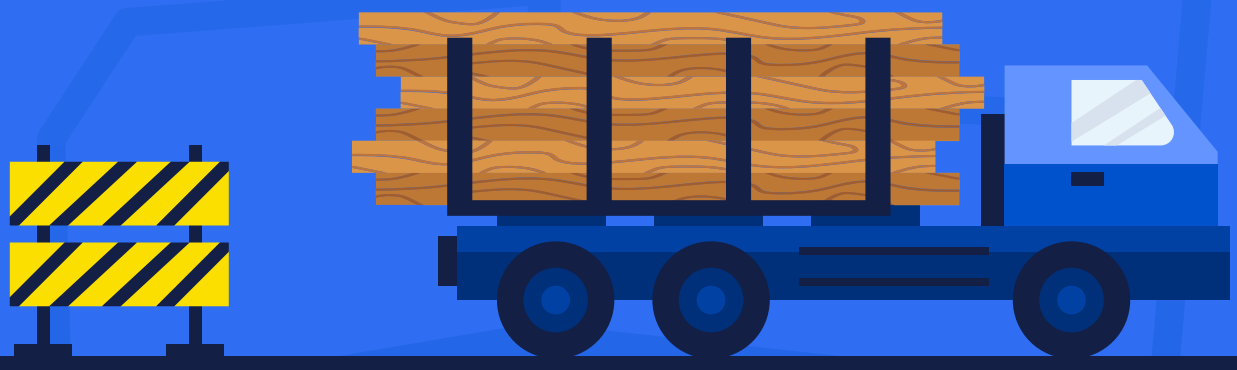
DispatchTrack

The Ultimate Guide To

Delivery Experience for BUILDING MATERIALS



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01



INTRODUCTION

If you're a building supplies distributor, one of the most important numbers for predicting the health and future success of your business is your delivery NPS.

With the construction industry still booming, contractors and construction companies need to be able to rely on their suppliers to keep their job site schedules on track and ensure that they have the right materials for the job at the right time. When you can provide customers with a great delivery experience, you can build trust and earn their repeat business. This is obviously a recipe for business growth and success.

Of course, it's a lot easier said than done. Job sites have complex schedules and they often move at a fast pace—which means your customers' needs are constantly evolving. When an order for a pallet of shingles comes in that needs to be scheduled and delivered that day, you need to find an available truck and driver to dispatch the delivery to as quickly as possible.

Not only that, but you have to make sure the truck has the right capacity and doesn't run afoul of any of your other routing parameters (e.g. being too big to access the job site). From there, you need to let your customers know when to actually expect the delivery, which can be difficult to estimate when you've just thrown a new order into an existing route. If there are delays, you have to spot them in real time and take quick actions to keep customers informed and remedy the situation.

It's a delicate balancing act—but if you can pull it off, you can boost your NPS and grow your business. The question is: **how do you get there?**



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WHAT MAKES FOR GREAT DELIVERY EXPERIENCE?

When thinking about the best way to boost your brand as a delivery business and provide customers with stellar deliveries, it can be helpful to think about what those stellar experiences look like in practice.

In the past few years, the gap in expectations between B2C deliveries and B2B deliveries has mostly vanished. Construction sites have always required fast delivery turnarounds, but buyers in this area increasingly want the kind of visibility you get into a mattress or fridge delivery—to say nothing of the kind of pre- and post-delivery touches.



In a nutshell, here's what modern building supply customers are looking for in there deliveries:

- **On-time performance:** Simply put, showing up at the right time is non-negotiable. Late deliveries can put job site schedules out of joint—and, in some cases, early deliveries can do the same.

- **Flexibility:** Customers want to feel like you can accommodate their needs—even when those needs don't fit into the plan that you had going into the day. This applies before the delivery, when they want you to be adaptable with last-minute orders, and during the delivery, when you need to manage exceptions swiftly to **prevent delays and disruptions.**

- **End-to-end visibility:** Giving customers the ability to track their own deliveries without calling in to ask about delivery statuses goes a long way towards building trust and ensuring smooth delivery processes.

- **Proactive delivery notifications:** To keep their own job sites on track, contractors need to know when to expect a given delivery—which means they need a notification when the delivery has been scheduled, when it's out for delivery, and when their stop is the next one. These notifications should include up-to-the-minute ETAs where possible.

- **Post-delivery follow-up:** Just because the driver has dropped off the pallet and collected proof of delivery, that doesn't mean the customer's journey is over. Gathering feedback in the form of surveys can be a valuable way to make customers feel supported.



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STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING DELIVERY EXPERIENCE

Delivery experience ultimately comes down to technology. To create the kind of high-touch delivery experience we described above, you need technological capabilities within your delivery planning and execution stack that not all solutions offer.

Here's a rundown of what to look for when you're trying to boost your delivery NPS, and how these capabilities feed into delivery optimization strategies.

Route optimization

Route optimization is already a complex problem from a mathematical perspective. Calculating all of the possible routes from even a small number of stops can quickly become too time consuming to be practical—especially once you add time window requests into the equation.

