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CONTENTS

Prime Air: the revolutionary delivery drone	06
Outsourced fulfilment: more than delivering the goods	10
The growing importance of flexible fulfilment	14
How can you use fulfilment and shipping to scale your business?	17
What's happened to the flexibility in warehousing that businesses desperately need?	22
Make the most of Fulfilment by Amazon	25
7 ways to hire the right warehousing staff	29
Connecting your ecommerce components to thrive in 2021 and beyond	34
Micro-fulfilment – a game changer for online grocery?	38
Perfecting omnichannel fulfilment: Salamander Cookshop	41
How using a handheld WMS app can improve performance in your storage operation	44
Make your warehouse work smarter	46
The importance of choosing a reliable delivery partner	49
Scale up with warehouse automation	53
Whistl: fulfilment that fits	58
What is green fulfilment and how can you achieve it?	62
Is your warehouse prepared for tomorrow's challenges?	67

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Prime Air: the revolutionary delivery drone

Amazon's future delivery system, Prime Air, is designed to safely get packages to customers in 30 minutes or less, using state-of-the-art technology. While it may be a while before we see it used on a mass scale, we take a look at this innovative solution to automated delivery.

How does Prime Air Work?

After receiving an order, a drone is loaded with the customer's package, making its way out of the warehouse and guiding itself to the customer's delivery location using GPS. Operating completely autonomously, it uses 'sense and avoid' technology to prevent contact with any obstacles. The customer receives a notification when their delivery is on its way, telling them when it will arrive. When the Prime Air drone reaches its location, it scans the landing area for potential hazards, lowers to the ground, drops the package off and flies straight back to altitude to return to the warehouse.

Safety and environmental impact

Safety was a major question surrounding the idea of a delivery drone, however Amazon seems to have found the solution to this. Combining diverse sensors and sophisticated machine learning algorithms, the drones are able to prevent collisions and identify flight environment changes.

In terms of the environmental impact, Prime Air could play an important role

in making 50% of all Amazon shipments net zero by 2030. These drones are powered by electricity and charged using sustainable means, saving on fuel usage and reducing emissions.

When can we expect to see Prime Air?

Prime Air is still in the trial phase, however the initial trial in Cambridge was a resounding success, suggesting it may not be too much longer before we see Prime Air drones being used more often. Amazon is working to gather data to continue improving the safety and reliability of their systems and operations, with the goal of building more aircraft in the near future.

Prime Air facts

- Packages for Prime Air can weigh up to 5lb
- Prime Air aircraft travel at nearly 400 feet
- There are Prime Air development centres in the UK, United States, Austria, France and Israel



Contributor:
Holly Worthington



“Prime Air could play an important role in making 50% of all Amazon shipments net zero by 2030.”



Image credit: Amazon



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Outsourced fulfilment: more than delivering the goods

In an ecommerce retail model, the quality of the fulfilment process – from the timeliness of delivery to the look and feel of the packaging – defines a customer's experience. And that process has to be consistently perfect whether a retailer is shipping one product or one thousand.

JAMES AND JAMES
eCOMMERCE FULFILMENT

Contributor:

James Hyde, CEO of James and James Fulfilment

James Hyde, CEO of James and James Fulfilment, explores how offering a fulfilment solution that goes above and beyond the role of a traditional fulfilment provider, and providing a fully integrated value-added service, gives ecommerce retailers the opportunity to scale and succeed in 2021.

First Impressions Count

Too many retailers underestimate the impact of fulfilment on customer experience. Spending a fortune on carefully curated websites and great delivery promises is a wasted investment if the product turns up late, damaged or swathed in acres of unnecessary packaging. First impressions count.

The way the product is presented, from the neatly folded packing slip, to the personalised message, to the low-impact packaging, should reflect the brand and reinforce the customer experience regardless of how many units sold.

D2C fulfilment is challenging

Direct to Consumer (D2C) fulfilment is challenging for many firms – especially companies looking to compete with the big names in the business, with next day delivery and a range of courier options.

Scaling up to cover peak sales can be a major headache too. The issue is not just recruiting the staff but also ensuring consistent quality – from picking accuracy to packaging. How can a retailer scale up in response to an unexpected plug from an Insta-influencer or a mention in a magazine? How can that opportunity be grasped without a robust, scalable and repeatable fulfilment model?

Few individuals become retailers because they are excited about the fulfilment process – yet great fulfilment skills can make or break an online business. This is an absolutely critical component of the customer experience. Therefore, companies need to put serious thought into it.



Fulfilment expertise delivers

Outsourced fulfilment is an obvious solution. It offers economies of scale and ensures a retailer can respond to spikes in demand without affecting the quality of customer experience.

If a retailer is to achieve that essential match of fulfilment experience to the core brand value, there are many issues to consider upfront. An absolute fundamental is to be realistic about the delivery promise. This means having a clear understanding of the cost model. What does it cost to ship to the UK and internationally? What is the variance between next day and longer shipping times – and how much do courier prices vary?

