

Your warehouse and the last mile:

Why warehouses are
the key to your same-
day fulfillment strategy



E-commerce was becoming more popular before COVID-19 hit. The crisis shifted that trend into overdrive, and research shows it's not expected to slow down.¹ But something else happened during the pandemic: Customers got used to fast delivery. From groceries and home improvement supplies to books and electronics, customers traded in-person store visits with virtual shopping for a wide range of purchases. With so many shoppers moving online, retailers competed for their business by improving the ordering experience – including by speeding it up. Now, customers have come to expect that they can get just about anything delivered quickly.²

To avoid leaving dollars in abandoned shopping carts, retailers and other businesses need to be ready to deliver on demand. That means it may be worth taking a second look at your warehouse. Fulfilling orders directly from the warehouse can help make ultrafast delivery a reality by skipping the lead times and scheduling associated with traditional carriers and even in-house fleets.

Direct warehouse delivery on a tight deadline used to be an exception. Same-day fulfillment would happen only a few times a year or for special orders.

Today, that need for speed is nearly universal. But there's a problem. Not every warehouse is set up to work so efficiently. Many operations lack the costly infrastructure needed to move products on demand, and traditional carriers aren't able to offer the flexibility needed.

That doesn't mean they're out of options. **With crowdsourced delivery, businesses can tap into a nationwide network of independent drivers to offer fast, efficient, affordable and scalable fulfillment when and where it is needed.**

With so much to gain from crowdsourcing in the last mile, it's critical to get implementation right. Whether your business is considering crowdsourced delivery for the first time or is already offering it, designing your program around fundamental best practices can help build long-term customer loyalty and satisfaction. Read on to learn about the advantages of crowdsourcing deliveries from the warehouse and how warehouse teams can set it up quickly, easily and effectively.



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Take these steps to deliver same-day from your DC

Although each business and warehouse is different, there are several common steps to take when adding crowdsourced delivery to your operations. Whether you're just starting out with crowdsourcing or are evaluating an ongoing partnership, it's critical for the whole team to understand crowdsourced delivery best practices and make sure they are well documented for future reference.

The first step is to set up your warehouse and processes properly. To do that, consider the following:

PHASE 1: LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Improve inventory visibility. Before you start moving products, you need to get your warehouse in order, and that includes addressing inventory. Do you have enough inventory to fill initial same-day orders? Can inventory be replenished quickly in response to demand? The promise of ultrafast delivery loses its value instantly if inventory isn't on hand. Ramp up inventory on popular stock-keeping units (SKUs) or those used to start the crowdsourced delivery program.

Make space for more orders. Everything has its place. The question is, where? Added inventory should be easy to identify, access and track. Dedicate warehouse space as a staging area for ultrafast orders. This area should be easy for your team to identify and move through.

Train employees. Train all staff to handle ultrafast fulfillment, which includes receiving the order as well as picking, preparing and staging it, and then handing it off to the delivery driver. During training and run-throughs, ask for feedback on the process and accept feedback from people at all job levels and functions. Then, document the processes for future training and as a reference for current employees.

Be accessible. With crowdsourcing, it's important to remember who is performing the delivery. Drivers will not be uniformed or driving company vehicles. They also may be unfamiliar with warehouses. Clear and specific wayfinding makes all the difference in easing order pickup. For example, is the drivers' entrance easy to find in your warehouse? Is there signage? Is the staging area obvious? Are packages physically separated? What does a driver see when they walk in the door? Look at your warehouse setup from the perspective of a driver who has never been there before. Also, include pickup instructions in the crowdsourced delivery app to help drivers get in and out as quickly as possible.



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Know your SLA. Service-level agreements (SLAs) define the terms between you and your delivery partner. When partnering with a crowdsourced delivery platform, establish clear, reasonable and achievable SLAs to ensure you deliver on your promise to customers.

Integrate with your point-of-sale and delivery systems. Plugging crowdsourced delivery into existing order and delivery management systems ensures real-time visibility. This helps avoid delays, incomplete information and missing orders.

Once your warehouse and systems are set up for crowdsourced delivery, you're ready to test out the process.

