

Parcel Entry

The Missing Control Point Between
Supplier Delivery and Saleable Stock

By Raoshan Kumar



INTRODUCTION

Your Warehouse May Have More Inventory Than Your ERP Shows

A parcel arrives at your warehouse.

The security guard receives it, checks the transport document and writes the details in a register.

- The parcel is placed inside.
- Then everyone gets back to work.
- A day passes.
- Maybe two.

Someone will open it when they get time.

This sounds like a normal warehouse process. In many fashion retail businesses, it is.

But there is a problem.

The business knows the parcel has arrived physically, but the ERP may not know it exists.

Until the parcel is opened and the merchandise is entered into the system, those goods remain practically invisible to the business.

- They cannot be allocated to a store.
- They cannot be seen by the sales team.
- They may not appear in stock reports.

The buyer may not know that the supplier's shipment has actually arrived.

And the owner may have no idea that saleable merchandise is sitting somewhere inside the warehouse.

This becomes even more complicated because suppliers rarely deliver large orders in one shipment.

You may order 1,000 sarees and receive them as:

200 + 300 + 250 + 250

The vendor confirms, "*The entire order has been dispatched.*"

Your ERP may show only 500 pieces because only two parcels have been opened.

The warehouse may say, "*All the parcels have been received.*"

The purchase team may say, "*Supplier has not completed the order.*"

Everybody is working with a different version of reality.

This is where Parcel Entry becomes important.

Parcel Entry is simply the practice of recording the physical arrival of a shipment in the ERP before its contents are fully processed into inventory.

It creates visibility between two events:

Parcel Received → Inventory Available

That small gap is often ignored.

But in a fashion retail business, that gap can affect stock visibility, supplier reconciliation, warehouse productivity, customer commitments and even the selling window of merchandise.

This book is about closing that gap.

Not by adding unnecessary complexity.

But by creating one simple discipline:

When a parcel arrives, you should know it's arrived. When it's opened or still waiting to be opened, you should know that too.

- Raoshan Kumar

Chapter 1: The Missing Step in Inventory Management

A parcel received is not the same as inventory received.

Let's start with a simple example.

You place a purchase order for 1,000 sarees.

Your supplier sends the goods in four parcels:

Parcel	Quantity	Status
P-001	200	Opened
P-002	300	Opened
P-003	250	Unopened
P-004	250	Unopened

All four parcels have physically reached your warehouse.

But your ERP may show only **500 pieces in inventory**.

So, what is the actual situation?

- Ordered: 1,000
- Physically received: 1,000
- Opened: 500
- Entered into inventory: 500
- Still waiting: 500

Without Parcel Entry, the last 500 pieces are effectively invisible.

This is the central problem.

The Traditional Process

Many businesses operate something like this:

Supplier → Transport → Security Register → Warehouse → Open Parcel →
Purchase Entry → Inventory

The weak point is between **Warehouse** and **Open Parcel**.

There is no system visibility during that period.

The parcel can sit there for hours, days or sometimes longer.

A paper register can confirm that something arrived, but it cannot easily answer:

- Which parcels are still unopened?
- How old are they?
- Which supplier sent them?
- Which purchase order do they belong to?
- Are any high-value parcels waiting?
- Are any customer-specific parcels waiting?
- Which purchase orders have been partially received?
- What arrived physically but has not yet become inventory?

These are management questions, not security questions.

That is why the parcel should enter the ERP as soon as it reaches the warehouse.

Parcel Entry: What It Actually Means

Parcel Entry does not mean creating inventory immediately.

It means creating a digital record of the physical shipment.

A basic Parcel Entry could capture:

- Parcel number
- Supplier
- Purchase order
- Transporter / courier
- Consignment or airway bill number
- Number of packages
- Date and time received
- Receiving warehouse
- Priority
- Status

The status could initially be:

Received – Unopened

Once the parcel is physically opened and processed:

Opened – Processed

This simple distinction creates visibility.

The ERP now knows:

"This merchandise has arrived physically, but it is not yet part of available inventory."

That is valuable information.

Why Fashion Retail Makes This More Important

Fashion merchandise has a selling window.

A festive collection arriving before the season has one commercial value.