This is where the insight collected by a fulfilment partner can make a difference for a retailer looking to scale up the ecommerce operation. With a deep understanding of the complete cost model, a retailer can match delivery options to the required level of customer experience. For example, is free shipping essential to reinforce the brand's luxury feel, or does the retailer need to set a minimum spend threshold to make free shipping viable?

Removing fulfilment complexity

Fulfilment delivery policies will not be set in stone; and for retailers, with a diverse product portfolio and customer base, delivery costs are likely to vary. And, without accessing continuously updated information about fulfilment costs, such decisions can only be based on gut feel – and that is where too many retailers have caught a cold and ended up selling at a loss.

In contrast, a good outsourced fulfilment partner solves this and can help retailers to develop packaging that reflects brand image. They can provide insight into the pros and cons of recycled materials – from the additional weight that has to be considered for any air freight, to balancing the cost of recycled packaging against the value of customer perception and approval.

In addition, a fulfilment partner should share continuous insight regarding both stock levels and age of stock. They should work with retailers to show where costs could be recouped – such as the opportunity costs associated with retaining a warehouse full of unsold items, compared with selling those

goods at discount. Proactive inventory management can transform this retail cost model.

Conclusion

Fulfilment is an extension of the customer experience and one that will define a customer's brand perception. But it is also about efficient retail operations and proactive management of both inbound stock and outbound product to maximise revenue.

Retailers that fail to embed the perfect fulfilment model within the customer experience are not just missing an important part of the process, they are fundamentally misunderstanding the way consumers and ecommerce fit together.



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The growing importance of flexible fulfilment

The COVID pandemic has seen a dramatic shift in the way that people shop. In 2020 alone, online sales grew by 46%. Those that previously preferred instore shopping had no other option but to buy online, with new cohorts being introduced to the world of ecommerce.

For many, they realised just how easy online shopping can be, particularly when retailers design a customer-focused approach.

Despite retail stores reopening, the growth of ecommerce shows no signs of slowing down any time soon. Instead, customers are expected to buy from retailers that can facilitate an omnichannel offering, including instore, home delivery and click and collect.

The growing need for a flexible approach to retail has put pressure on supply chains, making it essential to adapt fulfilment in a way that caters for a wide range of consumer preferences.

Makeshift fulfilment processes

As retail stores closed their doors during lockdowns, shoppers turned to ecommerce. This drastic change in consumer behaviour forced retailers to make quick fixes in order to survive.

Those that didn't previously have a significant online presence or offer home delivery had to find ways to offer this in a

hurry. While this was a great way to keep business coming in, it meant that these fulfilment processes weren't designed to be scaled up or down, and weren't often the most efficient.

Now is the time for long-term strategy

The growth of ecommerce is here to stay and retailers finally have a little breathing room to re-group. Now is the time to invest into fulfilment strategies that will deliver long-term benefits.

Here are the two main ways to make sure your chosen method can be flexible:

1. Invest in warehousing and real-time inventory management systems

Real-time visibility is key to understanding stock levels, anticipating trends, preventing wastage and replenishing inventory. Introducing processes that make inventory management simple can reduce workload for retailers, as well as helping to fulfil orders efficiently and quickly.



Contributor:
Holly Worthington



“Now is the time to invest into fulfilment strategies that will deliver long-term benefits.”

1. Offer a variety of delivery and collection options

When retailers have access to real-time inventory levels, they can create a synchronised approach to stock availability and sales. A well designed system will mean that retailers know how much stock they have, where it is located and how long it will take to reach any chosen destination. By creating a process that communicates all relevant information, retailers can offer a wide range of delivery and collection options with confidence.

Flexible fulfilment is key

Retailers must analyse their fulfilment processes and develop partnerships in order to meet changing demands.

Here are some of the reasons that you should look to introduce a flexible fulfilment model:

1. Choice

Being able to offer a variety of delivery and collection options helps to attract loyal customers. Catering for a wide range of preferences will enable retailers to attract the largest possible customer base.

2. Efficiency

Planning a fulfilment strategy that facilitates a wide range of storage and delivery methods can improve efficiency and productivity. Having access to real-time inventory levels is another way to be agile, saving time through automation wherever possible.

3. Adaptability

As we have seen, the retail landscape can change quickly. Having a flexible approach to fulfilment enables retailers to adapt as required. Regardless of any challenges that retailers are faced with, those that are able to pivot to a different model will be best positioned to overcome any difficulties.

4. Customer experience

When implemented well, a fulfilment strategy designed for omnichannel retail can help retailers to overtake competitors and stand out from the crowd. It also means retailers are able to convey accurate delivery and stock information, creating a positive and memorable customer experience.

By focusing on agility, retailers can create processes that are resilient and will be able to go from strength to strength, despite any challenges that they may face in the future.