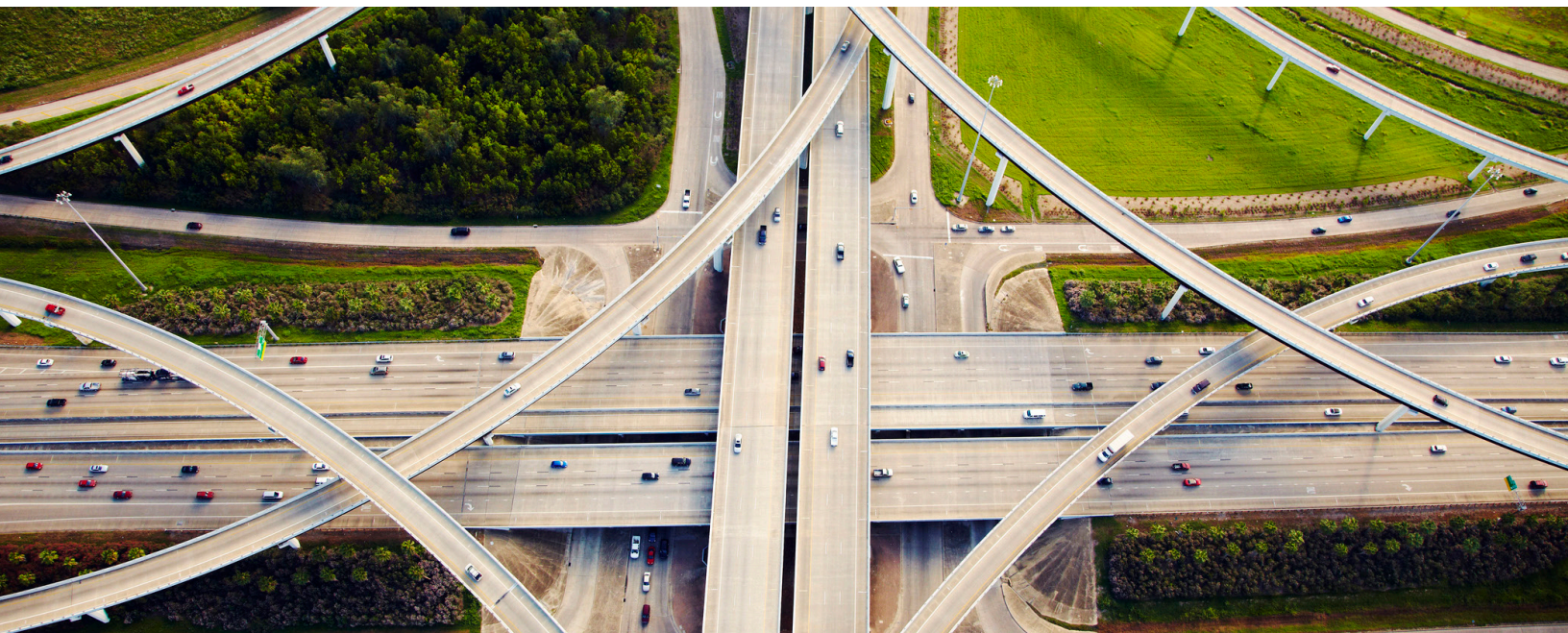
PHASE 2: READY TO LAUNCH

Test it out. The best way to see if the process works is to give it a try. After running through the processes internally, ask a trusted customer or group of customers if they'd be willing to try it out as a pilot program. Once the test is completed, bring the pilot stakeholders together and examine how it went, including what worked, what didn't and what could be improved. Remember to be open to feedback from all team members, as helpful insights can come from anywhere.

Spread the word. Once your process has been vetted internally and externally, let customers know that you now offer ultrafast delivery via crowdsourcing as an option. Inform them of what to expect with a crowdsourced driver and how they can access the faster delivery option.

Start small, then scale up. When formally launching crowdsourced delivery from the warehouse, try starting with a narrow focus before expanding across all SKUs. Consider which factors will determine eligibility for ultrafast delivery. Will the delivery options be limited to specific customers? A specific radius or market? Order size, weight, value or popularity? A particular product line? Start small and expand gradually as you fine-tune your use of crowdsourcing.

Learn from mistakes. New processes rarely go perfectly the first time out. In most cases, there will be issues that need working out. Create a feedback loop to get honest, constructive specifics about what went well and what didn't. Was there a missed delivery? Were drivers waiting at the warehouse? Did a driver pick up the wrong order? Welcome that feedback, and use it to evaluate your processes right away.



Ready to launch? Go from zero to ultrafast-delivery hero in just a few weeks

Depending on the size and complexity of your business, launching a new delivery program can take as little as a few weeks. Here are the steps.



