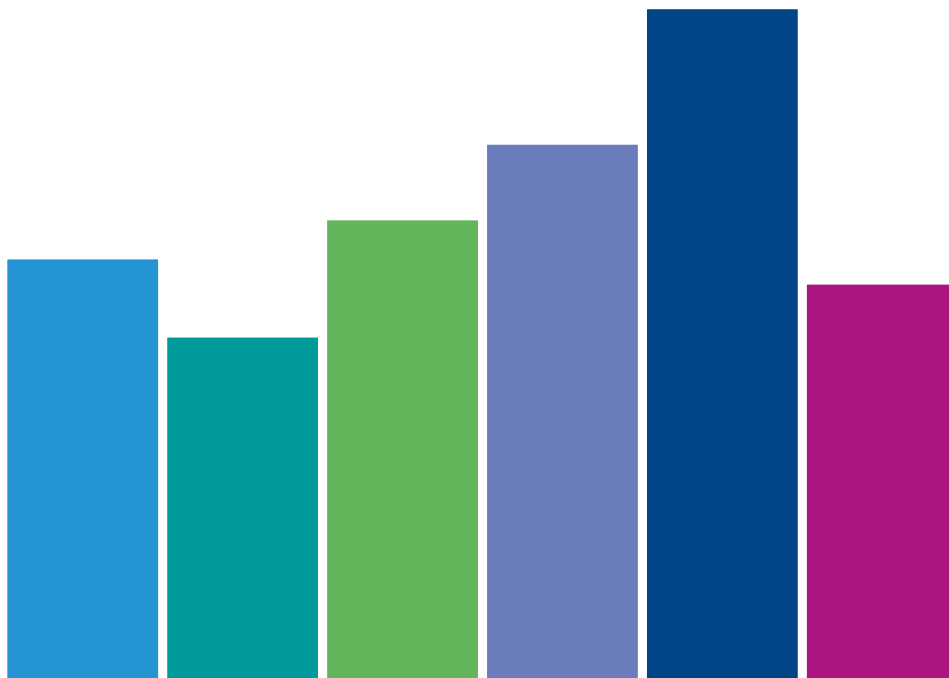




Peak demand survey

reveals opportunity to overcome seasonal challenges



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We asked **506 businesses** to complete a survey based on their experiences during peak periods across a range of industry types, including **manufacturers, distributors and retailers** (including ecommerce), with company sizes ranging from fewer than **50** to more than **500 employees**.

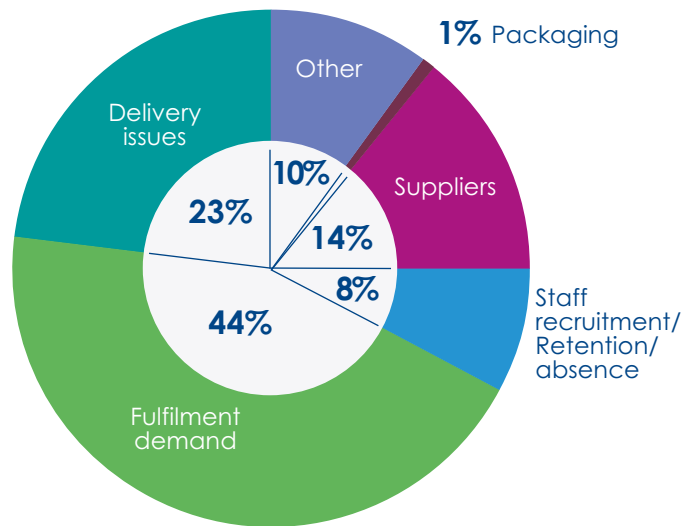
Here's what we found...

Over half of retailers, manufacturers and distributors struggled to maintain operating speed to meet demand in **the pre-Christmas** peak period. **26.68%** stated that **the summer** was the most demanding time of the year for them.