The same collection arriving after the season has another.

A fast-moving article that is physically sitting in your warehouse cannot help a store that is running out of stock.

A customer-specific lehnga waiting unopened in a warehouse can become a customer-service problem.

The issue isn't just:

"How quickly does my warehouse open the cartons?"

The real question is:

"How quickly does the stock move from receiving the parcel to becoming available for sale?"

That's where your ERP and warehouse process matter.

The Key Principle

Think of Parcel Entry as a control point, not another transaction.

The purpose is to create a digital trail:



Once these stages are visible, management can identify where the delay is occurring.

Chapter 2: The Partial Delivery & Unopened Parcel Problem

The supplier says "sent." The ERP says "pending." The warehouse says "it's here."

This is one of the most common situations created by partial deliveries.

Suppose you order 1,000 pieces.

The supplier dispatches:

- 200 pieces on Monday
- 300 on Thursday
- 250 the following Tuesday
- 250 later

The purchase order remains one order for 1,000 pieces.

But physically, the merchandise is arriving in pieces.

Without parcel-level tracking, reconciliation becomes difficult.

The retailer may ask:

"How much has the supplier actually delivered?"

The supplier may answer:

"We have already dispatched everything."

The ERP may show:

"Only 500 received."

The warehouse may say:

"The other parcels are lying here."

There is no single reliable view.

Ordered, Dispatched, Received and Processed Are Different

A good ERP should distinguish between these stages:

1. Ordered

What the retailer requested.

2. Dispatched

What the supplier says has left their premises.

3. Received

What has physically reached the retailer.

4. Opened

What the warehouse has physically unpacked.

5. Processed

What has been verified and entered into inventory.

These numbers can be different.

And that is perfectly normal.

The problem occurs when the ERP hides the difference.

For example:

Purchase Order: 1,000

Supplier says dispatched: 1,000

Parcel received: 1,000

Opened: 700

Inventory available: 700

Now there is no argument about the missing 300.

Everyone can see exactly where they are:

300 pieces are sitting in unopened parcels.

That is operational visibility.

The Age of the Parcel Matters

A parcel received 30 minutes ago is not a concern.

A parcel received five days ago may be.

Therefore, a Parcel Entry system should capture ageing.

A simple dashboard could show:

Status	Parcels
Received today	28
1 day old	14
2–3 days old	7
More than 3 days old	4
High-value pending	2

Now the warehouse manager knows where to focus.

The owner does not need to inspect every parcel.

Management can work on exceptions.

Not Every Parcel Has the Same Priority

Consider two parcels.

Parcel A: Routine merchandise worth ₹20,000.

Parcel B: A customer-specific lehnga worth ₹3 lakh being sent by air for a wedding.

Both are physically parcels.

Operationally, they are completely different.

Parcel B needs immediate visibility.

The ERP should therefore support priority indicators such as:

- Customer-specific
- High-value
- Urgent
- Seasonal
- Store replenishment
- Normal

This allows the warehouse to process merchandise according to business importance rather than simply according to the order in which cartons happen to be opened

A Practical Example: The ₹3 Lakh Lehnga

A customer has ordered a lehnga worth ₹3 lakh.

The supplier sends it by air.

The parcel reaches the retailer's warehouse.

The guard receives it and enters it in the register.

Then it gets placed with other parcels.

If there is no Parcel Entry in the ERP, the sales team may still believe:

"The supplier hasn't delivered it."

The supplier may believe:

"The retailer has received it."

The customer is waiting.

The parcel is physically inside the building.

But nobody has clear digital visibility.

With Parcel Entry, the moment the shipment arrives:

Customer Order Parcel — Received

The responsible person can immediately act.

This is where a small warehouse process directly affects customer experience.

The Supplier Communication Loop

There is another useful benefit.

Once the parcel is recorded as received, the ERP can automatically send the supplier a confirmation:

"Your shipment has been received at our warehouse."

This gives the supplier confirmation that the consignment has reached its destination and allows them to close the delivery record from their end.

A simple process becomes:

Supplier Dispatch → Retailer Receives → ERP Confirmation → Supplier Closes Delivery

This reduces unnecessary phone calls and improves coordination.

