



AI Demand Forecasting Readiness Checklist:

Is your business future-prepared?

Before investing in AI demand forecasting, it's critical to assess where your food distribution business stands today. Use this expanded checklist to identify strengths, close priority gaps, and prepare for scalable success.

DATA FOUNDATION

Do you have 12+ months of order and shipment history across customers?

☐

Is your inventory tracked at the SKU and warehouse/DC level?

☐

Are order, sales, and inventory signals centralized across your ERP, OMS, and WMS systems?

☐

Is shelf life or perishability recorded accurately for relevant SKUs?

☐

Can you trust your historical order/inventory data to be clean and complete?

☐

OPERATIONAL COMPLEXITY

Do you operate multiple DCs or fulfillment centers across regions?

☐

Are perishables or short-shelf-life SKUs a significant portion of your catalog?

☐

Do you frequently transfer inventory between DCs to meet demand?

☐

Are customer-specific SLAs a major driver of your fulfillment planning?

☐

Do your delivery routes or schedules vary frequently based on customer or market demand shifts?

☐

FORECASTING & PLANNING

Do you forecast demand at the SKU, customer, and warehouse level?	☐
Are your forecasts updated at least weekly to reflect changing demand?	☐
Can you easily measure forecast accuracy against actual demand?	☐
Do you track KPIs like MAPE, bias, service levels, and forecast volatility?	☐

TECHNOLOGY & INTEGRATION

Can your systems automatically share clean inventory and order data with external platforms?	☐
Can your systems export structured data (API, CSV) without manual effort?	☐
Can your systems auto-generate POs based on forecasted needs?	☐
Is your master data (SKUs, suppliers) clean, current, and consistently audited?	☐
Is inventory, order, and shipment data updated in real-time or near real-time?	☐

STRATEGIC READINESS

Is leadership aligned on predictive inventory and proactive supply chain goals?	☐
Do supply chain, procurement, and sales align around a unified demand plan?	☐
Is reducing inventory working capital a formal business objective?	☐
Are you planning to offer proactive forecasting, replenishment services, or inventory visibility to your key customers as a value-added service?	☐

Now that you've completed the checklist, please turn the page to assess your AI Demand Forecasting Readiness score.

AI Demand Forecasting Readiness Scoring

How to Score:

1. Check the box next to every question your organization meets today.
2. Give yourself 1 point for each box you check.
3. Add up your total points at the end to find your readiness score.

Interpret Your Score:

Boxes Checked	Readiness Level	What It Means
23-27	Highly ready	Strong data, operations, and strategic alignment. Ready to scale AI forecasting.
15-22	Strong foundation	Good base — close targeted gaps to maximize forecasting success and ROI.
Below 15	Foundational work needed	Strengthen data, systems, and planning before launching AI forecasting.

Next Steps Based on Your Score:

23–27 (Highly Ready): You're positioned to move quickly.

- Identify a pilot group (SKUs, warehouses, or customers) to launch AI forecasting initiatives.
- Begin real-time integration projects to sync data across ERP, WMS, and TMS systems.

15–22 (Strong Foundation): You're close.

- Prioritize closing gaps in data quality, forecast refresh rates, or system integration.
- Conduct a targeted readiness audit with your supply chain, procurement, and IT teams.

Below 15 (Foundational Work Needed): Start by strengthening the basics.

- Focus on cleaning and centralizing demand, inventory, and shipment data.
- Align cross-functional teams (sales, operations, procurement) around unified demand planning.