WEEK 1: ALIGN YOUR INTERNAL STRATEGY.

- Identify all stakeholders, including operations, billing, fulfillment and marketing.
- Agree on what initiative ultrafast delivery will support and what products will be available for it.
- Determine how orders will be processed and managed.
- Define the transaction. Who will be charged and how much?



WEEK 2: INTEGRATE TECH AND PREPARE YOUR PROMOTIONS.

- Integrate with the crowdsourced delivery partner's technology platform.
- Decide on your test markets and related marketing promotions. Start with larger markets and incorporate additional locations in phases.
- Promote same-day delivery to employees and customers before launch via website and e-commerce shopping cart updates, as well as point-of-sale signage.



WEEK 3: BEGIN SOFT LAUNCH AND TESTING.

- Set key milestones and metrics to measure success and completion. How will you measure your return on investment? What does success look like? When will you know it's time to expand?



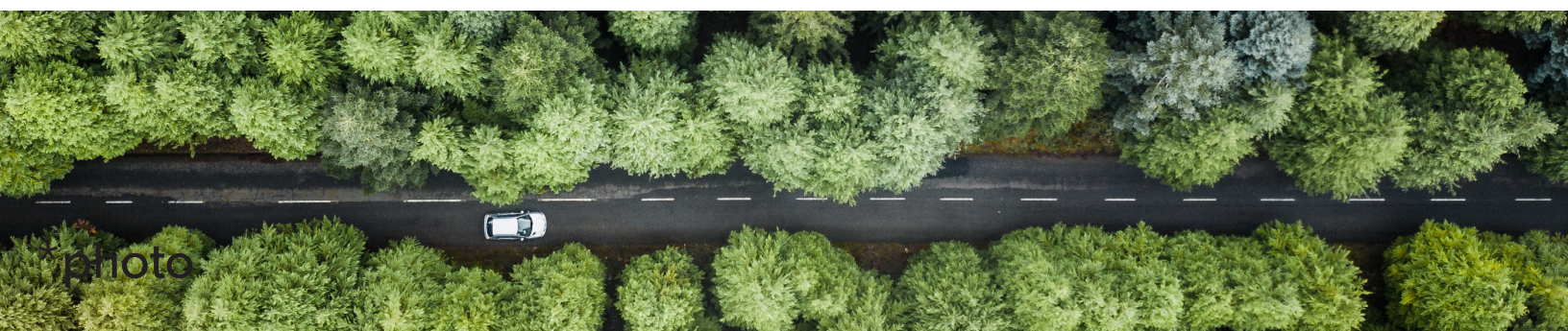
WEEK 4: ROLL OUT DELIVERY.

- With the soft launch complete, it's go time. As you fully launch, continue to monitor key performance indicators (KPIs), and document successes and issues.



ONGOING.

- Manage and optimize the crowdsourced delivery solution to make sure ultrafast delivery is working and that your team has the information they need to help make the program a success.



Know your crowdsourcing KPIs

Tracking progress is key to effective implementation and ongoing reliability. Make sure you're using the right measurements at the right time to confirm that your ultrafast delivery solution is working for your customers and your business.

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING THE TEST PHASE:

