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Your Business Your Way

Shape Smarter Distribution Decisions:

A Checklist for Distribution COOs
& Operations Leaders

Secure your long-term operations roadmap.

Disjointed Operations Are Eating into Your Margins

Smart distribution demands cross-business alignment. Nowhere is this more impactful than in today's competitive UK distribution landscape.

As competition intensifies, material costs rise, and operations grow more complex, COO's and Operations leaders in the distribution sector face an ever-increasing demand to cut costs, improve alignment, and advance productivity.

This challenge isn't unique to large enterprises or small independent distributors.
It's impacting everyone.

To stay competitive, COOs and operations leaders in the UK must focus on these five key areas:

- Smarter Inventory management
- Streamlined, end-to-end operations
- Higher-performing branches and warehouses
- Scalable systems that match demand
- Faster, more reliable fulfilment

Those that stand still risk being left behind.

Achieving these objectives builds a resilient, scalable IT infrastructure that meets your needs and defends against external threats.

87%

of COOs say they're increasing digitisation of their operations because of tariffs and are investing more in scenario planning

PwC Pulse Survey, 2025

5 Key Priorities for Forward-Thinking Distributors

And how COOs and operations leaders are making proactive improvements for success.

1

Smarter inventory management

Switching to inventory management software is driven by inefficiency (51%), limited functionality (31%), and unreliability (7%) in current methods and software

Buyer Insights for Inventory Management Software, Gartner 2024

Balancing inventory levels while minimising carrying costs and obsolescence can be a daunting task for operations leaders in distribution. The risk of overstocking or under-stocking products can impact profitability and customer satisfaction. This is made more difficult when operations teams are relying on disconnected, outdated software and processes that don't match current business demands.

Two-thirds of businesses (67%) still rely on either, or a combination of, manual methods and spreadsheets for their day-to-day inventory management operations

Buyer Insights for Inventory Management Software, Gartner 2024

Stocking the right products at the right time requires accurate and detailed insights into your customers buying behaviours and industry trends. Without this, distributors are at risk of tying much of their cash up in unwanted stock and leaving money on the table that could be utilised elsewhere.

How operations leaders are tackling inventory challenges

COOs and operations leaders are using technology to:

- Leverage real-time data for smarter forecasting

- Set alerts for low-stock popular SKUs to inform more accurate buying decisions

- Harness predictive analytics to anticipate demand across geographies and seasons

2

Streamlined, end-to-end operations

Nearly half of respondents surveyed said they had not invested in core building blocks of digital supply chain consistently across their networks

McKinsey & Co., 2023

Streamlining processes and optimising workflows is crucial for operations leaders to create an efficient and agile distribution business. Implementing simpler, more agile approaches reduces errors, accelerates progress, and enhances communication and collaboration that directly boosts the bottom line.

How operations leaders are streamlining operations at every level

COOs and operations leaders are using technology to:

- Automate repetitive and manual tasks with dedicated business management software

- Standardise workflows across the business to improve consistency and reduce inefficiencies

- Consolidate systems into one platform/provider that improves visibility and ensures data consistency across all business units

3 Higher-performing branches and warehouses

83%
of COOs say they're increasing digitisation of their operations because of tariffs and are investing more in scenario planning

PwC Pulse Survey, 2025

Legacy tech stacks and one-off solutions create friction that slows your team's efficiency. Simplifying your system architecture can boost reliability, reduce overhead, and allow IT to focus on strategic innovation instead of maintenance and firefighting.

IT leaders should prioritise a full tech stack audit; a comprehensive review that lists each component within the organisation and assesses their effectiveness, cost, and alignment with long-term business goals.

Doing so will help identify inefficient or under-utilised systems and allow leaders to make informed decisions about which assets are worth keeping, dropping, or 'sweating' to get more out of them and reduce licensing costs. This practice also helps determine any gaps in the tech stack and where to focus future investments.

How operations leaders are creating high-performing branches

COOs and operations leaders are using technology to:

- Utilise customised dashboards that provide identifiable inefficiencies that can be quickly addressed and improved across branches

- Develop multi-skilled teams that fill employee gaps across locations to account for peak periods or reduced staffing levels, keeping productivity high

- Establish standardised processes across locations to ensure consistency

4 Scalable systems that match demand

Distributors that leverage invoicing functions in their WMS are twice as likely to see medium or better profitability growth proving how essential efficient, automated billing is for financial stability and maintaining cash flow

2024 Third-Party Logistics Warehouse Benchmark Report

Limited scalability is a major challenge for operations leaders in distribution, as businesses must manage increasing sales channels, product ranges, and order volumes without compromising efficiency or service levels. Scaling often leads to higher costs and operational strain and runs the risk of tying up significant sums of capital.

To address this, companies must adopt scalable business solutions like flexible warehouse management systems, automation technologies, or flexible payment options.
Modular infrastructure and processes allow for easier expansion, while real-time data analytics supports better forecasting and planning.

