Fulfillment:
Growing your business with flexible logistics solutions

Whitepaper of IBS Logistics GmbH & Co. KG

Heek 2026
IBS Logistics GmbH & Co. KG
ibs-logistics.de

This whitepaper combines extensive research, expert insights, and years of practical experience from real-world logistics projects. It provides valuable guidance and actionable recommendations for optimizing logistics processes..

Foreword

As an owner-managed logistics service provider, we support our customers throughout the entire fulfillment process – from inbound goods receipt and order processing to returns management.

With many years of experience, our own warehouse and staffing resources, as well as extensive expertise in customs clearance and cross-border logistics, we develop reliable and scalable solutions tailored to individual requirements.

This whitepaper explores what modern fulfillment needs to deliver, how you can make your logistics future-ready – whether you manage operations in-house or work with an external partner – and when outsourcing becomes a valuable strategic decision.

We hope you enjoy reading.

Marko Maat, Geschäftsführer IBS Logistics

1.Five Key Success Factors for Effective Fulfillment

1. Why Fulfillment Has Become a Key Driver of Growth
2. Integrated Processes Instead of Standalone Solutions
3. Common Mistakes When Choosing a Fulfillment Partner
4. Checklist: Does Your Fulfillment Still Fit Your Business?
5. Conclusion: Fulfillment as a Competitive Advantage

1. Scalable Warehouse and Space Concepts

More growth does not automatically mean the need for more warehouse space. Additional storage capacity that remains unused during normal operations creates unnecessary costs.

The strategic approach is to first maximize existing capacity through optimized warehouse strategies, zone concepts, and dynamic space allocation.
Only when these opportunities have been fully utilized should expanding warehouse capacity become the next step.

Modern fulfillment structures provide both: stability in day-to-day operations and the flexibility to handle peak periods – proactively and predictably rather than reactively when capacity becomes limited.

Do I need additional warehouse space, to support growth?

Not necessarily. If growth is temporary and driven by seasonal peaks or other periods of increased demand, permanently expanding warehouse space can result in unnecessary costs. What businesses need are scalable warehouse solutions that can flexibly adapt to current requirements while efficiently handling increasing volumes.

1.1 Strategic Workforce Planning

In addition to warehouse space, workforce capacity is one of the most important factors for successful scaling.
Companies that need to quickly expand their teams during peak periods require flexible shift models, clearly documented processes, and experienced core teams that can efficiently train and integrate new employees.
Clearly defined KPIs for each process area ensure that quality standards and processing times remain stable even as volumes increase.

1.2 IT & System Integration

A powerful Warehouse Management System (WMS) with interfaces to ERP systems, e-commerce platforms, and marketplaces creates real-time transparency across inventory levels, orders, and shipment volumes.
This increases process efficiency, reduces errors, and enables proactive operational management.

What Modern Fulfillment Requires from an IT Perspective:
Modern fulfillment depends on integrated ERP, PIM, and WMS systems with seamless communication between e-commerce platforms, marketplaces, and shipping providers.
The key is not the individual solution, but how effectively all systems

2. Integrated Processes Instead of Standalone Solutions

Inbound, storage, picking, packing, shipping, and returns must work as one integrated system. Optimizing individual steps alone only shifts bottlenecks. Only aligned processes create reliable KPIs, shorter processing times, and controlled costs – even with increasing volumes.

What challenges arise with cross-border shipping?
When entering international markets, companies face new regulatory requirements, customs and tax regulations, as well as additional documentation obligations

2.1. International & Customs Expertise

International growth brings additional complexity: country-specific delivery requirements, customs and tax regulations, documentation requirements, and transportation processes.
Strategically positioned warehouse locations or nearshoring models can create additional competitive advantages.

3. Common Mistakes When Choosing a Fulfillment Partner

Choosing a fulfillment partner has a long-term impact on growth, service quality, and customer satisfaction. The following mistakes occur most frequently:

Prioritizing Price Over Process Quality

Low-cost offers can often hide inefficient processes and limited flexibility. .

Lack of a Scaling Strategy

Scalability should be part of the planning from the beginning – not only addressed once capacity bottlenecks have already occurred.

Viewing Fulfillment as Pure Outsourcing

Transparent KPIs, regular communication, and joint process development are essential for sustainable success.

Lack of Experience with Complex Product Structures

Without the right experience, companies risk picking errors, unclear inventory structures, and increased coordination efforts.

4.How well is your fulfillment set up?

