing key metrics to maximize sales and revenue. Deployed on a laptop or tablet, route operators, DSD planners, and sales center managers can adopt the recommended orders and quickly to see improved performance and return on investment.

Replacing an antiquated ATP in order to ensure an optimized allocation of inventory

One multibillion-dollar producer of baked goods with more than 20,000 associates distributing products through 11,000 routes, wanted to improve order accuracy to minimize waste—without losing sales from understocking—and empower front-line teams with greater visibility to real-time data.

In addition to forecasting challenges, the company recognized that major organizational obstacles stood in its way. It wanted to better coordinate a dozen fragmented regional bakeries and better connect with shoppers who expected the last two slices of their weekly loaf of bread to be as fresh as the first. They also sought to modernize their outdated operations using desktop calculators and manual spreadsheets and empower the company's front-line workforce with tools to maintain the highest quality from the production line through store delivery

Partnering with Zebra, the company deployed Workcloud Predictive Ordering, across the US and Canada. To improve forecasting, Zebra Workcloud applied a rigorous AI workflow to identify demand drivers and their impact, test for the hierarchy level that would drive the highest forecast accuracy and finally leverage machine learning to break down the forecast to the appropriate consumption level for ordering purposes. Zebra Workcloud's forecasting methodology considered more inputs—many captured directly from retailers and route drivers—and went beyond historically-driven base and promotion demand to include real- or near-real-time inputs, including weather, local events, store stocking constraints and actual point of sale (POS) data.

After a short deployment, each route salesperson began to receive daily, optimized orders on their handheld device. Within three months, the company experienced a significant reduction in stock-outs and wastage, adding crucial revenue and margin to their bottom line.

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4-5%
improvement in case fill rate for strategic customers

10X
increase in ROI from revenue maximized and fines avoided.

20-30%
reduction in forecast error

3%
increased revenue from reducing lost sales and stock outs

2-3%
returns reduction from wastage

The Benefits of Zebra Workcloud's Feature-Rich Solution

Strategic Order Placement—Segmentation of case fill is strategic, instead of first-come first-serve, with order execution driven by strategic priority (e.g., customer tier, due date, revenue, margin, service level, etc.) and enabled by a Dynamic Reserve. Optimal inventory assignment is achieved by considering both on-hand and in-transit inventory and planned production.

Improved On-shelf Availability and Reduced Waste—Leveraging the sophistication of AI modeling, forecast accuracy is enhanced by consideration of real-world constraints and rules resulting in fine-tuned replenishment orders down to the level of Store/SKU/Day.

Time-saving Productivity—Order processing is fully automated, replacing a manual, high-touch process. Easy-to-manage promising strategies help achieve OTIF targets and complex business outcomes are possible with simple configuration. Execution is streamlined thanks to up-front rules and a consistent process to manage exceptions, resulting in fewer expedites.

Consistency and Collaboration—Decision criteria are standardized and visible, replacing a sometimes siloed and inconsistent approach across the network. Customer Service strategy is considered upfront in the analysis, instead of an afterthought.

Responsiveness—Fulfillment guidance is responsive to business dynamics, instead of reacting with a lag. An intuitive user-interface, running in the cloud, facilitates the steps to review and refine system-generated order promises.

Accelerated Planning and Communication—A behavioral science-based user interface facilitates timely ordering by frontline sales staff and increases route driver efficiency.

Reliable for the Entire DSD Team—Built on time-tested Cloud-native SaaS technology infrastructure, the solution is scalable to 10,000+ parallel users.

Unified Demand Signal—Providing control for the differences between regions, stores, online, and even the fulfillment model, Workcloud Inventory Ordering serves as the connective tissue across financial, fill rate and customer-relationship-driven decision.

Support and Training—Accelerate uptake and results with 24/7 support and 40 hours of training and onboarding.

"Zebra Workcloud responded to our need for the "perfect order" with a solution that improved forecasting and delivered more accurate orders—in a user interface that enabled easier collaboration between our planners and route operators. Today, we depend on their solution for our entire 12,000 routes."

Morgan Smith,
VP, DSD Center of Excellence at Bimbo

Our Solutions are Built Upon Zebra Workcloud's World-class AI Demand Forecasting

Unified Demand Signal

Adjust for the differences between regions, stores, online, and even the fulfillment type, and serve as the connective tissue across financial, assortment, allocation, size, and pricing decisions.

Dynamic Forecasting Libraries

An analytic methodology to address data sparsity, avoid the impact of fringe sizes, handle new items, and protect unit minimums.

Omnichannel Profiling

Delivering demand profiles that consider store and online sales, predicting down to SKU and location.

Seamless Integration

Delivers pricing and forecasting results through simplified solution integration, feeding either Zebra Workcloud Inventory Optimization Suite or existing ERP solutions.

Scalable Data

AI models capable of digesting data that accounts for every demand driver—including seasonality, price, product lifecycle, trends, and local events.

Cloud Native

Built natively in the cloud with scalable distributed processing.

Contact your Zebra Partner or visit **zebra.com/contact** to request a meeting with our sales team to learn more about Zebra Workcloud Inventory Ordering