

Checkout & Fulfilment for Beauty Brands.

A Guide to Your Biggest, Untapped Growth Levers for 2026





The fulfilment landscape is evolving rapidly, driven by rising labour costs, supply chain complexities, and ever-growing consumer demands for fast, personalised service.

Entering 2026, the ecommerce landscape will be defined by two conflicting forces: unprecedented opportunity and unprecedented operational complexity. Consumers are buying across more channels than ever, global markets remain ripe for expansion, and digital commerce has become the default mode of retail. Yet the path to growth has never been more challenging for brands. From retail to beauty, wellness and consumer electronics, commerce leaders are all fighting a new set of constraints. In this environment, brands simply cannot outspend competitors on ads forever. Year on year, digital ad spend is growing at c. 9%¹ and

yet on average, 70% of shopping baskets are still being abandoned². It's never been harder — or more expensive — to attract, convert and retain customers online. This new reality isn't sustainable for any brand and therefore the new growth advantage must lie elsewhere: in checkout and fulfilment. In this guide, we'll show you how checkout and fulfilment is your new growth engine and lever for driving commercial business outcomes in 2026.

OPTIMIZING WAREHOUSE PERFORMANCE



How local does your buying experience feel at checkout?

In beauty, the buying experience is inseparable from trust. Shoppers expect checkout to feel familiar and transparent, even when purchasing from brands outside their home market. Global eCommerce continues to grow rapidly with sales projected to reach multiple trillions in the next few years showing that international demand is a strategic opportunity for brands willing to adapt to local

expectations*. Retailers that tailor checkout currency formats, payment options and delivery expectations to the local market help customers feel at home no matter where they are shopping from. When the experience feels distant or unclear, customers hesitate - particularly on first purchase - requiring more marketing spend to win back demand and reduce churn.

*<https://ecommercetips.org/e-commerce-statistics/>.

Where is friction quietly eroding conversion and trust for beauty brands?

Cart abandonment remains one of the most persistent challenges in online commerce globally, with average rates consistently close to seventy percent, indicating that a significant share of purchase intent fails to convert at checkout. Research shows that shoppers most commonly abandon baskets due to unexpected costs, complicated checkout processes and unclear delivery expectations, reinforcing how checkout friction remains a systemic issue across categories*. This is particularly impactful in beauty where customers often buy on discovery then decide at checkout. Reducing friction by making pricing, delivery and return policies clear before the final payment step reinforces confidence and improves conversion in markets with rising expectations.



Close to

70%

Global cart abandonment

*<https://baymard.com/lists/cart-abandonment-rate>

Is your operating model ready to scale with demand?

Many beauty brands begin international expansion through simple cross border approaches but as volumes increase, operational complexity grows. Increased volume exposes weaknesses in fulfilment systems and delivery networks making it harder to deliver consistent experiences at scale. The brands

that sustain growth anticipate this progression by investing in flexible fulfilment models that can localise inventory and reduce service variability as demand is validated, enabling brands to maintain service quality, protect retention, and preserve brand trust over time.





01. Checkout & Fulfilment: Your Biggest, Untapped Growth Levers for 2026

1

Rising CAC and the marketing efficiency cliff

Digital marketing has become expensive table stakes. As global digital ad spend increases year-on-year, retailers consistently cite rising customer acquisition costs as one of the top threats to achieving sales goals³. With media costs rising and performance volatility, brands can't simply "spend more" to grow. The economic logic must shift towards maximising the value of each visitor through better conversion, repeat business and obtaining higher-value customers over the long-term through an attractive market-leading value proposition.



2

Customer expectations have been rewritten

Today's consumers are ruthless. They benchmark every brand experience against the very best they encounter. This is the "Amazon Prime effect". If your payment methods and delivery options don't match that of your market-leading counterpart, you can bet your marketing budgets on higher basket abandonment.

At the same time, marketplaces, social commerce and live shopping are exploding, with platforms like TikTok Shop and live-stream commerce projected to grow towards £1.5 trillion by 2030 outside of China⁴. Your customers now place the same expectations for clarity, speed, and reliability regardless of whether they buy on a brand site, a marketplace, a live stream or a social feed.