Chapter 3: Designing Parcel Entry as an ERP Control System

The objective is not another screen. The objective is one reliable flow.

A poorly designed Parcel Entry feature can become just another data-entry exercise.

That is not useful.

The real objective is to make the physical warehouse and the digital ERP tell the same story.

A practical workflow could be:

Step	Stage	Description
1	Supplier Dispatch	Supplier sends the merchandise. Where possible, shipment details are linked to the purchase order.
2	Parcel Arrives	Warehouse receives the physical parcel.
3	Parcel Entry	The receiving person records the parcel in the ERP. The system generates a unique parcel reference.
4	Status: Received / Unopened	The parcel is physically inside the warehouse but has not yet been processed.
5	Supplier Notification	The system automatically confirms receipt to the supplier.
6	Parcel Opening	Warehouse opens the parcel.
7	Verification & Purchase Entry	The merchandise is checked and the relevant purchase/inventory transaction is completed.
8	Status: Processed	The ERP records that the parcel has been fully processed.
9	Inventory Available	The merchandise can now move into the normal inventory flow.

The complete chain becomes:

DISPATCHED → RECEIVED → OPENED → PROCESSED → AVAILABLE

That is the process the ERP should make visible.

What the Owner Should Be Able to See

A useful Parcel Dashboard does not need to contain 50 widgets.

Five or six numbers may be enough.

Incoming Parcels

How many parcels were received today?

Unopened Parcels

How many are waiting?

Ageing Parcels

Which ones have been waiting beyond the normal processing time?

High-Value Parcels

Are any expensive shipments pending?

Customer Parcels

Is any customer-specific merchandise waiting?

Supplier Pending

Which suppliers have parcels received but not yet processed?

This gives the owner a quick operational picture.

The Most Useful Report

If there is only one Parcel Entry report, make it this:

Received but Unopened Parcels

Parcel	Supplier	PO	Received	Age	Priority
P1024	ABC Textiles	PO891	20 Sep	3 days	Normal
P1027	XYZ Sarees	PO904	21 Sep	2 days	Seasonal
P1031	Designer House	PO911	22 Sep	1 day	High Value

This report immediately tells management:

- What is waiting?
- Since when?
- From whom?
- Why should I care?

That is the essence of useful ERP reporting.

Recommended ERP Data Structure

At a practical level, the Parcel Entry should maintain a relationship with the existing purchase and supplier data.

A simplified structure could be:

Parcel Header

- Parcel ID
- Supplier ID
- Purchase Order ID
- Warehouse ID
- Transporter
- Tracking / AWB number
- Received Date Time
- Package Count

- Priority
- Status
- Opened Date Time
- Processed Date Time
- Remarks

Then the system can connect the parcel to the eventual:

Purchase / GRN / Inventory Transaction

This creates traceability.

If someone asks:

"Where did this stock come from?"

the ERP can trace backward.

If someone asks:

"What happened to this supplier shipment?"

the ERP can trace forward.

That is much more valuable than simply storing a parcel number.

What Should Be Automated?

A good process should automate repetitive communication and visibility.

For example:

On Parcel Receipt

Send supplier confirmation.

If Unopened Beyond Threshold

Create an internal alert.

If High-Value

Notify the responsible manager.

If Customer-Specific

Notify the relevant sales/order team.

If Purchase Order Is Partially Received

Update the receiving status automatically.

When Processed

Close the parcel and link it to the inventory transaction.

The principle is simple:

"People should handle exceptions. The system should handle routine visibility."

Epilogue

Visibility Is the Real Objective

Parcel Entry may sound like a small warehouse feature.

But it represents a much bigger principle in retail management:

You cannot manage what your business cannot see.

A parcel arrives.

That is a physical event.

7 Rules for Implementing Parcel Entry

- **Rule 1** — Record the parcel immediately, do not wait for purchase entry.
- **Rule 2** — Give every parcel a unique identity, parcel ID, AWB or supplier reference should make it traceable.
- **Rule 3** — Keep "Received" and "Processed" separate, they are different events.
- **Rule 4** — Track ageing, A pending parcel should have an age.
- **Rule 5** — Prioritize exceptions, high-value, urgent, seasonal and customer-specific shipments need greater attention.
- **Rule 6** — Connect Parcel Entry to Purchase, do not create another isolated database.
- **Rule 7** — Give management an exception report, the owner should be able to see pending parcels without calling the warehouse.