The ability to show up at the right time—even when customers are demanding same day and next day deliveries—comes down to the strength of your route optimization. You need a route optimization solution that can generate routes in seconds and update existing routes just as quickly—all while accounting for capacity limitations, driver skill requirements, job site requirements and other factors that might impact vehicle type, and customer time window requests.

Not every routing solution on the market can make that happen. And even the ones that can can't always offer accurate delivery ETAs once orders have been routed. To make that happen, you often need to leverage AI and machine learning algorithms that can turn past delivery data on things like service time and traffic patterns into accurate predictions.



But with the right technology in place, you can set the foundation for a best-in-class delivery experience for your customers. For starters, with a fast, cloud-based solution you can generate routes quickly enough to push back your order cutoff time. This positions you to offer flexibility to your customers as to when they get their orders in—it also puts you in a position to easily adjust routes to accommodate changes as needed. Bear in mind, the right routing solution will make it easy to match the right drivers and vehicles to the right orders, so you won't be sacrificing route efficiency.

Crucially, AI-powered routing can also ensure that you have precise and accurate delivery ETAs. This puts you in a position to show up at exactly the time that you promised your customer—which forms the foundation of any successful delivery run.



Customer communications

Once you have a foundation of fast, efficient, and accurate routing, you can start to focus on the parts of the delivery process that touch the customer more directly—i.e. customer communications.

Job site managers and other stakeholders want total visibility into their deliveries—which isn't too surprising when you consider that they're often balancing complex work schedules and juggling a lot of moving parts. By communicating in a timely way across multiple channels, you can provide that visibility, build trust, and encourage repeat business.

Here are a few best practices for doing that:

- **Leverage texts, emails, and phone calls as needed:** There's no single medium that's appropriate for every stage of the delivery journey. You need to be able to send emails where appropriate—e.g. to provide proof of delivery—and pivot to texts for day-of delivery notifications. By the same token, you should communicate with your customers using their preferred method when possible.

- **Customize your messages:** If you deliver a variety of different items—and especially if you offer different services or installations—there isn't necessarily a one-size-fits-all message for each delivery. If you can configure the messages your customers receive to the specific delivery or service type and the specific product they're receiving, you can offer an experience that feels more personalized.

- **Enable two-way communication:** You don't want anything to go wrong on the day of delivery—but disruptions are just a fact of life in delivery management. The trick is dealing with them proactively, which in this case means communicating directly with the customer if possible.

Live order tracking

For a truly B2C-worthy customer experience, there is a level beyond sending delivery notifications: **offering live order tracking directly on the customer's device.** Someone waiting for a delivery of siding material isn't likely to keep refreshing their delivery tracking portal every few minutes the way a consumer waiting for a couch might, but they will sometimes want to check their delivery status.

When that happens, you don't want them to have to call your customer support team to ask when the truck is going to arrive. Phone calls are seen as a last resort by most these days, and even if they weren't they still wouldn't scale from a back-office perspective. Conversely, if you can give customers the ability to instantaneously see their delivery ETAs, they can get the info they need and plan accordingly.

By tackling the delivery journey from end to end with your communications, you can do more than just keep customers informed—you can inspire real confidence that the delivery will go right. Simply put, this level of customer experience makes contractors feel like they can rely on you when it matters. The trick is finding technology that will enable you to offer the number of communication touch points we're talking about at scale.



Making this happen requires a connected system that feeds status updates from drivers back into your centralized system in order to adjust ETAs in real time. This requires smart, connected systems that cover the delivery process from end to end. You need seamless movement of data between drivers, dispatchers, and customers and the kind of visibility that comes from not having to hunt for information. But offering that kind of visibility to customers can go a long way towards improving your delivery NPS.