£1.5^{tn}
value of global e-commerce market

3

Cross-border is no longer optional. But it is complex

The global cross-border ecommerce market is valued at around £1.5 trillion and continues to rise⁵. A 2024 cross-border report by DHL found that over half of cross-border shoppers actively seek products they cannot get locally, especially in categories like fashion, beauty, and specialty nutrition. Yet, entering new markets requires navigating local tax rules, duties, customs payment preferences, and courier networks — a level of complexity that can paralyse growth plans.



77%
of customers rated fast delivery as important





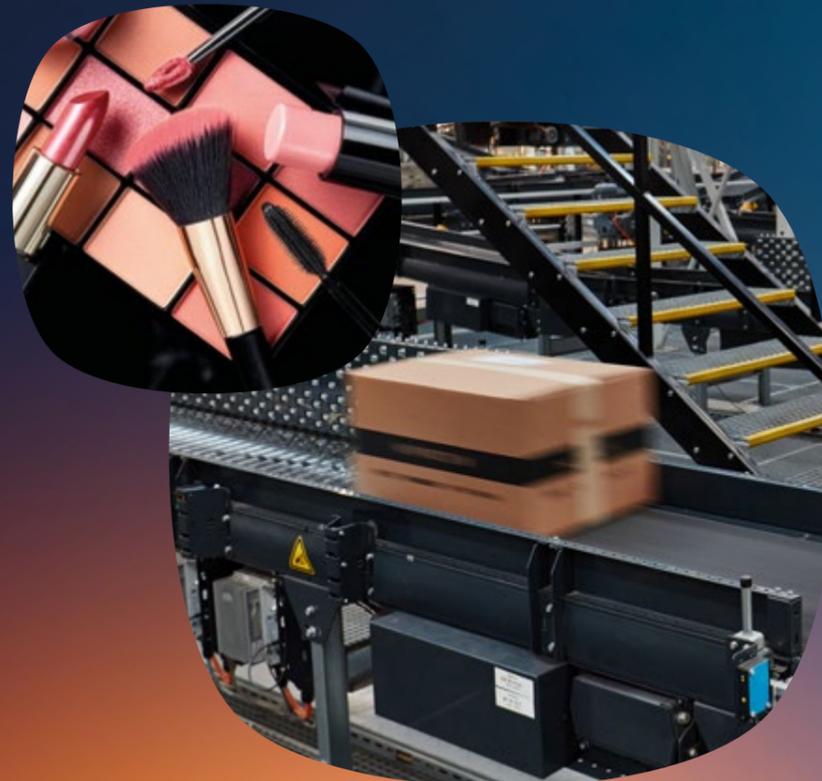
02.

Checkout and Fulfilment: More Demand, Less Margin

In light of these above challenges, here's why checkout and fulfilment which have historically been perceived as cost centres to be managed should now be regarded as strategic assets to be optimised.



81% of UK consumers actively assess delivery options before choosing a retailer



1

Remove friction at checkout and conversions follow

Local payment methods, clear duties and delivery promises, and a checkout built for trust can unlock double-digit growth. Amazon's Buy with Prime proves the point, delivering an average 25% conversion uplift for sellers using Prime⁶.



2

Delivery doesn't just complete the sale – it defines your brand.

81% of UK consumers actively assess delivery options before choosing a retailer, and 80% say a poor delivery experience damages brand perception. The impact is real: 78% won't buy again after a bad delivery experience. Fulfilment excellence drives customer retention and loyalty.



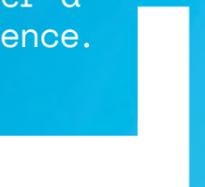
3

Fast, reliable delivery and frictionless returns drive stickier customers and higher spend.

Our own data shows that beauty customers who were upgraded from standard to next-day delivery delivered 2% higher retention value and an 11% uplift in subsequent order value. Proof that speed pays back — time and time again.



Won't buy again after a bad delivery experience.



03.

