

# How to Select the Right Last Mile Logistics Software: A Guide

**The Last Mile Is Complex:** Learn How to Find a Solution That Will Simplify It

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# Why Elevated Customer Experience Is the Key to Last Mile Delivery Success

As high-grade customer experiences become more common, organizations must strive to elevate deliveries beyond expectations. When it comes to last mile delivery, being on time will not be enough to sustain an advantage.



While some have already implemented new technology for a competitive advantage, every operation will ultimately need to upgrade their existing logistics software to grow or sustain business in this new reality. It's no longer a question of if your organization needs advanced technology to manage the last mile; the question simply becomes: what software is best for your business?

## Why Read This Guide?

Researching and selecting the right last mile logistics solution for your business can be overwhelming. This guide aims to demystify the process, providing you with a simple framework to approach the endeavor, covering aspects such as:

- What you should know before you get started
- The importance of product demos in your research process
- The factors that should guide your selection and recommendation

**How to Choose the Right  
Last Mile Solution:**

# What to Know Before You Get Started

# 01

## Uncover Your Delivery Pain Points

To overcome the challenges that come with delivering on time, delighting customers, and optimizing costs, you first need to recognize and identify your pain points. Every business is different, but there are plenty of pitfalls that are fairly common to the last mile:



**Real-time Visibility:** One of the biggest obstacles facing delivery organizations is the blind spot that arises once a truck leaves the dock. Without constant eyes on activities in the field, it can be difficult to identify and address problems, improve processes, or keep customers updated.



**Access to Reliable Data:** Without the right set of tools to collect and consolidate reliable operational data from the field, it's nearly impossible to get an accurate snapshot of performance at any given moment. This makes it challenging to identify potential problems or exceptions promptly.



**Customer Expectations:** Elevated customer experiences require you to effectively deliver the visibility and control that customers demand throughout the buying experience—but this can be difficult when you don't have that visibility available internally.



**Highly Complex Routing:** If your current routing solution is not effectively or dynamically accounting for the many variables and parameters essential to a thriving delivery operation, you may be leaving money on the table. You want to find the most cost-effective route—but not at the expense of meeting customer and driver needs.



**Accurate ETAs:** To truly delight customers, your trucks need to arrive at the right site at the right time. Unfortunately, accurately calculating last-mile ETAs is nearly impossible by hand—in fact, it's even difficult for many routing software solutions.



**Scheduling Deliveries:** Across the industry, most service teams are spending too much time trying to get in touch with customers to schedule and confirm deliveries. It's time to ask yourself: how much of that process can be automated?



**Scalability:** If you're not using cloud-based software solutions, your technology may have a hard time keeping up as you add new trucks and routes to your growing business. Not only does this complicate growth, it also impacts your flexibility.



# 02

## Know the Latest Trends and Innovations

As organizations move to effectively address the realities of an omnichannel, on-demand delivery world, advanced last mile solutions are becoming even more critical to success.

**This has led to tremendous innovation and growth in the space over the last several years, resulting in some noteworthy capabilities and trends.**



### 360° Visibility:

To attain the visibility that modern logistics organizations need to operate efficiently, delivering a premier customer experience depends on real-time updates from the field, including delivery statuses and proof of delivery. Since GPS technology cannot support this level of detail and input, end-to-end logistics solutions leverage mobile technology seamlessly with the core software to capture, centralize, and share critical field data with key stakeholders.



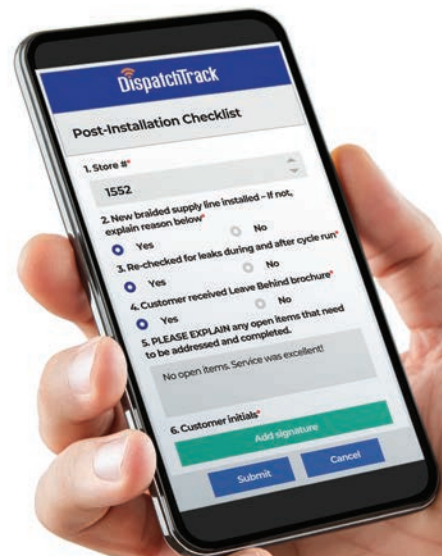
### SaaS-based Solutions:

This modernized pay-as-you-go model is more cost-efficient and scalable than an on-premises solution, but getting started and staying up to date with the latest releases is also much easier. Many legacy on-premises systems are shifting to the cloud, but the process is messy and inconsistent. Of course, not all SaaS solutions are truly scalable. The right solution will be able to route 10,000 trucks without slowing to a crawl.



