

# What to look for and how to select an e-commerce fulfillment company.



# Let's Meet Bob



Bob is an online retailer who sells and ships a few orders per day but focuses on keeping his customers very **happy**. And they ARE!



Bob wants to grow a little faster, so he decides to spend his **hard-earned money** to hire a marketing guru.



Bob's order volume quickly starts to climb. Even with his family helping, he's receiving over **50** orders a day and getting **overwhelmed!** Bob needs to outsource!





Bob does some searching online for a fulfillment company, but he quickly finds that there are **THOUSANDS** to choose from. Now he's really getting **STRESSED!**



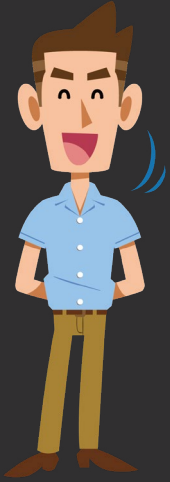
Bob calls his cousin Vinny, and Vinny tells him that the word on the street is to use **ACME Fulfill** because they're cheap!



Bob calls **ACME Fulfill** right away and signs up. Whew!



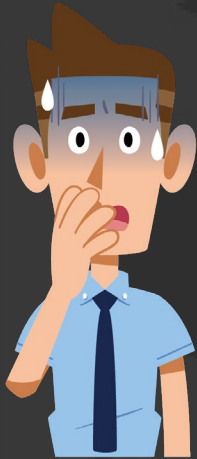
Bob spends the next couple of weeks wondering why it isn't **EASIER** to get everything setup for **ACME** to begin shipping! Finally, everything is ready, so he sends them the bulk of his inventory.



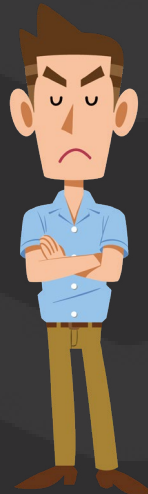
Bob is so **relieved!** Now he can hire some people and focus on other areas of the business as it continues to grow.



A few months later...

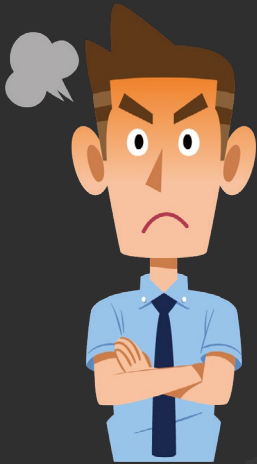


Bob is **SHOCKED** to be receiving phone calls and emails from some very **UNHAPPY** customers when he's built his reputation on his excellent customer service!



Bob immediately tries to contact ACME Fulfill, and it takes **DAYS** to get in touch with a representative to get some answers! Bob is getting very **FRUSTRATED!**





Meanwhile, more and more phone calls, emails, and bad reviews are rolling in and the problems aren't getting fixed! ARG!!



Why Was it Broken?!

This is NOT what I ordered!!!

I never got my order!!!



Bob was **ANGRY!!** Bob was **DONE** having orders sent to wrong addresses, wrong items shipped to correct addresses, orders arriving days late, and items delivered damaged! Business had been picking up and he was getting ready to ship globally! He needed a fulfillment provider that could **PARTNER** with him to scale his business.

**BUT IT'S TOO LATE!**



Bob's orders started to decline rapidly due to his severely damaged online reputation that had taken a **TREMENDOUS** amount of money, hard work, and time to build.

POOR BOB.



Bob felt totally defeated, he lost his entire business! He knew he should have spent more time doing research to find a capable fulfillment provider. But, HOW would he have actually known what to look for? What kinds of **QUESTIONS** should he have asked to make sure he was choosing a **QUALIFIED** fulfillment solution provider?





*E-commerce fulfillment is actually highly complex, involving many processes from the moment your customer clicks the **CHECKOUT** button, to the moment they have the package in their hands.*

---

*What do you need to know to ensure you are choosing the right fulfillment center for your business?*

---

*A **qualified** e-commerce fulfillment provider will take that complexity out of your hands and actually make your e-commerce order fulfillment **easy**.*



# WHAT DO YOU NEED?

*What are your fulfillment needs as an online retailer?*

## ❑ *Shopping Cart Integration*

- ❑ *Multi-channel support*
- ❑ *Consolidated Online Dashboard*

## ❑ *Transparency*

- ❑ *Costs*
- ❑ *Real time Order Tracking*
- ❑ *Inventory*

## ❑ *Competitive Shipping*

- ❑ *Delivery Times*
- ❑ *Shipping Costs*
- ❑ *Address Validation*
- ❑ *Worldwide Shipping*

## ❑ *Client Support*

- ❑ *Email or SMS alerts*
- ❑ *Payment Reminders*
- ❑ *Dedicated Account Manager*

## ❑ *Packaging options*

- ❑ *Custom*
- ❑ *Inserts*

## ❑ *Returns Processing*

## ❑ *Warehousing*

- ❑ *Climate Controlled*
- ❑ *FDA Certified*
- ❑ *Extensive Storage Capability*
- ❑ *Multiple Locations*





# SO, HOW DO I FIND A **QUALIFIED** E-COMMERCE FULFILLMENT PROVIDER?

THE MORE YOU KNOW..