Solving Critical Growth Challenges: Your Guide



Challenge 1:

Rising Consumer Checkout and Delivery Expectations

Design checkout for mobile-first speed:

Consumers expect a fast, intuitive checkout. Every extra step, reload or form field increases drop-off, especially on mobile.

Localise payment methods to remove friction:

Offer the right mix of digital wallets, Buy Now Pay Later, and local payment methods in every market. Shoppers abandon when their preferred payment option isn't available.

Be transparent on delivery from the outset:

Clearly surface delivery speed, cost, duties and taxes before the final step. Surprises at checkout are a primary driver of abandonment.

Give customers real delivery choice:

Provide flexible options from next-day delivery and late cut-off times to standard and economy services letting shoppers balance speed and cost.

Build confidence with accurate order tracking:

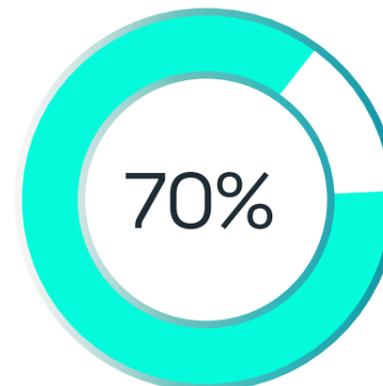
Real-time, reliable tracking reduces post-purchase anxiety and reinforces trust, making customers more likely to complete the purchase.

Make returns effortless:

Simple, clearly explained returns remove perceived risk at checkout and are a proven driver of conversion, particularly for first-time buyers.

Connect checkout and fulfilment as one experience:

Localised checkout and best-in-class fulfilment must work together reducing friction, increasing confidence, and turning intent into completed orders.



Up to 70% of online baskets are abandoned, with a significant proportion driven by delivery uncertainty and payment friction at checkout.

Challenge 1:

How THG Fulfil solves this challenge



Checkout by THG Fulfil:

Imagine a conversion-optimised checkout that supports over 60 payment providers, 30 languages and access to 200 markets, tailored to local preferences, address validation, fraud management and a flexible rules engine for delivery options and pricing. That's Checkout by THG Fulfil. Built to quickly convert consumers and scale brands internationally without all the complexity.



THG Fulfil 's automated fulfilment network:

Complimenting Libiao, Autostore and Geek+ robotics with relentless optimisation to deliver high throughput automation, faster pick, pack and dispatch time, reduced error rates and cost-per-order efficiencies to guarantee consistent Next Day Delivery propositions and reliable delivery performance to the end consumer.



Your growth potential unlocked

Localised checkout and delivery aren't incremental optimisations — they directly impact conversion, revenue, loyalty and lifetime value. They turn checkout from a point of friction into a growth engine.

Benefit from:



Conversion uplift driven by reduced payment friction, mobile-first checkout design and clear delivery promises.



Reduced basket abandonment as delivery uncertainty and payment limitations are removed.



Average order value (AOV) uplifts as customers are offered faster delivery options, late cut off limits and flexible fulfilment choices.



Higher repeat purchase due to increased customer satisfaction from reliable delivery and service levels.



Customer lifetime value increases as higher retention and AOV compounds over time.





Challenge 2:

Navigating International Commerce

Eliminate FX and pricing uncertainty:

Transparent FX handling and localised pricing build trust, protect margins and prevent cart abandonment caused by unexpected costs at checkout.

Get tax, duties and fees right upfront:

Accurate sales tax, VAT and duty calculations at checkout remove surprises, reduce delivery failures and ensure compliance across markets.

Simplify customs and cross-border documentation:

Automated, compliant customs paperwork keeps parcels moving quickly across borders and avoids delays, penalties and returns.

Navigate legal, regulatory and compliance at scale:

Each market comes with its own rules. Centralised, expert-led compliance removes the burden from brands and reduces risk as they scale internationally.

Offer fast, reliable international delivery:

Speed and reliability matter globally. A distributed fulfilment network brings inventory closer to customers, improving delivery times and reducing cost to serve.

Solve returns locally, not cross-border:

Local return solutions cut cost, speed up refunds and protect customer experience; a critical driver of repeat purchase in international markets.