Adopting an integrated portfolio of mobile apps can also aid day-to-day operations for your staff and supports a smoother experience for your customers. Having every aspect of the distribution process visible and manageable from a portable device allows operations leaders to have accurate oversight at the tip of their fingers.

How operations leaders are scaling for long-term success

COOs and operations leaders are using technology to:

- Build flexible, cloud-based software infrastructure that is infinitely scalable and supports new territories, branch locations, customer demands, products, and more

- Embrace mobile applications so software is always accessible

- Embed software across the business that supports real-time forecasting and planning

In 2024, nearly 30 percent of distribution professionals reported average order processing times of less than 30 minutes

Statista, 2024

5 Faster, more reliable fulfilment

Customer trust is built on a distributor's ability to provide the right product quickly. Fulfilling orders swiftly is paramount to keep customers returning and growing revenue. This requires operations leaders to effectively connect each business unit across online platforms, physical stores, warehouses, and delivery teams.

Inefficiencies in the picking, packing and delivery process – such as inaccurate stock information, slow workflows, and inflexible payment options – will inevitably lead to lost revenue from customer dissatisfaction.

How operations leaders are enabling consistently fast fulfilment

COOs and operations leaders are using technology to:

- Reduce delivery times and improve order accuracy with enhanced order routing and greater inventory visibility

- Adopt automated and mobile picking, packing, and labelling tools that reduce errors and labour costs

- Embrace sourcing to delivery software that tracks each touchpoint from buying stock and tracking inventory, to flexible sales options and real-time delivery oversight

The Solution to Achieve Long-Term Growth with Operational Excellence

As we've seen, reducing operating costs, building scalable infrastructure, and improving fulfilment speed, efficiency, and accuracy are key to successful operations functions in your distribution business.

You and your teams need the right tools to turn your goals into a reality.

Accelerating sales, streamlining workflows and delivery, and bringing clarity and control to complex challenges can now all be achieved through one technology partner.

That's where Klipboard comes in.

With ERP One by Klipboard, you eliminate the blind spots and manual work that slows down your operations. ERP One connects your entire operation - from inventory and purchasing to sales, finance, and reporting - into a single, unified system.

You'll move faster, reduce waste, and make confident decisions that drives your business forward.

Instead of reacting to problems, you stay ahead of them. Instead of jumping between disconnected systems, you run a unified operation, from one platform, that's built to scale with you.

Purpose-built for distributors. Join over 35,000 distribution businesses already using ERP One to turn operational complexity into scalable, long-term growth.

To summarise:

- Keep teams connected across offices, shops, and warehouses

- Get paid faster with integrated payment and billing software

- Track stock in real-time and ditch manual processes

- Centralise scheduling for full team oversight and higher productivity

- Scale with limited risk using software that grows with you

- Understand buying trends to deliver what customers want

Klipboard business solutions: connected data and secure scalable systems, all in one place.
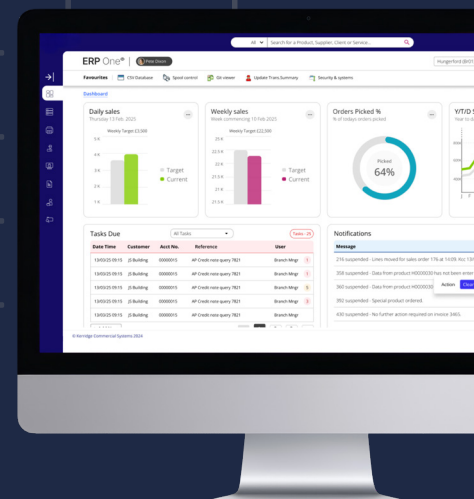
Achieve Results, From Anywhere

Klipboard's mobile app ecosystem is transforming distribution productivity where legacy systems fall short.

Our range of integrated mobile apps give you the tools to streamline every distribution workflow across your business - no matter where your teams work. From receiving goods and managing inventory to picking, tracking orders, and delivery, discover how our suite of mobile apps, purpose built for distribution workflows can empower your teams to achieve more.

Support your digital strategy

Empower your staff

Meet sales commitments

Discover powerful qutations

Digitise your delivery management

Easily analyse your finances

Optimise your warehouse management

Make rebates management simple

Automate your invoice processing

Gain efficiencies with mobile apps

Make IT the Driver of Your Business Growth, Today

Get in touch with our team to learn more or request a demo of our distribution-focused business solutions.

Talk to the team   **Request a demo**   **Explore all solutions**

About Klipboard Solutions:

Digital solutions that drive real efficiencies

Flexible supply channels are key for wholesale distribution companies to stay successful. Klipboard's range of ERP and business management solutions offer various modules designed to boost profitability and enhance customer service.

Our solution integrates and optimises production processes with industry-specific tools that boost efficiency, reduce downtime, and streamline your operation.

www.klipboard.com