---

*Here are some questions we suggest you ask potential fulfillment providers:*

- ❑ ***Is your Order Management System (OMS) a proprietary or out of the box solution?***

*Why you ask:*

*Out of the box solutions can be limited based on when they were created, by whom, and how often they are updated. Proprietary solutions are usually on the cutting edge of technology and being updated regularly based on actual customer feedback.*

- ❑ ***Is your OMS Cloud-based and real-time?***

*Why you ask:*

*Cloud based software allows for faster processing speeds and connections to other data sources, to keep you up to date in real-time on every order status.*

- ❑ ***Do you have an Internet “dashboard” on which I can manage my account? Is it mobile friendly?***

*Why you ask:*

*Dashboards are a window to your business. Having one central location to manage all your orders, regardless of the source, saves you time and provides you the information you need to make better business decisions.*

<https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>



- ❑ ***With how many online shopping carts is your OMS integrated? Is there any cost to me to integrate with your OMS?***

*Why you ask:*

*Scaling your business is so much easier when you are working with a fulfillment center that already provides integrations with all of the major shopping carts. Some fulfillment centers will charge you for integration. It is important to understand those potential costs upfront.*

- ❑ ***Does your OMS provide address validation to ensure accurate delivery?***

*Why you ask:*

*Typos are inevitable. Address validation is key to saving money, time, and effort by pre-checking an address to get your product to your customer in the most efficient manner.*

- ❑ ***Does your OMS offer order grouping so that my customers may take advantage of an up-sell offer or add to an order and it will all ship as one order?***

*Why you ask:*

*Why pay to ship several packages when your fulfillment provider can consolidate those orders into one? Saving money by taking advantage of consolidated shipping and providing your customer with an exceptional experience will help your business grow.*



# NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PERFORMANCE.

Your fulfillment provider must ship the *right product*, at the *right time*, to the *right address*.

## ASK THESE QUESTIONS

IN THE LAST YEAR..

- ❑ *How many B2C orders has your company shipped?*
- ❑ *How many account credits were issued to your clients?*
- ❑ *What percent of your client's orders were shipped with the right product(s)?*
- ❑ *What percent of your client's orders were shipped on the same day you received them?*
- ❑ *What percent of your client's orders were shipped to the right address?*

### *Why you ask:*

*Every business should know how well they are doing. Measuring the things that matter to the clients and being transparent will build a working relationship of trust that will help you feel confident that your order fulfillment is in good hands.*





# REPUTATION

---

*Client references are good...  
but be sure to **CHECK***

*Google does not allow any company to edit their client reviews.  
While it is not a perfect snapshot, it can give you valuable insight.*



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

---

*Your fulfillment center solution should be in contact with various trusted vendors  
in the e-commerce industry that, based on their recommendation, can help save  
you time and money.*





# INDUSTRY RECOGNITION

A qualified Fulfillment provider will be recognized in the industry. For example: [MultichannelMerchant.com](http://MultichannelMerchant.com) is a one-stop online resource, with original research, executive summaries, tech and supplier roundups and insights on market trends that help you manage your everyday business. The editors of Multichannel Merchant analyze and recommend the top 3PLs annually.



Click [here](#) to go to Multichannel Merchant

## Speaking of Multichannel...

In addition to selling products on your own website via Shopify or another e-commerce platform, are you selling your products on a marketplace like Amazon, Walmart, Etsy, eBay and Jet - or on multiple marketplaces?

Ask the e-commerce fulfillment provider if they are already integrated with these platforms and can serve you and your customers via EDI and/or “drop shipping”.



# Speaking of AMAZON...

---

*Are you currently an Amazon Prime seller or plan to become one in the future?*

*Amazon enables its Prime sellers to less expensively fulfill their own Amazon orders through Seller Fulfilled Prime (“SFP”).*

---

## ASK THESE QUESTIONS

**amazon.com**<sup>®</sup>

- ❑ *Can they ship all Prime orders received by **2:00 PM local time on the same day?***
- ❑ *Will orders ship via **Prime-approved carriers** for delivery by ground in no more than two days?*
- ❑ *What percentage of the continental US population can they reach in no more than two days by ground?*

*Even if you have no desire to sell your products on Amazon, **you will still have to compete with the Prime delivery standard of no more than two days.***

---

*Be sure that your e-commerce fulfillment provider can enable you to economically provide delivery to 99% of the US population in one-to-two days, from the minimum of 4 fulfillment centers, to avoid prohibitive inventory carrying costs.*