Choose infrastructure that scales with you:

The fastest growing brands don't build country by country. They plug into a global commerce and fulfilment platform that removes friction and accelerates time to market.

In 2025, THG Fulfil shipped to 180 countries, with our furthest delivery reaching New Zealand – 18,000 km away.

180
Countries



Challenge 2:

How THG Fulfil solves this challenge



Checkout by THG Fulfil with Merchant of Record: Imagine selling into 200 markets through one, single commercial relationship. Our MOR model assumes financial, tax and regulatory responsibility for transactions: calculating and remitting local taxes and handling legal and compliance burden.



Global Fulfilment & Courier Management: Our unrivalled network of over 250 international warehouses and global local carrier relationships are built solely to optimise cost and speed of local delivery. Our complex algorithm of carrier routing and rules ensures the best delivery method is automatically selected per market.



Marketplace Fulfilment for Cross-Border Selling: We've built integrations with global marketplaces and cross-border platforms including Amazon and Zalando so that our clients can tap existing demand without building their own local operations network.



Your growth potential unlocked

Enable faster market entry, compliant global operations and local fulfilment and returns. Scale into new regions in weeks, winning more first-time customers and growing internationally at lower cost and risk.

Benefit from:



Lower abandonment driven by fewer pricing surprises, clearer delivery promises and simpler checkout flows.



Faster growth in new and existing regions as demand is unlocked without operational drag.



Higher first-time purchase rates as trust increases through localised experiences and reliable fulfilment.



Faster time to market for new regions (weeks instead of multiyear entity buildouts).



Reduced risk and overhead from global compliance.



Lower operational costs through local fulfilment, local returns and fewer failed deliveries or customs issues.





Challenge 3:

Fragmented Sales Channels

Brands must now sell via their own DTC, global and regional marketplaces such as Amazon and Zalando, and social commerce including TikTok Shop and live shopping platforms. This often results in multiple, brittle point-to-point integrations, disjointed inventory views, inconsistent delivery propositions, and higher operational overhead and error rates.

Centralise inventory into a single source of truth:

Unified inventory visibility across all channels prevents overselling, reduces cancellations and enables smarter stock allocation.

Standardise delivery promises across platforms:

Customers expect consistent delivery speed, cutoff times and service levels, regardless of where they buy.

Orchestrate orders from one platform:

A single order management layer routes orders intelligently across fulfilment locations, channels and delivery options.

Scale fulfilment without multiplying complexity:

Shared fulfilment infrastructure supports DTC, marketplace and social orders without duplicating processes, systems or stock.

Unify post-purchase experience across channels:

Consistent tracking, returns and customer communications protect brand experience, even more so on third-party platforms.

£1.5tn

Marketplaces, social commerce and live shopping are exploding, with platforms like TikTok Shop and live-stream commerce projected to grow towards £1.5 trillion by 2030 outside of China⁴.

Challenge 3:

How THG Fulfil solves this challenge



Checkout by THG Fulfil:
Our checkout solution provides our clients with a flexible, standalone checkout layer that can sit across different ecommerce platforms, standardising the customer experience and reducing integration complexity.



Shopify Integration:
Access global capabilities without replatforming. Our Shopify integration enables brands to connect their Shopify stores directly to our enterprise-grade fulfilment and courier network.



Marketplace Fulfilment:
Our integrations with leading marketplace connectivity platforms like Rithum and Mirakl allows brands to manage multiple channels from a single, unified fulfilment back end. Orders from marketplaces and DTC sites are fulfilled from one pool of inventory within THG Fulfil, enabling efficient stock allocation and reduced overselling.



Your growth potential unlocked

With centralised fulfilment orchestration and automation, brands can scale predictably, quickly unlocking growth, without adding operational complexity.

Benefit from:



Higher conversion as inventory accuracy, delivery promises and fulfilment reliability improve across all platforms.



Faster, more predictable growth across DTC, marketplaces and social without operational bottlenecks.