### Robust All-in-one Packages:

Since optimizing internal operations and providing great customer experiences is no longer an "either-or" decision, newer, more advanced last mile solutions are addressing both with one cohesive, end-to-end platform.



# 03

## Ensure Internal Alignment

Identify and engage key stakeholders from across your organization that will influence your decision from the start to avoid delays and friction later in the process.

**This is a general list and may vary for you based on organizational structure, company size, etc., but consider representation from operations, IT, dispatch team, customer support, and finance, along with an executive sponsor (e.g. COO). Once assembled, gather and gain alignment on:**



### Expectations

Specific challenges or opportunities the software will solve



### Security Specifications

IT requirements to protect your proprietary customer data



### Integration Requirements

Essential integration points with existing systems e.g. POS and WMS



### Budget

Upfront investment and onboarding costs, as well as ongoing costs

# 04

## Know the Key Features and Functionality

At a high level, any best-in-class logistics and delivery solution should check the following boxes. More on this functionality in the next few pages.



### Route Optimizer



### Real-time Customer Communication Tools



### Driver Mobile App



### Real-time Visibility Dashboard

**Evaluating Potential Solutions:**

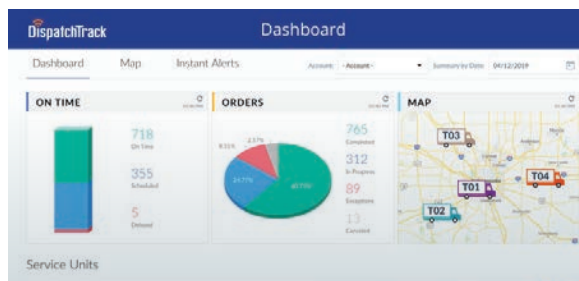
# How to Find the Right Functionality

# 01

## Route Optimizer

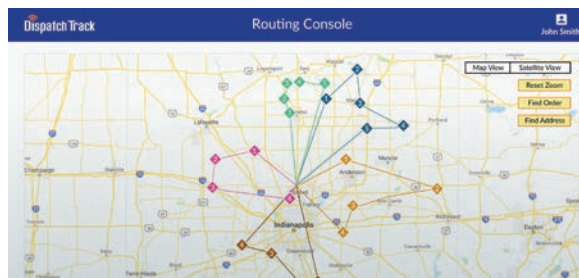
The quality of your last mile logistics and delivery software can be appraised by the sophistication, accuracy, and speed of the routing engine at its core. To support your business's complexities today and into the future, you need an advanced routing engine.

**An advanced engine goes beyond leveraging distance, driving speeds, and toll roads to optimize routes and determine time windows. It considers factors such as the service necessary for each type of delivery and other user-defined optimization parameters that may be unique to your business. Crucially, you need something that automatically factors in the drive-time differences between trucks and cars, and ideally even the drive- and service-time differences between different drivers or technicians.**



Here are three other features to invest your research into when evaluating a software's routing capabilities:

**Dynamic ETAs:** To meet customer expectations, you need to be able to provide precise time windows for delivery as well as up-to-date, accurate ETAs while the driver is on the road, even as delays occur and conditions change.



**Multiple Routing Modes:** Routing engines are generally capable of supporting recurring (always the same) or dynamic (always different) planning logic. However, if your company needs the flexibility to accommodate occasional changes to a recurring route, then a routing engine with hybrid planning logic is an advanced feature you'll want.



### Continuous Optimization (Machine Learning):

Even after a route is finalized, advanced routing engines allow you to modify it as new orders come in (but before the truck has left). This allows for smarter capacity planning and a smoother transition into picking items and level-loading your trucks.