Your fulfillment needs to grow with your business. Increasing order volumes, new products or changing requirements can quickly push existing processes to their limits.

The more questions you can answer with "*Yes*", the more reason there is to take a critical look at your current solutions!

Capacity & Growth
□ Promotions, seasonal peaks or growth regularly lead to capacity bottlenecks.
□ As order volumes increase, error rates or delivery times also increase.
□ Logistics constraints delay market entries or product launches.
Processes & Resources
□ Operational fulfillment tasks such as packaging or shipping regularly tie up internal resources.
□ Many fulfillment processes are manual and create additional workload.
□ There is a lack of transparency regarding costs, processes and potential areas for optimization.
Systems & Transparency
□ There is no clear real-time overview of inventory and orders.
□ ERP, shop system and fulfillment are only partially integrated or are still connected manually.
□ Clear KPIs for assessing logistics performance and optimizing it in a targeted way are missing.
Service & International Requirements
□ Customers do not always receive reliable information about delivery status and delivery times.
□ Customs and export processes create additional workload.

Your Evaluation

Every "Yes" indicates: There is potential for optimization in your fulfillment. Use these insights to make processes more efficient, deploy resources more effectively and prepare your logistics for further growth. With the right structures and an experienced fulfillment partner, you can optimize workflows, manage costs more effectively and focus more strongly on your core business.

What your result means

Not every box you tick automatically means that you need to fundamentally change your fulfillment setup.
What matters more is where bottlenecks occur, how often they arise and whether your current structures can grow with your business.

0–2 statements

Good foundation: take a closer look at individual areas
Your fulfillment structures appear fundamentally stable. Individual points may nevertheless indicate that processes could be made more efficient or better prepared for future growth.

What you should pay attention to:
Keep a close eye on the areas you ticked. If isolated exceptions turn into recurring problems, it is worth optimizing early before they develop into genuine bottlenecks

3–5 statements

Initial bottlenecks are becoming visible
Several areas of your fulfillment are already requiring additional resources or making workflows more difficult. This does not necessarily represent a major problem at present. However, as order volumes increase, new products are introduced or additional markets are added, these points may become increasingly relevant.

What you should pay attention to:
Check which of the topics you marked are connected. Manual processes, a lack of transparency and rising error rates, for example, are often not isolated proble ms.

6–8 statements

Significant potential for optimization
Your answers suggest that existing fulfillment structures are reaching their limits in several areas. This can slow growth, tie up internal resources and cause operational logistics issues to demand increasing attention.

Now it is worth taking a closer look:
Which tasks genuinely belong to your core business? Which processes can be automated? And which structures do you need so that higher volumes do not automatically mean more effort?

9–11 statements

Your fulfillment structure should be reviewed as a whole
Many of the typical bottlenecks are already occurring in your business. This does not automatically mean that outsourcing is the right solution. However, it does indicate that you should systematically review your current processes, systems, capacities and responsibilities.

The key question now is:
Is your current fulfillment structure designed to reliably support your planned growth in the future?

Where is your greatest potential for optimization?

Do not look only at the total score. The number of statements you ticked provides an initial indication. Even more revealing, however, is the area in which your answers are concentrated. Take another look at your answers on page 1 .

1. Capacity & Growth

Several boxes ticked in this area?
Then the challenge may lie less in your current day-to-day operations and more in the scalability of your structures. Seasonal peaks, rising order volumes or new products should not create additional bottlenecks every time.

Check:

- Can capacity be adjusted at short notice to accommodate increasing volumes?
- Do delivery times and quality remain stable even during peaks?
- Can new products or markets be introduced without logistics becoming a bottleneck?

Your lever: scalable warehousing and process structures.

2. Processes & Resources

Several boxes ticked in this area?
Then your fulfillment may be tying up more internal capacity than you realize. Manual workflows in particular can work at low volumes, but as the business grows they increasingly require time and staff.

Check:

- Which operational tasks regularly tie up internal employees?
- Which processes are repetitive and could be standardized?
- Are costs and the actual use of resources transparent?

Your lever: standardized workflows and more targeted use of internal resources.

3. Systems & Transparency

Several boxes ticked in this area?
Then you may be missing the technical foundation needed to manage your fulfillment efficiently. Inventory, orders and performance metrics should not have to be gathered from different systems or transferred manually.

Check:

- Are ERP, shop system and fulfillment connected?
- Do you have an up-to-date overview of inventory and orders at all times?
- Can you use clear KPIs to identify where processes are working well and where they are not?