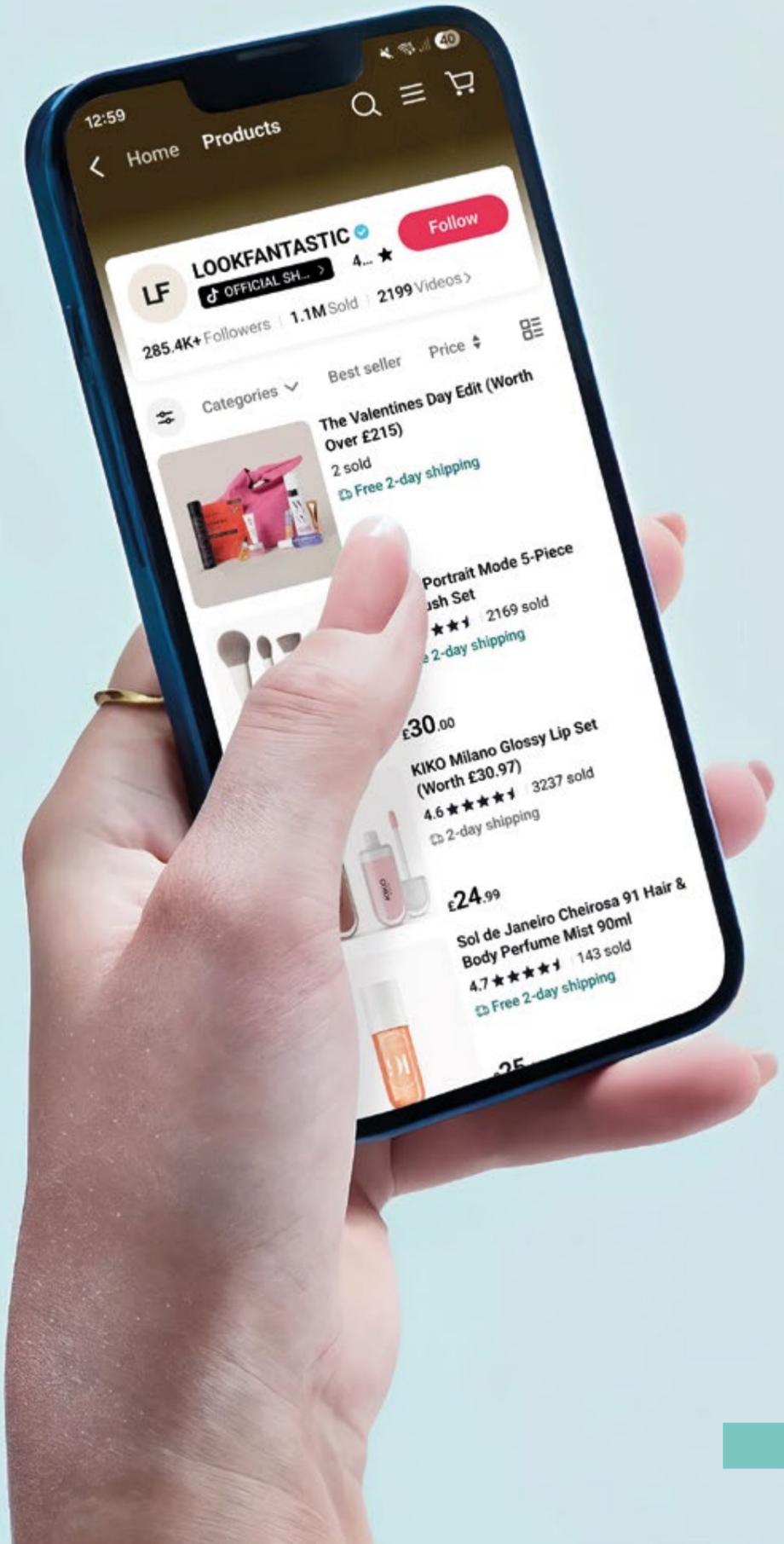
Fewer cancellations caused by inaccurate stock, missed SLAs or inconsistent delivery propositions.



Higher pick, pack and dispatch accuracy through centralised orchestration and automation.



