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# Peak Shopping Season Predictions in Europe

What can retailers learn from peak season 2021 and how can they prepare for the upcoming one?



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## E-Commerce Landscape in Europe

Accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, e-commerce growth exploded across Europe in 2021. For starters, **74% of internet users in the European Union shopped online in 2021** – the highest we have seen in a decade.

Despite this surge in e-commerce adoption, we also witnessed **an increasing number of consumers returning to physical retail**. With the re-opening of physical stores and easing of COVID-19 restrictions, European shoppers became more interested to buy in-store again. Top retailers in Europe also focused on creating integrated in-store and online shopping experiences to cater to the ever-growing needs of consumers.

### A general shift away from fast and cheap fulfillment

Next, we observed a shift away from fast and cheap fulfillment, as retailers moved toward setting more realistic delivery expectations worldwide. **The use of same-day delivery**, for instance, has **declined from a previously low base to 4%** among the top retailers in Europe.

**More retailers adopted in-store returns** (51%, up 11% from a year ago), whereas returns via home pick-ups were offered by 9% – a 6% drop from the year before. Returns via drop-offs at a third-party collection and returns point also rose slightly by 3% to 20%. Lastly, **the number of retailers who refund the original costs of shipping has fallen by 45%** over the last year. Today, only 39% of retailers offer it – down from 84% a year ago, with its uptake decreasing in all categories.

### What's next?

2021 was no doubt a year fraught with opportunities, crises and uncertainties. From the reopening of borders, to the lasting impacts of Brexit and the global supply chain crunch, it was indeed one for the books. Now that we have entered the second half of 2022, the highly-anticipated shopping season is just around the corner. What can retailers expect for this peak season after unprecedented holiday sales volumes from the past 2 years? Read on to find out!

#### References:

"E-commerce statistics for individuals," Eurostat 2022  
 "The 2021 RetailX Europe Top1000", Internet Retailing 2021



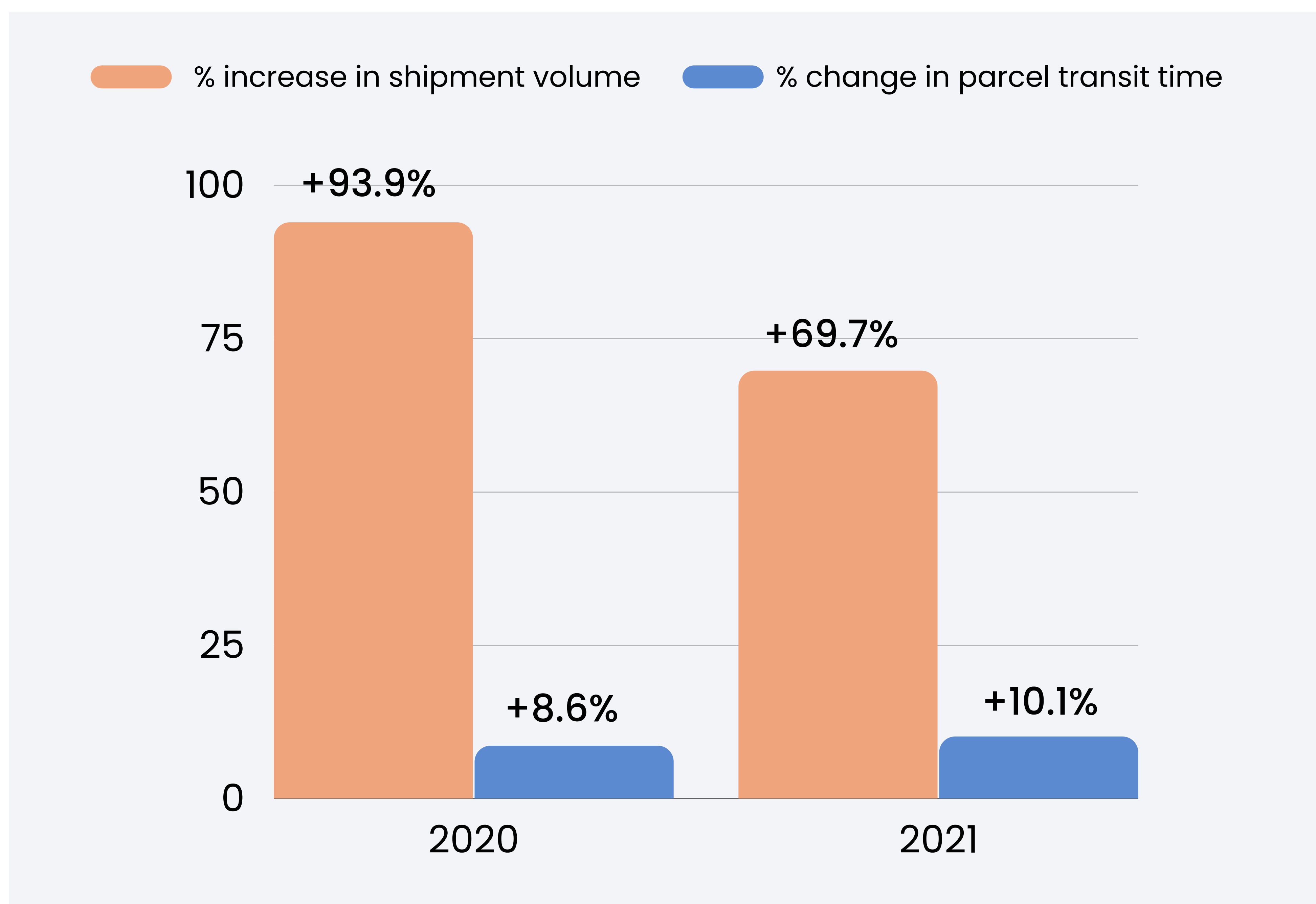
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## Parcel Monitor's Peak Season Forecast 2022: How Peak Season 2021 Went

As compared to the period before BFCM, **parcel volume only increased by 69.7% in 2021**, down from the 93.9% growth experienced in 2020. One possible explanation could be that people were starting their holiday shopping as early as June – a whopping 4 months before the start of BFCM deals. The trend was even more notable in the UK, where parcel volume growth plunged from 97.4% during BFCM 2020 to 45.4% during BFCM 2021. A similar trend was also witnessed in Germany, where the figures went from 90% in 2020 to 79% in 2021.