Your lever: integrated systems, automation and reliable data.

4. Service & International Requirements

Several boxes ticked in this area?
As complexity increases, so do the demands on your fulfillment. Delivery information, customs, exports and different markets require processes that work reliably without creating additional manual effort for every order.

Check:

- Do your customers receive reliable information about their deliveries?
- Are international shipping and customs processes clearly defined?
- Can additional markets be served without operational complexity increasing disproportionately?

Your lever: clearly defined processes and experience with more complex shipping requirements.

What happens next?

Growth needs fulfillment that keeps pace

Perhaps while completing the checklist you found that your structures are already working well. Or perhaps you identified areas that repeatedly cost time in day-to-day operations, make growth more difficult or increasingly tie up internal resources.

Not every company needs the same fulfillment solution.

Key factors include your product range, order volumes, seasonal fluctuations, sales channels, system landscape and the markets you ship to.

That is why IBS Logistics develops fulfillment solutions tailored to the actual requirements of your business.
From warehousing and picking to packaging and shipping, through to the integration of existing systems and international logistics processes.

Would you like to know what your results specifically mean for your business?

Then let's take a look together at your current fulfillment structure and identify where processes can be optimized effectively.

Any questions? We're here for you.

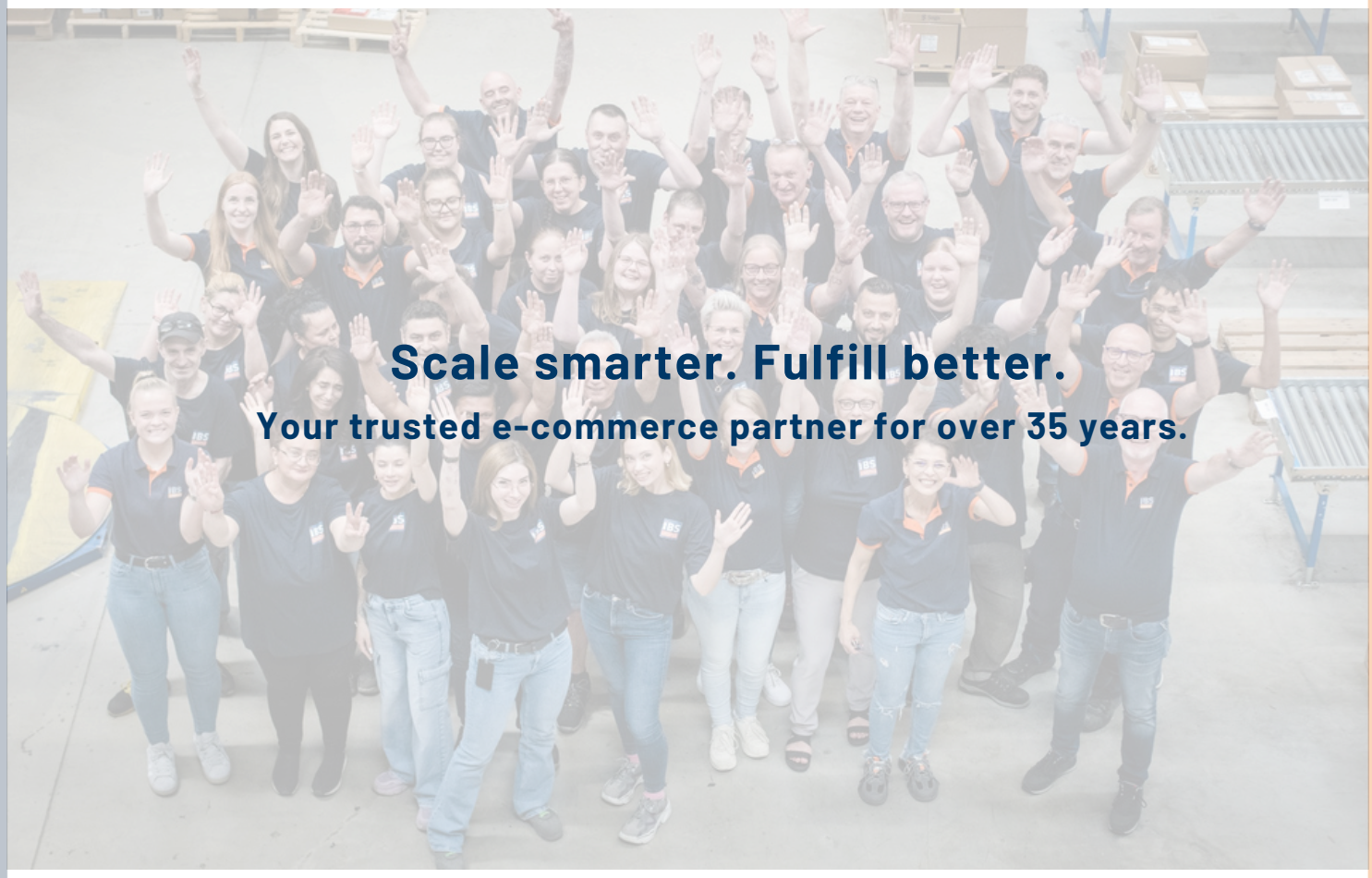
IBS Logistics GmbH & Co. KG · Benzstraße 21 · 48619 Heek
Ansprechpartner: Marko Maat (CEO, IBS Logistics)
ibs-logistics.de