# Amazon Solution Provider Network

*Whether you are selling on Amazon now or not, having your customer's orders in the hands of an SPN fulfillment provider should give you a sense of comfort. Amazon has very high standards and holds both sellers and partners to those same standards ensuring a consistency of service across the board. Is your fulfillment provider part of the Amazon Solution Provider Network?*



## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

*Where your fulfillment provider is located can make all the difference when shipping around the country, or around the world. To stay competitive, your fulfillment provider should be able to reach all of your US customers in 1-2 days by ground and have an international presence to help you reach around the globe.*



# 7/365 IN 24HRS



*Time is of the essence when it comes to getting your product to your customer. Expectations are at an all-time high since Amazon implemented 2-day shipping. Make sure your fulfillment provider is getting your product out within 24 hours of receiving your order.*



## ERRORS AND CORRECTIONS

*Taking responsibility for errors is the sign of a mature business, but beyond that, standardized quality control processes and implementing corrective actions ensures that similar errors will be prevented in the future. Be sure that your fulfillment provider is transparent about their mistakes and takes responsibility for them. Your fulfillment provider should pay for any errors on their part and follow up with the Root Cause Analysis and Corrective Action taken to remedy it.*





# OMS AND “DASHBOARD”

So, you've got a world-class OMS and dashboard, but what if I need to speak with a real person?

Make sure that your e-commerce fulfillment provider will assign a dedicated account manager to you so that you may contact the same person every time, *a person who knows you and your business.*



## THE WORLD IS MY MARKET!

Selling on the Internet enables you to sell to customers all over the world. *Be sure that your e-commerce fulfillment provider can quickly and economically deliver to any customer, anywhere in the world.*

### ASK THESE QUESTIONS

- To how many countries do you currently ship?*
- Do you have fulfillment centers in other countries?*



# STAY COMPLIANT

---

*Are you selling health and beauty products or other specialty products that may require regulatory agency oversight or compliance?*

---

**IS YOUR FULFILLMENT CENTER FDA REGISTERED?**



## LET'S TALK PRICE!

---

*Be absolutely certain that you understand ALL of the costs of doing business with your e-commerce fulfillment provider.*

*First, understand that your freight/postage costs will be about 3 times more than your provider's fulfillment fees.*

**ASK FOR A FREIGHT/POSTAGE RATE CHART.**



*Freight/postage costs are based upon your provider's total aggregated shipping volumes. Look for e-commerce fulfillment providers shipping millions of orders annually for rates that you will love.*





## LET'S TALK PRICE!

*Next, consider fulfillment fees.*

*The generic per-order “fulfillment fee” covers all of the services provided for **EVERY** order, including integrating your shopping cart with the provider’s OMS, order management and labeling, access to an Internet “dashboard” including the provision of all carrier tracking, customer address validation, order grouping, and an assigned customer service agent; as well as order labor, including inbound inspection, sample-count and stock put-away.*

---

*RECEIVING YOUR INBOUND PRODUCTS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE FULFILLMENT FEE WITHOUT ANY ADDITIONAL CHARGE IF YOU CAN MEET INDUSTRY-STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS.*

---

*Your e-commerce fulfillment provider will also charge a fee for labor to pick each product for each order. “Picking fees” tend to increase with your SKU count and the size/weight of your products --- i.e. it takes much less time and effort to pick 60-count vitamin capsule bottles for men, women and children (3 SKU) than to pick a pair of shoes from 5,000 different styles, colors and sizes. Of course, there is a “storage fee,” typically assessed as per pallet per month.*

*And please, please don't forget to ask about “set-up fees, account maintenance fees, technology fees”, etc.*





# PERKS

---

## *Invests in the future*

*With great success comes great responsibility. Winning in business is great for the bottom line, but then what do you do with it? Every business owner knows that it's important to invest back into your business to see it grow, but is that all? Investing in the community and the world at large through legitimate charities is a great way to pay it forward. Does your fulfillment provider think 'outside the box' and support local and/or global charities?*

## *Shows gratitude*

*Clients are the heart of any business, without them, there would be no business. Aside from providing excellent services, showing your clients how much you appreciate them is a great way to build long lasting relationships. Ask your potential fulfillment provider how they show their gratitude.*

## *Invests in YOU*

*YOUR success is paramount. The world of e-commerce is exciting, but very competitive. Providing you with the latest industry and educational information to help you learn and grow your business creates a synergy of success. Does your fulfillment provider offer free educational resources and connections with industry influencers?*





*You can save substantial time and money outsourcing customer order fulfillment.*

*During the life of your business, you will make few more important decisions than the selection of an e-commerce fulfillment provider.*

## THE RIGHT PROVIDER

*A **qualified** provider will delight you and your customers with excellent service at a low cost. Once you're engaged with the right e-commerce fulfillment provider, you can focus all of your time on the fun stuff --- **product and market development that grows your business!***

*We hope this information was helpful in your search for a qualified fulfillment provider. Call or email us today for a free quote.*

***sales@fulfillment.com and 1-800-277-6096***