As compared to the start of the pandemic, parcel delivery performance in Europe appears to be recovering by leaps and bounds. More specifically speaking, the region's **average transit time has gone down from 1.5 days in 2020 to 1.3 days in 2021**. Despite this overall improvement in transit times, there was an increase in delivery delays during the peak period. In fact, the hold-up during BFCM 2020 was only 8.57%, as compared to 10.08% same time last year.

### State of Europe E-Commerce in Peak Season 2021



## Parcel Monitor's Peak Season Forecast 2022: How Peak Season 2022 Might Look Like

### Will it be a quiet peak season this year?

According to our projections, **e-commerce parcel volumes will decrease by about 12.9%** (between 5.3% and 20.1%) during the 3-week period starting from Black Friday Cyber Monday (BFCM) weekend, as compared to the same time last year. Moreover, our "full month" projections for November to December indicate that **peak season 2022 will likely be a stagnant one** with minimal changes (between -9% to 9%) in the number of e-commerce parcel volumes from the month before.

Compounding the damage from the COVID-19 pandemic, the escalating conflict in the region following the Russian invasion of Ukraine has no doubt caused some major e-commerce disruptions on a global scale. Against the backdrop of stagflation and a poor economic outlook, consumers have lost much of their purchasing power and are being forced to reduce their spending in any way they can. Hence, it would not be surprising to see a slowdown in e-commerce purchases in the upcoming peak season.

Having said that, it is still too soon to determine how peak season 2022 will pan out in light of all the uncertainties in the world today. While we know it will be unprecedented, further developments remain to be seen.



## Preparations for Peak Season 2022: Advice from an Industry Leader

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We recently reached out to Wolfgang Lehmacher, a Supply Chain & Technology Expert at Parcel Monitor, to hear his insights on the upcoming peak season in Europe. Here is what the former Head of Supply Chain and Transport at the World Economic Forum has to say:

### What should retailers do to prepare for the upcoming peak season 2022?

"Companies should set up data-driven supply chains with a high level of visibility and solid data on customers and consumer trends to support customized promotions and programs that offer incentives for those that wait. Such a system leaves room for the shaping of consumer behavior instead of being driven by market developments through the use of email marketing and social media channels most effectively."

### How would the peak season this year be different from 2021?

"While Covid-19 remains to be a wild card markets are exposed to high inflation and slowing global economic growth. Households are cutting back on big-ticket items and start putting a break on services like travel and dining out. Raising prices and slimming savings may also show their impact on goods. The economic outlook for the second half of 2022 isn't great which causes consumer concerns. This all together indicates that the peak season 2022 will probably not be as dramatic as what we have seen during the hot times in the last two years. Nevertheless, in today's volatile world, everything can happen which makes cash and agile systems king."



**Wolfgang Lehmacher**  
Former Head of Supply Chain and Transport  
World Economic Forum

## About Parcel Monitor

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### An E-Commerce Logistics Community

Initiated by e-commerce logistics enthusiasts at Parcel Perform, Parcel Monitor is a community that aims to inspire the e-commerce logistics ecosystem to create a better delivery experience for everyone.



### For Industry Professionals

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E-commerce logistics professionals leverage our data and resources to derive market insights while forming meaningful collaborations across the entire industry.

### For Consumers

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Millions of consumers rely on Parcel Monitor's free parcel tracking to monitor the status of their parcels across 900+ carriers globally on a single platform.



## Data Methodology

Through our benchmarking and carrier performance measurement activities, we collect billions of anonymized data points from 130+ countries each year. High-quality data from millions of parcels tracked from more than 1500 carriers have been analyzed to create this report.

Domestic and international data is analyzed on a "trade lane" level, comparing the same combinations of origin and destination to maintain data representativeness. Benchmark data sets have been compiled with strict minimum requirements for data point quantity and comparability (detailed in the respective "Benchmarking approach" sections).

To come up with these peak season projections, we applied different machine learning techniques specific to forecasting, evaluated the models' performance against historical data, and used the model that had the best accuracy to produce our forecast numbers.

## Request for Your Customised Logistics Report

**Parcel Monitor's Benchmarking Report measures your end-to-end logistics experience and compares it with data from more than 1500 carriers and over 2 billion parcel tracking updates.**

With these industry benchmarks, compare and understand your logistics performance against the top logistics performers in your market. With the right insights, e-commerce businesses can make data-driven decisions to enhance the consumers' experience and improve customer lifetime value.



### What's Inside the Report?

A customized report with critical performance metrics such as:

- ✓ Parcel volumes split by domestic/international
- ✓ Shipment transit times
- ✓ Carrier dependence
- ✓ Collection points deliveries
- ✓ ... and more!

The reports are available for free for Parcel Monitor members. Request for one now!

[Request for your report now](#)