5. Conclusion: Fulfillment as a Key Competitive Advantage

In the fast-paced, international e-commerce environment, fulfillment is a critical factor that influences growth and customer loyalty. A well-planned, scalable fulfillment strategy creates flexibility, increases efficiency, and helps prevent bottlenecks.

However, fulfillment requirements are as individual as the business models themselves. Different markets, sales channels, order volumes, and product complexities demonstrate that:

Standardized fulfillment is rarely a sufficient solution anymore. Tailored approaches that grow alongside the business are what companies need. At IBS Logistics, we develop exactly these solutions – customized, scalable, and comprehensive, supported by our extensive expertise.



IBS Logistics GmbH & Co. KG
Benzstraße 21 · 48619 Heek
Contact: Marko Maat
ibs-logistics.de

FAQs: Your Questions – Our Answers

Introduction & Guidance

Q: When does outsourcing fulfillment to an external service provider make sense?
Outsourcing fulfillment makes sense when internal fulfillment operations consume more resources than they create. Typical indicators are: you or your team spend most of your time on operational logistics tasks instead of focusing on your core business. Error rates increase, delivery times become unreliable, or growth is limited because your warehouse, staff, and processes can no longer keep up.
An external partner provides more than just additional capacity. They bring structure, technology, and expertise to your operations – allowing you to focus again on the areas that truly drive your business forward.

Q: What is the difference between fulfillment and traditional warehousing?
Traditional warehousing usually ends with storing and retrieving goods. Fulfillment covers the entire process chain: from receiving an order in your online shop to picking, packing, shipping, returns management, and customer service.
It is not just about storing products – it is about ensuring that orders reach your customers reliably and efficiently, with seamless integration into your e-commerce systems

Q: How long does it take to set up a new fulfillment solution?
The timeline mainly depends on the complexity of the IT integration and the size of the product range. Simple setups with standardized interfaces can go live within a few weeks.
More complex requirements – such as multiple sales channels, customized packaging solutions, or international shipping processes – typically require two to three months for a smooth implementation. The key is to use this time effectively: for test runs, data checks, and process alignment to ensure a seamless go-live.

Scaling&Growth

FQ: How does fulfillment work with highly fluctuating order volumes?
Fluctuating order volumes are one of the key challenges in fulfillment – which is why they should be considered from the very beginning. A well-designed fulfillment setup distinguishes between long-term growth and temporary increases in demand, for example due to campaigns or market launches, and responds flexibly to both scenarios.
This is achieved through scalable warehouse concepts, flexible staffing models, and clearly documented processes that remain stable even during short-term volume peaks. One factor is crucial: volume changes need to be communicated early. Only with sufficient notice can capacities be adjusted and bottlenecks avoided.

Q: Can small businesses also benefit from working with a fulfillment provider?
Yes – and often they benefit the most. For smaller companies in particular, outsourcing fulfillment can be a strategic advantage: it provides access to professional warehouse infrastructure, established carrier conditions, and proven processes without requiring major investments in space, employees, or technology.
This creates valuable flexibility and enables growth that would often be difficult to manage internally.

FAQs

Q:Whathappens ifmy companygrows quickly – can the fulfillment setup keep up?
That dependson how the fulfillment operation was designed from the beginning. Companies that make scalability a core part of their fulfillment strategy are well prepared for growth.
In practice, this means flexible warehouse capacities that can be expanded when needed, processes that remain reliable even with increasing order volumes, and IT integrations that allow new sales channels or markets to be added quickly.
At IBS Logistics, scalability is not an add-on – it is a fundamental principle. We develop fulfillment solutions that grow alongside your business.

