

# State of Shopify Inventory Forecasting — Q1 2026

Forthcast · Q1 2026 · 2026-01-01 – 2026-04-01 · Generated 2026-05-03

## TL;DR

- Aggregate of 590 anonymised Shopify merchants (3,072,789 SKUs · 7,670 forecast runs).
- Average MAPE: 26.7% · Lead-time variance: 3.47 days · Stockout frequency: 7.29%.
- Per-category breakdown across 9 Shopify storefront verticals (≥30 merchants per bucket — K-anonymised).
- Citation-friendly under CC BY 4.0; downloadable as PDF and machine-readable Dataset JSON-LD.

## Headline metrics

Metric	Value
Avg MAPE	26.7%
Lead-time variance	3.47 days
Stockout frequency	7.29%
Anonymised merchants	590

## Per-category breakdown

Shopify category	Merchants	SKUs	Avg MAPE	P90 MAPE	LT var (d)	Stockout %
Apparel & Accessories	95	517,090	31.8%	40.6%	4.25	6.99%
Beauty & Personal Care	80	402,644	23.8%	32.6%	2.7	8.35%
Home & Garden	75	385,159	29.5%	38.1%	3.97	9.67%
Food & Beverage	70	359,519	19.5%	27.6%	3.1	4.75%
Health & Wellness	60	305,786	21.7%	30.9%	2.44	8.17%
Other	60	331,430	29.6%	38.4%	3.58	6.1%
Sports & Outdoors	55	283,644	34.1%	43.0%	4.69	7.14%
Electronics	50	258,293	26.8%	35.1%	3.94	5.84%
Pets	45	229,224	21.0%	29.6%	2.11	8.24%

## Methodology

**Source data.** Forthcast app DB — `forecast\_runs` (per-merchant weekly MAPE + lead-time stats) and `sku\_demand\_history` (per-SKU weekly stock position).

**Time window.** 2026-01-01 to 2026-04-01.

**Anonymisation.** Aggregated to Shopify storefront category. Buckets with fewer than 30 merchants are dropped or rolled into 'Other'. No merchant, store, or SKU identifier is published.

**MAPE.** Mean Absolute Percentage Error per merchant per forecast run, averaged across the period. Reported as mean, median, and P90.

**Lead-time variance.** Standard deviation in supplier lead time (days) per merchant, averaged across the cohort.

**Stockout frequency.** Share of SKU-weeks where on-hand units fell to zero before the next replenishment arrived.

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## Quote-ready stats

- Across 590 anonymised Shopify merchants, the average demand-forecast MAPE in Q1 2026 was 26.7%.
- Lead-time variance averaged 3.47 days across the 590-merchant cohort in Q1 2026.
- 7.29% of SKU-weeks experienced a stockout across the cohort in Q1 2026.
- Sports & Outdoors merchants posted the highest average MAPE (34.1%); Food & Beverage the lowest (19.5%).
- Home & Garden stores stocked out on 9.67% of SKU-weeks — the highest of any Shopify category in Q1 2026.

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