Faster onboarding to new channels with expansion to a new marketplace in weeks instead of months.





Challenge 4 :

In-House Fulfilment Inefficiencies and Capital Constraints to Growth

Global expansion is attractive but fraught with complexity: localised payment preferences, FX, local currencies, sales tax and duty calculations, customs documentation, legal, regulatory and compliance and local return logistics. For many brands, these obstacles delay or even derail international growth.

Define the real problem, not the symptom:

Before investing in automation or outsourcing, clearly articulate where fulfilment is breaking down; cost, speed, accuracy, or scalability.

Identify where costs are rising fastest:

Pinpoint labour intensity, overtime, peak-driven staffing, space constraints and manual processes that are pushing cost-to-serve higher each year.

Assess operational inefficiency and throughput limits:

Understand where bottlenecks occur whether in picking, packing, cutoff times or dispatch, and how they cap daily order volumes and growth.

Measure inconsistency and error rates: Track mispicks, late dispatches, failed deliveries and returns errors that damage customer experience and inflate operational costs.

Evaluate speed and service level gaps:

Compare current cutoff times, delivery speeds and peak performance against customer expectations and competitors' propositions.

Quantify the true cost of manual work: Include hidden costs such as training, attrition, error recovery and management overhead, not just warehouse labour.

Pressure-test scalability and peak readiness:

Assess whether current operations can absorb growth, promotions and seasonal peaks without service degradation or emergency spend.

Understand capital constraints to automation:

Large upfront investment, long payback periods and inflexible systems often delay or block automation, especially in uncertain demand environments.

Separate what must be owned from what can be optimised externally:

Focus internal teams on brand, product and growth, while operational complexity and capital-heavy automation are handled by scalable fulfilment infrastructure.

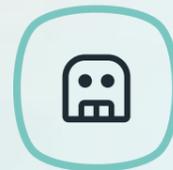


Challenge 4:

How THG Fulfil solves this challenge



Automated fulfilment network: Our global, automated fulfilment network offers brands the ability to tap into a market-leading operational solution whilst avoiding upfront CapEx, replacing fragmented, labour-intensive in-house operations with a scalable, high-performance fulfilment platform — one that doubles speed of delivery, offers the latest NDD cutoffs in market, and delivers over 80% 5* customer ratings.



RaaS automation solutions: Whilst traditional automation requires significant CapEx, long approval cycles and multi-year payback periods, our Robots as a Service (RaaS) model shifts automation to an OpEx model, allowing our clients to access robotics without large upfront spend or balance sheet risk. Through RaaS, we help brands turn automation from a high-risk, capital-heavy project into a flexible, scalable growth enabler, adopting robotics faster, safer and with immediate commercial impact.



Your growth potential unlocked

Localised checkout and delivery aren't incremental optimisations — they directly impact conversion, revenue, loyalty and lifetime value. They turn checkout from a point of friction into a growth engine.

Benefit from:



Cost-to-serve per order reduced through lower labour dependency, less overtime, improved space utilisation and fewer manual touchpoints.



Increase in AOV driven by faster delivery options, reliable cutoff times and increased customer confidence at checkout.



Higher long-term value as fulfilment reliability compounds across repeat orders.



Reduced customer service centre contacts, lowering support costs.



Faster pick, pack and dispatch, enabling later cutoff times and improved delivery propositions.



Ability to absorb demand spikes (campaigns, seasonality) without compromising service levels.