Collectively, **67%** of businesses said that the **despatch packing process** and **delivery issues** caused the most stress.

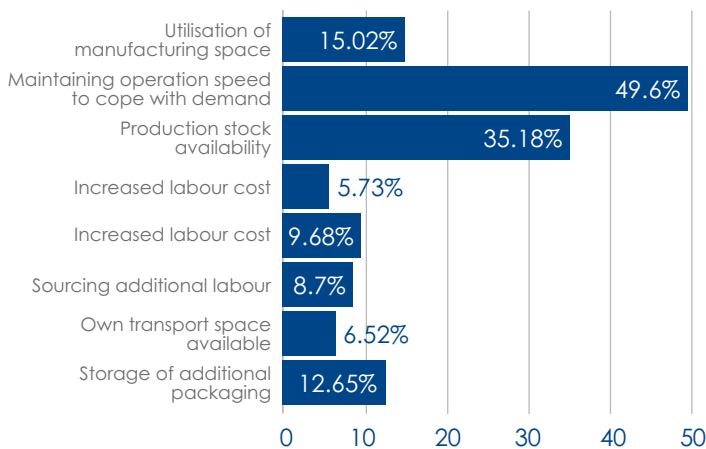
The survey uncovered an **overlooked opportunity** for businesses to **increase their throughput during peak** – it identified that 1 in 7 businesses hadn't considered the impact of packaging on the **speed of packing** and **dispatching items**.

Factors causing the most stress



Biggest challenges faced in peak

Maintaining **operating speed** and **stock availability** are among **the biggest challenges** faced during peak. Other issues that businesses commonly experience include: utilisation of manufacturing space, increased labour costs, transport and storage space.



Black Friday and Cyber Monday

IMRG reported that total UK online spend for **Black Friday in 2016 was £1.23bn** on the day and forecasted the total **Black Friday “peak period”** online spend to come in at **£6.77bn**. Out of the retailers that responded to the survey, **43%** consider Black Friday as an opportunity for their business.

It seems that businesses **have learned their lessons** from previous years seriously addressing the Black Friday spike in the peak season and have planned accordingly for success.

Black Friday is no longer seen as a single day; It is now a whole week, preceding one of the busiest periods for many retailers: **pre-Christmas shopping spree**.



Product damage and returns

An increase in the number of orders placed during peak seasons puts additional burden on resources and packing capabilities. Our survey has revealed that **23% of respondents expect to see more damages and returns during peak** than at other times.

The implications of your customer receiving damaged goods can be much more than just the associated transport, replacement and product write off costs. **Your brand reputation is at risk too.**

Using the correct packaging can prevent this, saving your company valuable time and money and, most importantly pleasing your customer!



STAY PREPARED

Smart planning before the peak will help you ensure that your packaging operation delivers maximum throughput with minimum labour. Below are a few ideas to help you prepare your packaging operation ahead of peak:

- 1. Organise your packing area** – make sure that packing materials are easily accessible and your packers have enough packing materials to see them through a full day of packing.
- 2. Use the right amount of packaging** – consider reducing the amount of packing materials you use, as overpacking adds expense and can lead to damage.
- 3. Optimise your storage space** – using temporary pick bins in your warehouse will help you to make room for additional SKUs. Also consider using a stock and drip feed service to ensure you have just the right amount of packaging at all times.



4. Increase your packing speed – introducing automation solutions such as tape machines and automatic void fill dispensers will help to increase the speed of packing. Alternatively, consider using self-erecting crash lock boxes in your manual packaging operation.

5. Reduce transport costs – reducing the size of a pack can help to cut carrier tariffs and increase transport yields. Consider optimising your box sizes for better pallet utilisation, and ensure smaller letterbox.



Did you know, a review of your packaging can potentially help you speed up your packing process, decrease the amount of packaging storage space you need and increase your pallet yield? Contact us for a free packaging review.
Email contactus@macfarlanepackaging.com