How to ensure a smooth journey for e-commerce parcels

A guide to courier, express, and postal service providers

The explosive growth in e-commerce distribution is a major opportunity for the CEP industry. But it also poses a challenge to the flow of parcels, as operators, systems, and machinery are working at max capacity or above. Follow the journey of a parcel below.
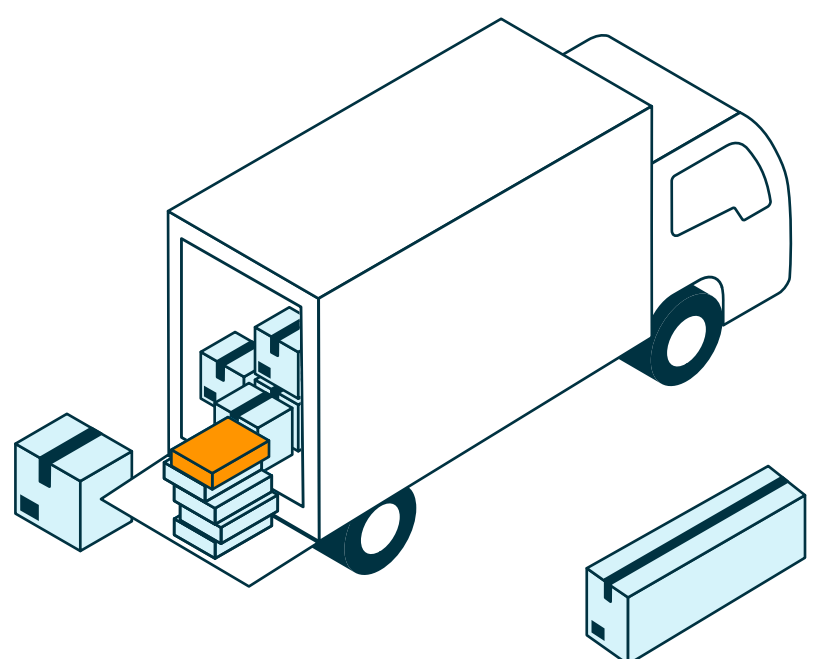
Parcel pick-up

1

CHALLENGE: Shipments from senders are often loaded indiscriminately onto delivery trucks.

TIP:
CEP providers can do pre-sortation already at this step. You could divide items in three groups: Small parcels; regular and larger parcels; odd-size and non-machinable.
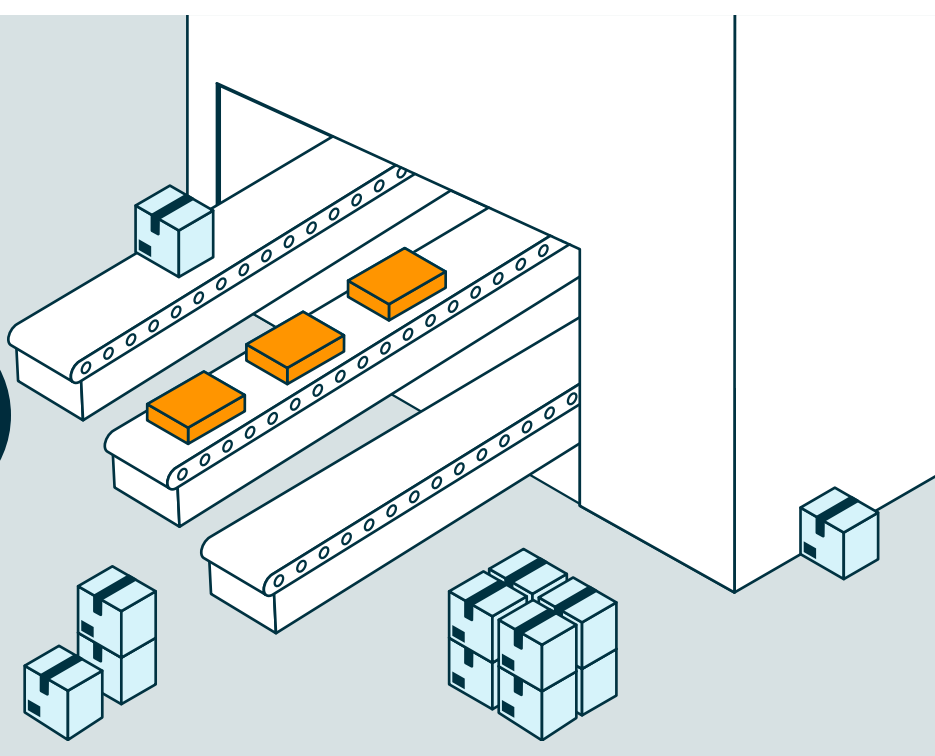
Arrival at parcel centre

2

CHALLENGE: Disruptive trends in global e-commerce and seasonal fluctuations make it difficult to predict parcel flow and the split between size categories.