# 02

## Customer Communication

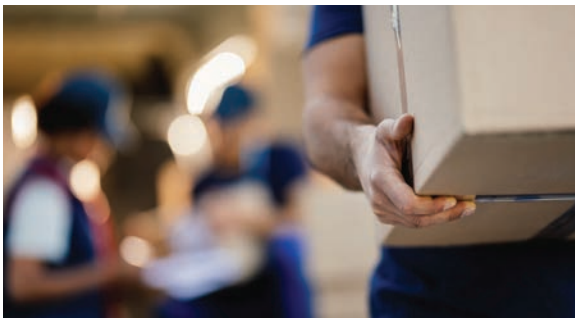
Increasingly, the customer experience is becoming a critical component of last mile success. In addition to a route optimizer, it is important that your delivery organization adequately provides consistent, proactive communication.

**Best-in-class logistics and delivery solutions successfully deliver increased control to the customer, delivering information and visibility across multiple channels to create a significant last-mile competitive advantage. Check to see whether your software offers these customer-facing capabilities and tools.**



### **Self-scheduling/Online Reservation System:**

Dynamic, capacity-aware systems allow you the ability to offer customers pre-set, pre-optimized delivery windows that they can schedule themselves. Not only does this decrease the time and costs associated with outbound phone scheduling, but it is a feature that is highly appreciated and valued by customers.



### **Automated Communication Workflows:**

Schedule communications for all last mile milestones, including delivery scheduling and confirmation, 48-hour reminder, day-of reminder, route-start message, and up-to-date ETAs via your customer's preferred channel(s).



### **Real-time Tracking:**

For total transparency, customers can directly track their order and access accurate ETAs throughout the day-of-delivery, measurably reducing customer confusion and frustration while minimizing calls into your support team.

# 03

## Driver Mobile App

One of the most important elements of a high-performing delivery solution is a reliable, easy-to-use mobile app. It serves as a data pipeline between drivers, management, and customers, creating the real-time visibility so critical for success on the last mile.

**Here are some mobile app must-haves that deliver the functionality you need:**

**Easy to Use and Reliable:** The only way to achieve the end-to-end visibility your organization needs is through driver adoption of the mobile app. In order for drivers to buy-in and use it, it needs to make their jobs easier. If it is not intuitive and easy to learn, the drivers won't try it. If it is unreliable or experiences connectivity issues in areas with poor cell phone service, the driver will stop using it.

**Chain of Custody Tools:** The app should allow the driver to complete frictionless and secure documentation, complete with signatures, notes, and pictures of each delivery as well as GPS detail and timestamps. To ensure your drivers' health and safety, some companies now offer contact-free delivery capabilities, so your driver can collect POD without customers having to touch the driver's mobile device physically.

**Mobile Dispatch Capability:** This allows dispatchers in the main office to digitally deploy hundreds of orders to multiple driver devices from their delivery logistics software. An advanced system will also allow you to add custom forms to the orders.

**One-Touch Notification:** Enable drivers to safely and proactively alert customers when they are on the way without having to hand-hold their device or navigate lengthy menus while driving.



**Custom Alerts:** Leverage real-time triggers to notify relevant stakeholders as new information is received. For example, when a driver updates the status of a delivery as "partial delivery – missing items" via the app, an alert is sent to the right person so the situation can be managed proactively.

# 04

## Real-time Visibility Dashboard

Real-time visibility dashboards provide a consolidated snapshot of all your operational key performance indicators (KPIs) in an easily digestible and actionable format accessible to internal stakeholders, from management to the support team.

**For delivery organizations, these KPIs often include the real-time status of all trucks, routes, and deliveries in one place so you and your team can stay aligned, quickly identify issues, and proactively address problems.**



In terms of assessing solutions, it is important to confirm that the software you are evaluating not only offers a centralized dashboard but also is lightweight, works on a common browser, and enables your entire staff to run an instance simultaneously at no additional cost. Here are the key features a dashboard should have:

**Mapping Views:** Pinpoint the current location of your entire fleet and follow movement in real-time.

**Real-time ETAs:** Accurate ETAs which are constantly being updated as drivers provide new status updates so that staff can address inbound customer inquiries.

**Automated Alerts:** Accurate ETAs that are constantly being refreshed as drivers provide new status updates so that staff can address inbound customer inquiries.

**Recreate Routes:** A “breadcrumbs” feature allows you to recreate past routes, complete with GPS coordinates and time stamps, so you can better research the cause for delays or issues. While most software will not allow you to access this data indefinitely because it takes up significant space, you should ensure it is available for at least 5 days.