Recording it in the ERP creates digital visibility.

Opening it is another physical event.

Recording that creates another layer of visibility.

Processing the merchandise creates inventory.

Connecting all these events creates a reliable business trail.

The value is not in the parcel number.

The value is in knowing where your merchandise is in its journey.

This becomes particularly important as a retailer grows.

When you have one store and a small warehouse, people can compensate with memory.

The warehouse manager knows what arrived.

The buyer knows what is pending.

The owner knows which supplier is important.

But when the business has multiple stores, hundreds of suppliers and thousands of transactions, memory stops scaling.

The ERP must take over the visibility.

That does not mean putting every decision into software.

It means ensuring that the right information is available when a decision is required.

A good retailer should be able to answer these questions quickly:

- What has my supplier dispatched?
- What has physically reached me?
- What is still unopened?
- What has been entered into inventory?

- What is delayed?
- What needs attention today?

If the answers require five phone calls and a warehouse visit, there is an operational visibility gap.

If the answers are available on a screen, the business has control.

That is the real purpose of Parcel Entry.

Not more data entry.

Not another ERP module.

Not another report.

Visibility.

Because when a ₹3 lakh customer parcel arrives, you should know immediately.

When 300 pieces from a 1,000-piece purchase order are sitting unopened, you should know.

When festive merchandise has been waiting for three days, you should know.

When a supplier believes the shipment has been delivered, you should know.

And when something is waiting longer than it should, the right person should be alerted before the delay becomes a business problem.

The process can remain simple:

Received → Unopened → Opened → Processed → Available

But that simple process can eliminate a surprisingly large amount of uncertainty.

Your warehouse already contains the information.

Your ERP's job is to make that information visible.

The Way Forward

You do not need to redesign your entire warehouse tomorrow.

Start with one exercise.

For the next week, record every parcel that physically arrives.

Capture only:

Supplier | Purchase Order | Received Date | Parcel Reference | Priority |
Opened/Unopened | Opening Date

At the end of the week, review the list.

Ask:

- How many parcels were received?
- How many are still unopened?
- How old are they?
- Which suppliers have the most pending parcels?
- Are any customer or high-value parcels waiting?
- How long does it normally take from receipt to inventory entry?

These six questions will tell you more about your receiving process than a paper register ever could.

Then take the next step:

Make the process part of your ERP.

The objective is simple:

Every parcel should have a status.

Every pending parcel should have an age.

Every important parcel should have a priority.

Every processed parcel should connect to inventory.

Every supplier shipment should have a clear receiving confirmation.

Once this becomes part of your daily operating rhythm, Parcel Entry stops being a warehouse formality.

It becomes a control point between merchandise purchased and merchandise available for sale.

And that is where real inventory visibility begins.

Final Thought

The next time someone in your warehouse says:

"Sir, parcel aa gaya hai."

Don't stop at *"Okay."*

Ask three simple questions:

"System mein received hai?"

"Open hua?"

"Stock mein available hai?"

Those three questions can reveal the entire gap between physical merchandise and visible inventory.

Because a parcel that has arrived is not necessarily inventory that is available.

And in fashion retail, that difference matters.

About the Author



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For over two and a half decades, Raoshan Kumar has been at the forefront of revolutionizing the retail business landscape, providing cutting-edge software solutions that empower retailers to thrive in an ever-evolving market. With a deep-rooted passion for retail operations and an unwavering commitment to technological excellence, Raoshan has become a trusted name among more than 500 retailers across the country.

About zOrder

zOrder was founded with a vision to revolutionize the way businesses manage their operations. Over the years, we have grown to become a leading provider of ERP solutions, catering to the unique needs of the retail, wholesale, chain of stores, and manufacturing industries. Our journey is marked by continuous innovation and a deep commitment to helping businesses achieve operational excellence.

Need help managing your inventory? Let the zOrder team help you!

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