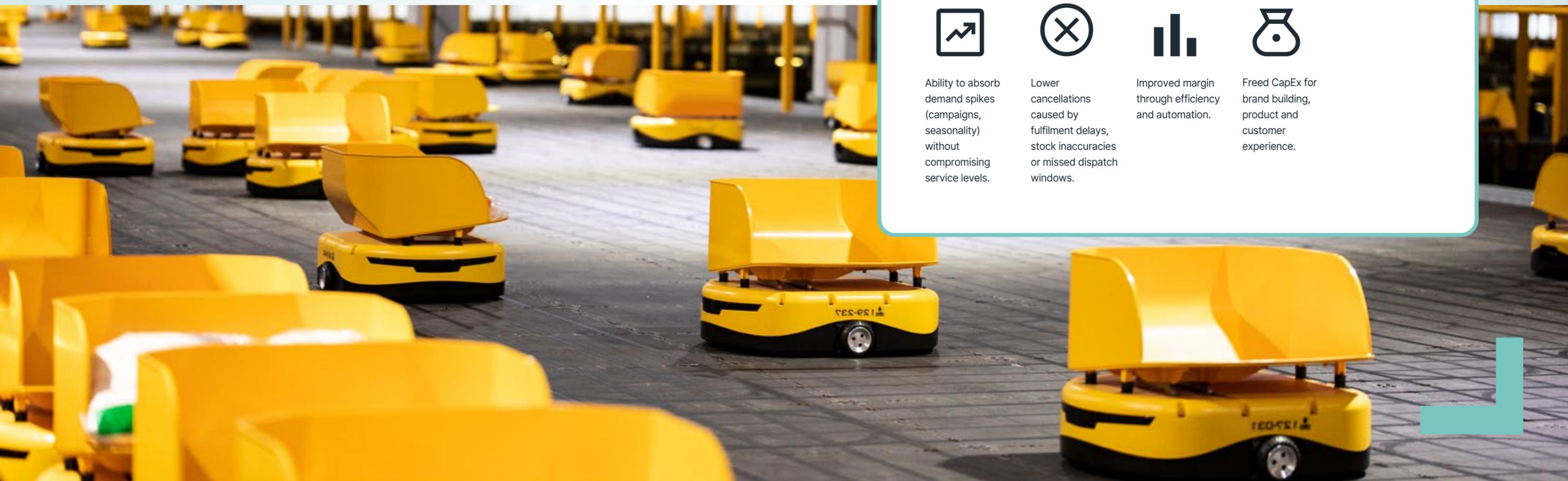
Lower cancellations caused by fulfilment delays, stock inaccuracies or missed dispatch windows.



Improved margin through efficiency and automation.



Freed CapEx for brand building, product and customer experience.



04. Strategic Implications for Brand Leaders.

By 2026, ecommerce will represent more than one-fifth of global retail. Brands that win will be those that align growth ambitions with operational excellence. Checkout will be where conversion, localisation, and compliance is won or lost, and fulfilment will determine whether promises are kept, and customers come back. Multi-channel inventory and marketplace operations will decide who captures demand across an increasingly fragmented digital landscape.

For CEOs, CMOs and COOs,
our advice is clear:

Stop treating your investments in checkout technology and fulfilment as a cost centre. It is a growth lever that is proven to influence conversion, retention, and customer lifetime value as much as, if not more than, additional ad spend.

Aim for operational parity with platforms like Amazon: You don't need to replicate Amazon's infrastructure, but you must match customer expectations for delivery speed, checkout experience and transparency. THG Fulfil is designed to bridge that gap.

Use checkout and fulfilment to make CAC work harder:

With CAC rising, every incremental uplift in conversion or repeat rate compounds. Investments in checkout and fulfilment yield ongoing returns.

Build for global from day one:

Cross-border demand is too large to ignore. Using MOR models, global payments and ready-made fulfilment networks allows brands to test and scale markets quickly.

Stay modular, avoid lock-in, but insist on integration:

THG Fulfil's ecosystem is modular for flexibility, but because it's integrated, it avoids the fragmentation that undermines many brands' tech stacks.



05. About THG Fulfil

For over 20 years, we've built and optimised a global operational network — first for our own brands within THG plc, and now as a market leading operational solutions provider.