TIP:
You can improve parcel mix predictions with real-time data capture from legal for trade software as well as ongoing talks with customers about expected future trends.
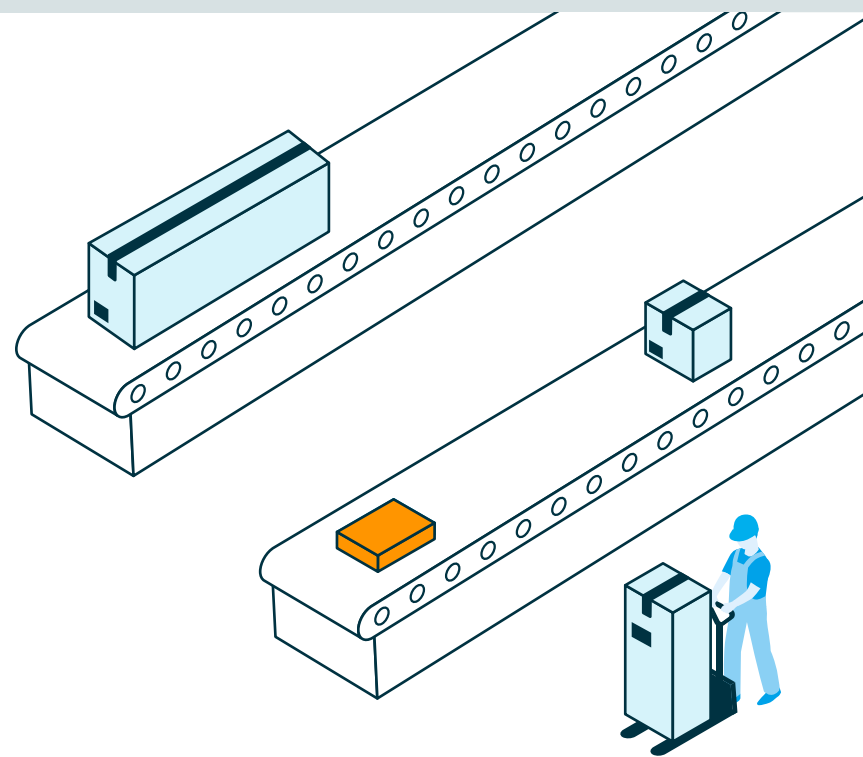
Parcel processing

3

CHALLENGE: Sortation systems are typically optimised for relatively large parcels, which puts automated handling of smaller parcels at risk.

TIP:
With a dedicated rest mail* system, distribution centres can achieve a very high degree of automation. Such a sortation system will typically be designed to handle items up to approximately A3 size.

*Shipments that are too large to be considered letters and too small to be considered parcels by conventional standards.

Label reading and rework

4

CHALLENGE: Some parcels are not labelled sufficiently with barcodes – others are missing data. In both cases, such parcels are non-machinable.

TIP:
Video coding can eliminate the need for physical handling of unresolvable parcels. Data management and enrichment can be done remotely.
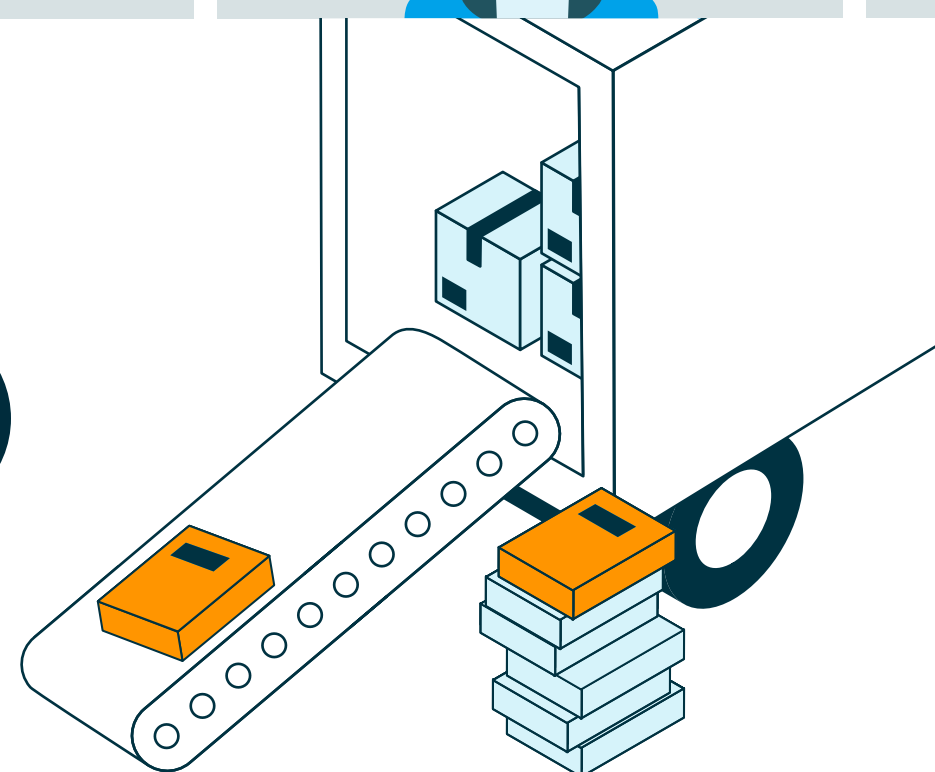
Onto delivery