**Reporting:** A combination of standard reports as well as the ability to intuitively build custom reports.

A critical component of operational performance is driver behavior. Your software provider should also be able to equip your fleet with Electronic Logging Device (ELD) hardware that connects to the truck’s engine to monitor important performance stats like Hours of Service (HOS), speeding, hard braking, or excessive idling. The data collected via your telematics solution should integrate seamlessly with your real-time visibility dashboard so you can create the reports you need to keep your fleet safe and in-compliance.

# The DispatchTrack Platform



## Mission Control

A centralized dashboard accessible by dispatchers and support teams gives real-time insight into the status of each driver, truck, and delivery



## Self-scheduling

Customers choose preferred delivery day and time via a capacity-aware self-scheduling tool



## Intelligent Routing

Dynamic, AI-powered route optimization algorithm that works quickly to optimize routes and calculate accurate ETAs across thousands of stops



## Automated Confirmation

24-hour delivery reminder & confirmation with option to reschedule



## Proactive Communication

Day of delivery confirmation via customer-preferred channel



## Real-Time Tracking

Ability for customers to track their deliveries from dock to door



## Driver Mobile App

Easy-to-use mobile app that allows one-click updates and maintains the critical connection with your driver

# Choose the Software That Offers Comprehensive Coverage of the Last Mile Experience

After evaluating the shortlist of possible software vendors via demos, collecting peer validation, and comparing features, it's time to synthesize all your research to make a decision.

**Here are some key questions to consider as you make your final recommendation to your internal stakeholders:**

## Functionality

- How effectively does the software address each pain point the stakeholder team identified earlier in the process?
- Will the software be valuable in addressing potential pain points that may arise in the future?
- What type of onboarding, training, and technical support is offered to customers? Is there an incremental cost associated with any of these services?

## Budget

- What is the all-in cost to purchase, set up, and train employees on the software?
- What are the ongoing costs to support it?
- How do these costs change as your organization grows?

## Security Specifications

- Are the IT standards to protect customer data met?
- Do you need SOC2/Type2 and HIPAA-certified data centers?
- Is third-party vendor access needed?
- What are the data management and security features?

## Integration Requirements

- Can your IT stakeholders test the API?
- What are the critical integration points that must work with the existing system?
- Does the mobile app perform equally well on both iOS & Android devices? What about in areas of low to zero cell phone service?

**As with all technology investments, the decision comes down to a cost-benefit analysis that is specific to your organization's objectives and goals. Does the value that the software will deliver justify the cost and resources required to purchase, set up, and maintain it? This value might come in the form of reduced IT spend, reduced cost per delivery, better driver retention, improved customer satisfaction scores, a reduction in manual effort, or any number of other areas.**





We hope this guide helped you find the answers you were looking for while raising your expectations of what an excellent logistics solution can do for your business. If there are any questions left unanswered or new ones sparked by this guide, please contact **[sales@dispatchtrack.com](mailto:sales@dispatchtrack.com)** to keep the discovery going.

DispatchTrack has developed software that includes these essential features, plus even more proprietary innovations that help teams achieve success.

**To learn more, book an appointment with DispatchTrack for further details and a short demo.**

- **100% multi-tenant SaaS with scalable architecture**
- **Powering deliveries for furniture, appliance, 3PL, food, building supplies, and other industries**
- **Servicing over 60M deliveries per year and growing**
- **Customers regularly see 3-10x ROI**

### **About DispatchTrack**

DispatchTrack is a leading provider of SaaS solutions for food distributors, furniture retailers, and anyone else who struggles to optimize the last mile. Our streamlined and intuitive user dashboard provides the real-time visibility that dispatchers need to keep track of their deliveries and proactively manage them.

Among the platform's many features, we offer modular tools for self-scheduling, route optimization, customer communication, real-time tracking and ETA, proof of delivery, and delivery network intelligence and analytics.

With customers across North America, Europe, South America, and Asia, DispatchTrack is used by thousands of businesses of all sizes and many multi-billion-dollar enterprises across a wide range of industries. More than 180 million scheduled delivery experiences are powered by DispatchTrack each year. **For more information, contact us now at 1-866-437-3573 or [sales@dispatchtrack.com](mailto:sales@dispatchtrack.com).**