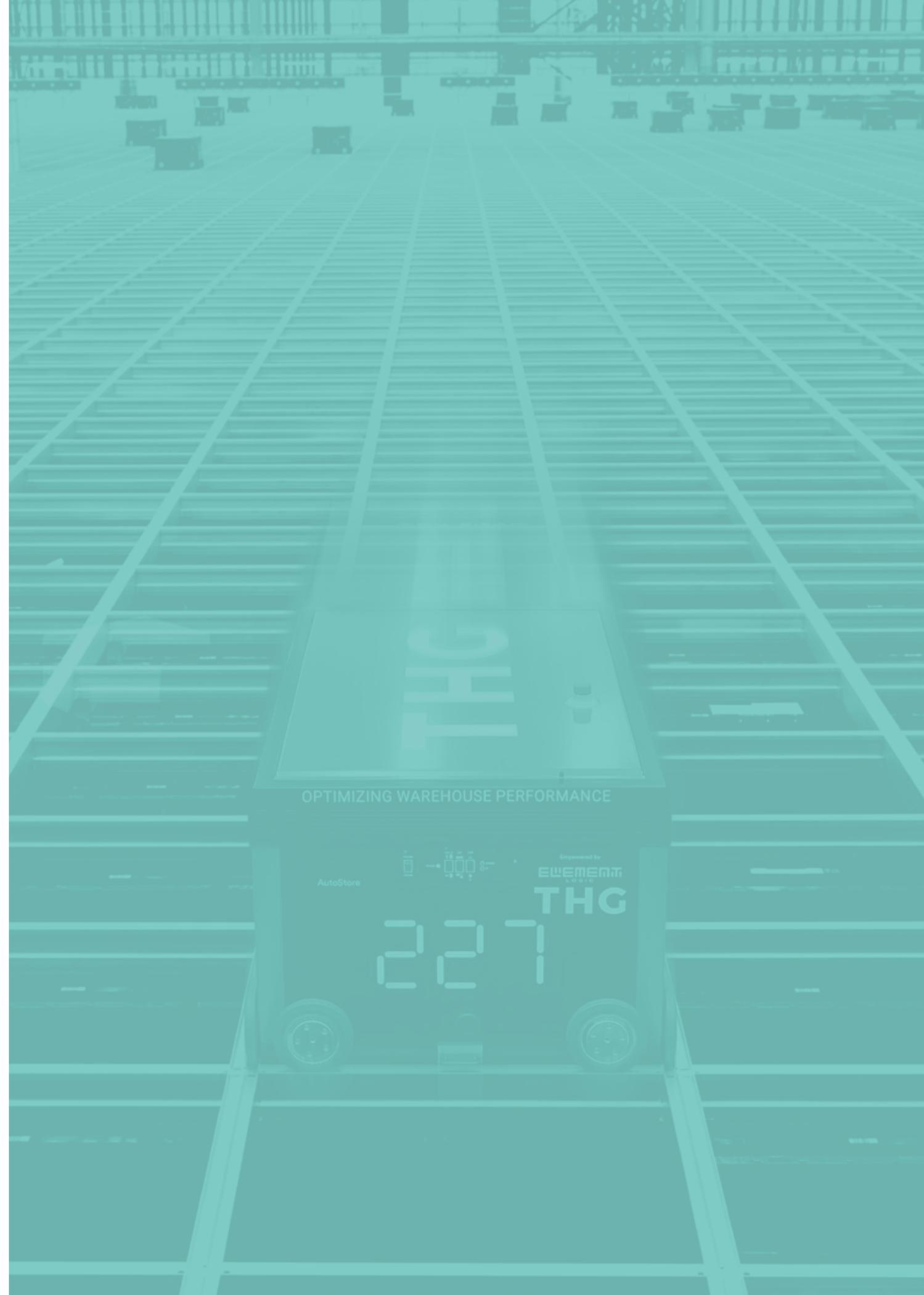
As brand owners, we've seen firsthand how the order to delivery experience can make or break customer experience and brand reputation. That's why we became obsessed with perfecting it. This relentless focus led us to develop

the UK's leading ecommerce operations solution and a highly competitive, dedicated ecommerce offering in the US. We've always believed checkout and fulfilment isn't a cost centre or an afterthought — it's a growth driver, impacting both customer retention and acquisition. By partnering with THG Fulfil, we help brands turn checkout and fulfilment from back-office necessities into the biggest growth levers in modern commerce.



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For more information about THG Fulfil's Checkout and Fulfilment capabilities and consulting services, please contact our team to schedule a facility tour and strategic consultation.