IT & Integration

Q: Which online shop systems and marketplaces can be connected?
Modern fulfillment setups support common e-commerce platforms such as Shopify, WooCommerce, Shopware, and Magento, as well as marketplaces like Amazon, Otto, and Zalando. In addition, customized API integrations are possible, for example with ERP systems or PIM solutions.
The specific interfaces required are determined during the initial requirements analysis – ensuring that the integration is set up correctly and completely from the start.

Q: How long does a technical integration usually take?
Standardized interfaces for common shop systems are typically ready within a few days to two weeks.Customized integrations or more complex system environments require additional preparation time – in these cases, four to eight weeks should generally be planned.
A thorough testing phase before going live is essential to identify and resolve data errors or transmission issues at an early stage.

Q: What happens to my inventory data when switching to a new fulfillment provider?
Switching providers is always a sensitive phase – especially when it comes to inventory data. A reliable partner manages the transition in a structured way: with accurate inventory checks, a coordinated migration plan, and a transition phase where old and new systems are carefully transferred. The goal is a seamless changeover without order interruptions or data loss. We recommend planning the switch outside peak sales periods and allowing sufficient preparation time.

FAQs

International Operations &

Q: Whichcountriescan be supplied?
In principle,worldwide shipping ispossible – from EU countries and the European Economic Area to third countries outside the EU.
Depending on the destination market, different requirements apply regarding documentation, customs procedures, and delivery conditions. Which carriers and shipping routes offer the best combination of speed, reliability, and cost efficiency for your specific market is determined together during the fulfillment planning process.

Q: How are customs procedures and documentation requirements handled?
International fulfillment does not end with shipping. Companies delivering across borders must ensure correct customs declarations, comply with country-specific documentation requirements, and consider tax regulations in the destination country.
At IBS Logistics, we have extensive expertise in customs clearance and manage the entire process – from the correct classification of goods and customs codes to the preparation of all required shipping documents.
This helps prevent delays at borders and ensures reliable delivery of shipments.

Q: What should I consider when shipping to non-EU countries?
Shipments to third countries – meaning countries outside the EU – require careful preparation.
This includes correct customs declarations, proof of origin, export documentation, and compliance with country-specific import regulations. Tax-related aspects, such as VAT or import taxes in the destination country, must also be taken into account.
Without the necessary expertise, companies risk delays, returns, or additional costs. We recommend integrating international markets into the fulfillment planning process at an early stage – not only once the first orders have already been placed.

Quality & Collaboration

Q: How transparent is communication with IBS Logistics during ongoing operations?
For us, transparency is not just a promise – it is an actively implemented principle. You have realtime access to inventory levels, orders, and shipment statuses through our WMS.
In addition, we provide regular coordination meetings, dedicated contacts, and structured reporting – ensuring that you always know what is happening in your logistics operations without having to manage day-to-day processes yourself.

FAQs

Q: Which KPIs are regularly reported?
Key performance indicators include processing times, picking accuracy, shipping speed, inventory accuracy, and return rates.
Which KPIs are most relevant for your business model is defined together at the beginning of the partnership. Reporting is structured to provide more than just a review of past performance – it also serves as a foundation for proactive decision-making.

Q: How are errors or complaints handled?
Mistakes can happen – what matters is how they are addressed. At IBS Logistics, every reported issue is systematically reviewed through clear root-cause analysis, a quick resolution for the affected order, and targeted measures to prevent recurrence.
Complaints are not viewed as disruptions, but as opportunities to improve processes. Our goal is to continuously reduce error rates – not simply manage them.

The publication of this content, or any parts thereof, is not permitted without prior approval from IBS Logistics GmbH & Co. KG.

Any questions? We are here to help.
IBS Logistics GmbH & Co. KG · Benzstraße 21 · 48619 Heek
Your contact:: Marko Maat (CEO, IBS Logistics)
ibs-logistics.de

IBS Logistics GmbH & Co. KG
Benzstraße 21
48619 Heek
Phone: 02568 / 38888-0
Fax:02568 / 38888-18
Mail: contact@ibs-logistics.de
Web:www.ibs-logistics.de

Limited Partnership: Registered office & place of jurisdiction: 48619 Heek,
Commercial Register: AG Coesfeld HRA 5312
Unlimited Partners: maat Verwaltungsges. mbH, 48619 Heek/Westf
Commercial Register: AG Coesfeld HRB 9759.
Managing Director: Marko Maat