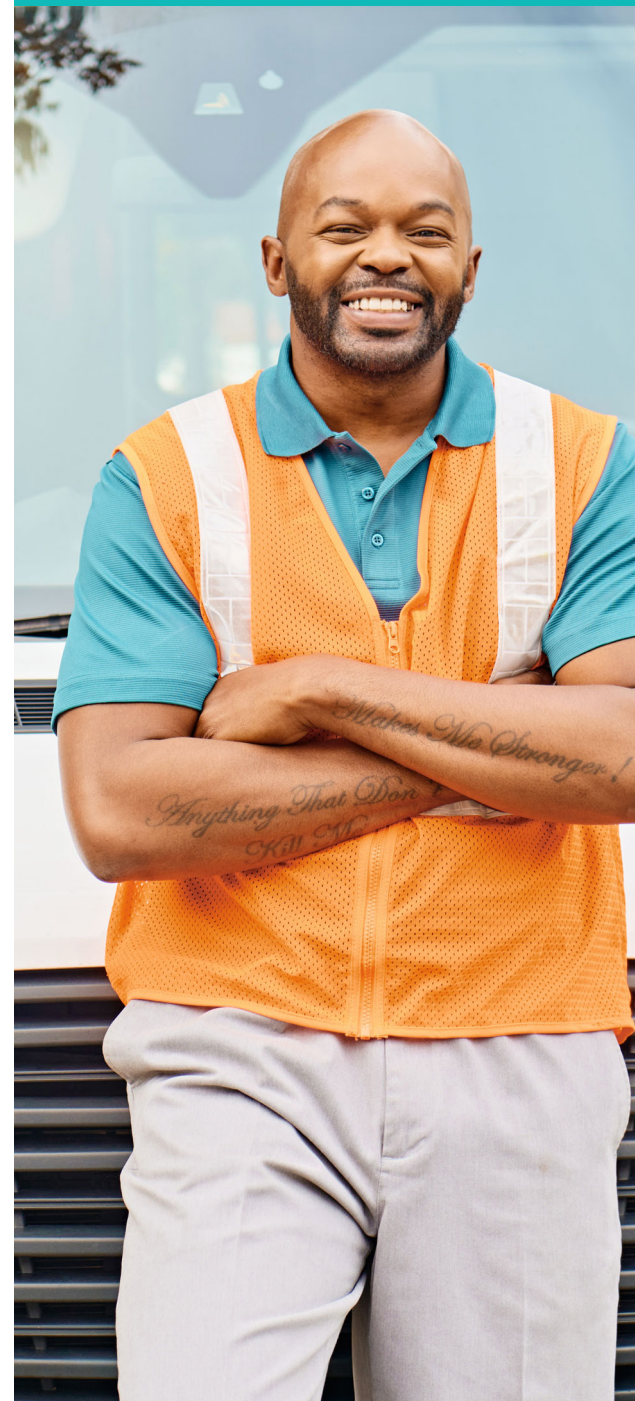
- Are you hitting your target number of daily deliveries?
- Is the share of on-time deliveries high?
- Is the share of canceled deliveries low?

POST-LAUNCH METRICS TO TRACK:

- Delivery volume period over period.
- On-time delivery rate period over period.
- Average cost per delivery compared to previous solutions.
- Customer net promoter score before and after launching same-day, or for comparing same-day orders to other types.



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Get the word out

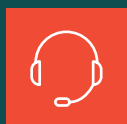
Ultrafast delivery won't get your business far if your customers don't know you offer it. So, tell them. And then tell them again in a different way. Make sure customers know they can rely on you to deliver the same day, while educating them about what to expect from crowdsourced delivery. Here are some ways to do that:

- **Update your website.**
- **Add notifications** to e-commerce shopping carts.
- **Post signs** in store and/or at the point of sale.
- **Include details** in sales scripts.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP TO SMART AND FAST WAREHOUSE DELIVERY

Times have changed. Today, businesses must offer ultrafast delivery to win and retain customers. But they don't have to be limited by the size of their own fleets or constraints put on them by third-party carriers.

Most operations can start up crowdsourced delivery from their warehouses right now with their existing infrastructure. Having a platform with a nationally scalable footprint helps avoid the need for a complex network of third-party on-demand fulfillment providers while helping you grow your business. Roadie's vast driver network, nationwide presence and 24/7 support make us a trusted platform for warehouse delivery, from implementation to expansion and beyond.



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Take the next step in launching crowdsourced delivery from your warehouse with [our strategy worksheet and checklist](#). And visit [Roadie.com](https://www.roadie.com) to start your same-day delivery capability.

Roadie, a UPS company, is a leading logistics and delivery platform that helps businesses tackle the complexities of modern retail with unmatched delivery coverage, flexibility and visibility. Reaching 97% of U.S. households across more than 30,000 zip codes — from urban hubs to rural communities — Roadie provides seamless, scalable solutions that meet a variety of delivery needs.

With a network of more than 310,000 independent drivers nationwide, Roadie offers flexible delivery solutions that make complex logistics challenges easy, including solutions for local same-day delivery, delivery of big and bulky items, ship-from-store and DC-to-door. For more information, visit www.roadie.com.

SOURCES

1. Romaine, Ed. "20 Statistics that Show the Importance of Same-Day Delivery." Conveyco, November 30, 2021. <https://www.conveyco.com/delivery-statistics/>.
2. Saleh, Khalid. "The Importance of Same Day Delivery – Statistics and Trends." Invesp. April 11, 2021. <https://www.invespro.com/blog/same-day-delivery/>.

