

Bellwether Hardware — “Reorder”

Independent hardware store · 9,400 SKUs · one shop · Astoria, Oregon

COMPLETED BY	Tobias Renn, Buyer
ALSO IN THE ROOM	Marguerite Renn, owner · Danny Osei, floor
DATE	24 July 2026

1 · The decision

In one sentence, what decision does this dashboard exist to get made?

What goes on Friday's truck, and which lines we should stop carrying altogether.

Who opens it, and when?

Me, Thursday afternoon, on a phone, walking the aisles with a scanner in the other hand. That is the whole design constraint. If I have to sit down at the office computer to use it I will go back to doing it from memory, because walking the aisle is how I catch the things the system does not know about.

How does that decision get made today, without it?

A printed sheet of everything that sold last week, sorted by units. It is the wrong sort and I have known it was the wrong sort for nine years. Blue painter's tape is at the top of that list every single week and it has never once needed ordering.

Is there a rule the decision follows? Write it out, in the order it applies.

1. How many days of stock is there, counting what is on the shelf and anything already on order. 2. How long does that supplier take. 3. The reorder point is the lead time plus seven days, because Friday's truck is the earliest anything can land. 4. Order the shortfall, rounded up to whole cases. 5. Sort it by days of cover minus lead time, so the slow suppliers come first.

Should the dashboard apply that rule, or only display it?

Apply it, and show me the three numbers it used on every line. I override it most weeks — seasons, a job going in up the road, a rep with a deal — and I want to write why on the line rather than in my head. But it does not get to place the order. Nothing on that screen touches a supplier.

What is the most common way you are caught out?

Long-lead lines that sell slowly. The eight-inch pruner sells six a week and comes from a man in Yakima who ships once a fortnight. It never looks urgent and it is always the one that is gone in June.

You said the drop decision matters as much as the order. Why?

Because nothing else in the shop ever asks it. A reorder list only ever asks whether something will run out, and a dead line never runs out, so nobody ever decides anything about it. There are forty-four brass cabinet knobs in aisle four that were there before we bought the place.

Anything you specifically do not want on it?

Do not put margin on it. Every one of the lines I want to drop has a lovely margin, because margin is what you make when a thing sells and none of them sell. And do not put anybody's name on a stock count. The day a count has a name attached is the day the next one gets quietly fixed on the shelf instead of written down.

Where does the data come from, and how fresh does it need to be?

Point of sale and the goods-in scanner, overnight. Nightly is fine. What is not fine is pretending the on-hand figure is true — it drifts, and the list is only as good as that number, so I want the counted lines on their own screen.

Where will it be used?

On a phone, in an aisle, under shop fluorescents, one-handed. Nowhere else. There is no wall to put it on and I am not going to sit down.

2 · Screens requested

SCREEN	WHAT IT IS FOR	WHAT IT MUST SHOW
Friday's truck	What to order, in the order it will run out.	Cases to order, the line, days of cover against the reorder point, on hand, on order, weekly rate, lead time, and any buyer's note overriding the suggestion.
Stop carrying	Lines that have not earned their shelf for two seasons.	Units held, units sold in twelve months, turns a year, money tied up, and a written reason for each one.
Count these	Where the book figure and the shelf have drifted apart.	Book figure, counted figure, the drift, and whether the drift actually changed the suggested order.

3 · Figures, and the comparison each one carries

FIGURE	MUST APPEAR AGAINST
Days of cover	The reorder point — the supplier's lead time plus seven days
Suggested cases	The shortfall in units, and the case quantity it was rounded to
Order value	The average of the last four Fridays
Counted on hand	The book figure, and whether the difference changed the order
Units sold in a year	Units held, as turns

No figure appears on this dashboard without the comparison beside it. A number with nothing to compare it against is not information, and the component that renders these will not accept one.

4 • What this must not do

- 1. No margin or profit figure anywhere on the reorder screens.
- 2. No name attached to a stock count.
- 3. Nothing that places an order. This is the argument for one.
- 4. No ranking by units sold — that is the sort we already have and it is wrong.
- 5. Nothing that needs two hands or a desk.

Treated as binding rather than as a preference. Every item above is checked again before the tool is handed over.

CONFIRMATION

The answers above are mine and may be used to build the tool described. Bellwether Hardware is a fictional business profile supplied for demonstration and testing; every figure appearing in the delivered dashboard is sample data.

SIGNED — TOBIAS RENN

DATE