5
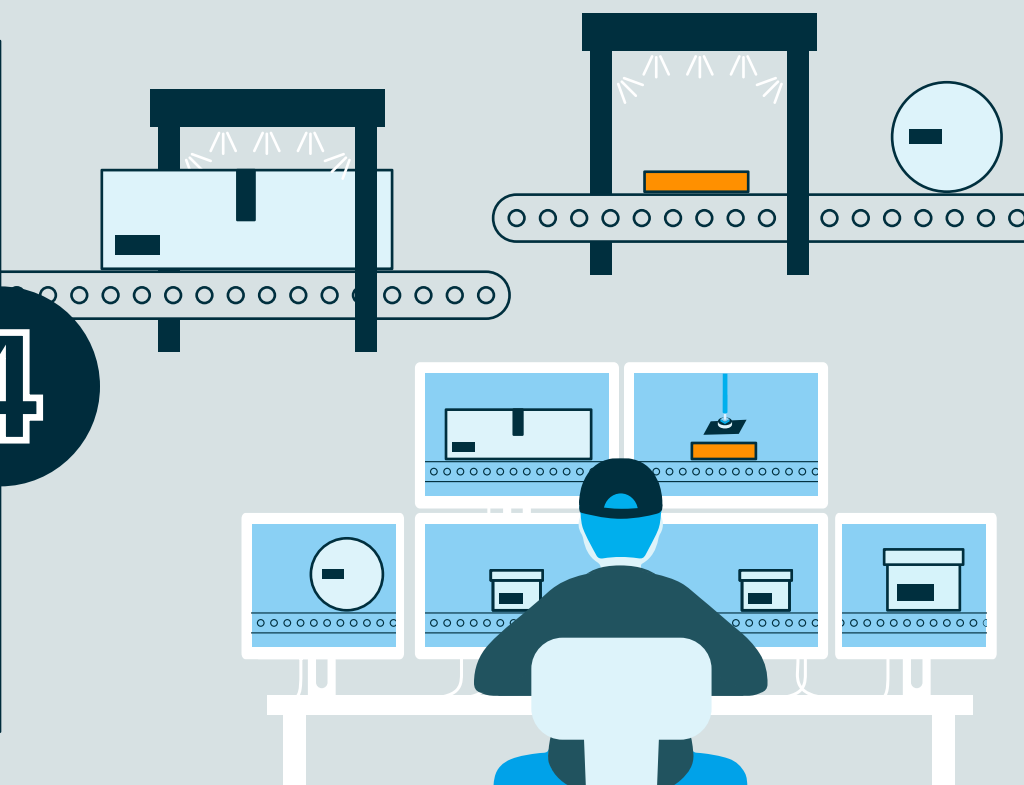
CHALLENGE: Unsolvable parcels are not always undergoing the necessary rework. As a consequence, the parcel goes 'under the radar' and is not properly tracked.

TIP:
Don't pass the problem further down the line: Make sure to re-induct reworked parcels into the sortation system for proper data capture and tracking.

5 things to consider for your automated sortation system

Sortation is the beating heart of modern Courier, Express and Parcel (CEP) operations.

As such, choosing the right solution for automated sortation at your distribution centre is a major business decision. With potentially hundreds of possible sortation designs, it's an acquisition that requires careful consideration in terms of both capacity, performance, and specialisation.

At the same time, emerging trends and new international players in global e-commerce make it increasingly difficult to know which is the right solution now and in the long run. To get started, download our guide for e-commerce parcel distributors:

"5 things to consider for your automated sortation system".

5 THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR YOUR AUTOMATED SORTATION SYSTEM

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