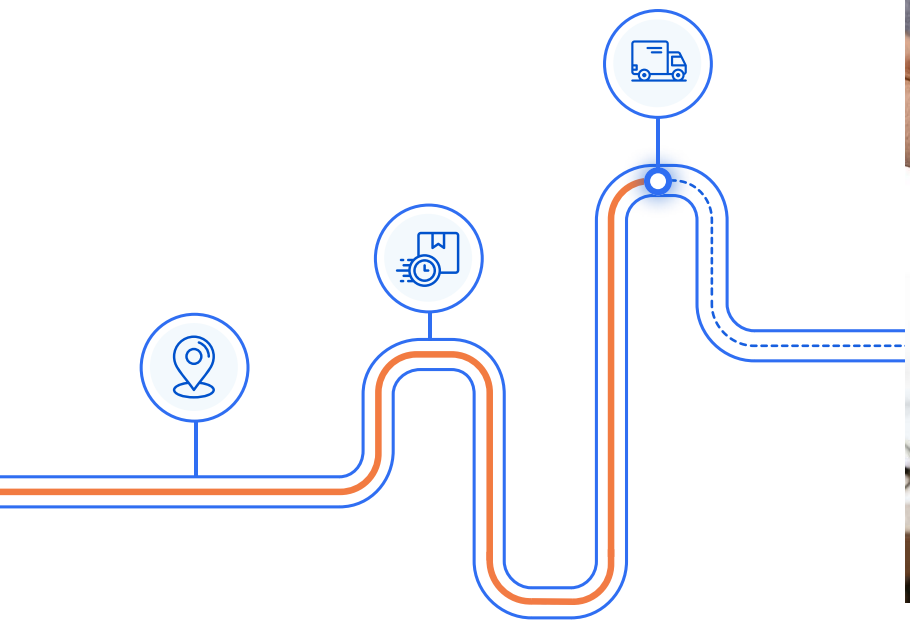
Exception management

Providing visibility externally to customers can be extremely valuable—but what you do with the visibility you've achieved internally can also have a big impact on the delivery experience. A lot of this comes down to how you approach exception management.

When delivery schedules are chaotic and job sites have shifting requirements, disruptions are simply a fact of life. But without visibility into your deliveries, there's often no way to tell that something has gone wrong until the customer or driver calls to tell you about it. By then, it's usually too late to keep things on track, and your only option is damage control.

This scenario looks totally different when you can spot exceptions in real time. When you don't have to hunt for the information you need—when the status of every truck, route, and driver is at your fingertips—you can see whether a driver is going to miss their ETA for any given stop. Once you've seen the potential for a late delivery, you can proactively reach out to the customer to work the situation out, or even send new instructions to the driver.

By the same token, if you can see the proof of delivery for each stop as soon as it's uploaded, you can spot deliveries that didn't go according to plan—e.g. those where the wrong items were delivered or items may have shown up damaged. This puts you in a position to mitigate the situation directly with the customer, and do it quickly. These situations may not be ideal, but the faster you're able to reach out to the customer the faster they'll feel confident that you're going to put things right. Most of the strategies we've discussed so far have been aimed at getting higher highs when it comes to customer satisfaction, but cutting out the lowest of the lows can also be a big help.





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HOW DISPATCHTRACK LEVERAGES

CONNECTED TECHNOLOGY TO ENSURE A B2C-WORTHY CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

The strategies we've been talking about for boosting all depend on having the right tools for the job.

And that's exactly what we strive to provide at DispatchTrack. We offer a comprehensive, cloud-based platform for managing last mile deliveries from end to end.

Our solution is designed to make building supplies distribution faster, more efficient, and more streamlined—all while ensuring a B2C-like customer experience that will keep your customers coming back. To make that happen, we offer:



AI-POWERED ROUTE OPTIMIZATION

We give dispatchers and routers full visibility into their delivery capacity and help them maximize its usage. Our system automatically accounts for driver speed and skill, vehicle capacity limitations, customer time window requests, site specific requirements, and more to generate the most efficient possible routes in seconds. At the same time, we leverage AI to turn past delivery data into 98% accurate ETAs. The result that you ensure efficient capacity usage, and your customers get reliable on time deliveries.

B2C-LEVEL CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS

Our solution is designed to create stellar delivery experiences across channels, which is why we enable users to seamlessly send emails, texts, and even automated phone calls to customers at scale. Communications can be customized by different product or service types, and they can be set to whatever cadence is right for your business. We offer schedule confirmation emails, route start notifications, next stop and arrival notifications with live ETAs, and automated surveys after the fact so you can measure your delivery NPS and capture feedback.

TOTAL REAL-TIME VISIBILITY-FOR YOU AND YOUR CUSTOMERS

Not only does DispatchTrack's platform offer you total visibility into your delivery capacity, it also enables real-time delivery intelligence throughout the entire delivery process. Users can monitor deliveries as they unfold from a single-pane-of-glass dashboard that shows live updates for every truck, driver, and route. From there, you can quickly spot exceptions and manage them proactively to keep your deliveries on track and your customers happy.

And this level of visibility isn't just available for dispatchers and customer support staff—it's available for your customers as well. Your customers can access a live delivery tracking portal either via a tracking link in your email/text communications or a widget on your website. From there, they can see their order information/status, a live ETA, and the location of the truck on a map.

SMARTER PROOF OF DELIVERY AND DRIVER MANAGEMENT

To underpin these visibility capabilities, DispatchTrack offers a highly-connected driver mobile app. From the app, drivers can update their statuses as they move from job to job (which is fed back into our routing algorithm to provide updated ETAs throughout the delivery), scan items on and off the truck, and capture robust proof of delivery in the form of pictures, signatures, and notes. As deliveries are underway, this level of connectivity makes it easier to spot and manage exceptions—resulting in a better experience for your customers and improved delivery NPS. After the fact, this helps create a complete audit trail for every delivery, which simplifies return management and streamlines post-delivery follow up.

All of this functionality combines to cover the entire last mile process from end to end—all with a laser focus on the customer. DispatchTrack's technology helps numerous building supplies delivery organizations cut through the chaos to provide a best-in-class delivery experience to their customers. The result is an improved delivery NPS and a strong foundation for business growth.



DispatchTrack

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