How can you use fulfilment and shipping to scale your business?

Customers' expectations are becoming increasingly complex and retailers are having to work harder than ever before to scale their businesses. Keeping up with a wide range of delivery options can easily become a priority when the business is not designed to be scalable, meaning other areas of the business can take a back seat.

This article outlines the growing need for convenient fulfilment options and the ways that retailers can ensure their business operations are scalable.

Customers need convenience

Convenience is key in creating customer loyalty, with retailers benefiting from offering a range of delivery options and being able to compete with the likes of Amazon Prime.

The ecommerce market has enabled customers to make quick and easy purchases. Non-store retailing (retailers with no physical store presence) spend **grew by 56% between April 2019 and April 2021**, while Amazon's UK sales soared by 51% last year.

The reason for this rapid growth is that customers have looked to shop with retailers that can offer their preferred delivery methods. However, to gain returning customers, retailers must make sure that the delivery side of every purchase is seamless.

The challenge for retailers

As sales increase, retailers are faced with the challenge of fulfilling a growing number of orders. Often, a solution that was once efficient becomes inefficient when scaled up and it needs redeveloping.

An enormous 95% of shoppers say that convenient delivery options play a major role in their choice of online retailer. In addition to this, alternative delivery options such as click and collect have become essential to win customers' business. On top of having a choice of convenient delivery options, the returns process is expected to be just as easy, quick and simple.

Most retailers are already busy enough, so those that commit large amounts of time to their fulfilment and shipping processes often have to neglect the growth of their business.



Contributor:
Holly Worthington



“Retailers that automate processes or work with suitable fulfilment partners can simplify the process of scaling up and down as required.”

How can you make your retail business scalable?

For a retail business to be scalable, it is essential to connect your selling channels to your fulfilment process and then deliver in a way that creates a great customer experience. Automation helps to maintain consistency and deliver a stand-out fulfilment process, however big or small the demand is.

If sales continue to rise, there comes a point in every business where outsourcing becomes a viable solution. In this case, instead of storing, picking, packing, printing labels, sending and dealing with the logistics of returns, these aspects of the business can be outsourced to a specialist.

Choosing to work with a fulfilment partner that knows the industry is key in being able to scale your retail business as required.

Benefits include:

- Not having to worry about sourcing increasing warehousing space to store additional stock
- Not having to spend time managing returns
- Having experts on hand that understand processes, for example, shipping overseas and knowing the implications of Brexit
- Some fulfilment businesses have centres in different countries, meaning you can keep inventory close to the customer for faster delivery
- Upscaling does not require any major changes to processes, unless you choose to change your fulfilment partner



Retailers that automate processes or work with suitable fulfilment partners can simplify the process of scaling up and down as required. By outsourcing this aspect of the business, it frees up time to focus on selling, as well as growing the brand and customer base.

Efficient management is key in making fulfilment as quick and easy as possible, allowing retailers to spend their time on more productive areas of the business, rather than being tied down to manual aspects of warehousing and delivery.

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And while it has been challenging, we are proud to say that retailers using Scurri are flourishing online and seeing incredible growth with delivery volumes sky-rocketing in the last year.

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What's happened to the flexibility in warehousing that businesses desperately need?

Economists predict that the UK economy will show a dramatic recovery from the pandemic – but this could be curtailed by a simple shortage of storage space. Our clients tell us of a serious market failure, yet, extraordinarily, in the government's recent White Paper on planning, there was not a single reference to the land and space needs of supply chain and logistics industries.



Contributor:

Matt Whittaker, Commercial Director at Bis Henderson Space

Even before the pandemic, the UK was significantly 'under-warehoused'. According to estate agency Savills, a record 50.1 m sq ft of space was taken up in 2020. Some 20 m sq ft of that was new build – half of which was 'speculative' and usually snapped up long before completion. Amazon alone took a quarter of the available space, the 3PLs are also active, and, say Knight Frank, another agent, 'The UK only has 10 months' worth of warehouse supply available at current growth rates' – and much less in London, the South East, and the near-urban locations needed to support on-line last mile.

Rental rates are soaring and even the 40 million sq ft that Knight Frank expect to see completed in 2021 may not restore a functioning market. Demand for space is only going to increase.

Every £1 billion extra spent through e-commerce generates need for 750,000 sq ft of extra space, and ecommerce is just one competing need for warehousing. In both retail and manufacturing we see businesses abandoning the dominant lean, Just-in-Time, low inventory, procurement-led supply chain model. With increasing risk

from events such as, Covid, Brexit, trade friction with China, flooded Taiwanese chip-makers, and the Suez Canal blockage, businesses are facing greater uncertainty and are looking to build resilience into their supply chains. And that means holding more inventory which in turn puts further pressure on available warehouse space.

Flexibility is a sound bulwark to uncertainty. So most businesses, our clients included, don't want or need vast new empty sheds. They need operational, workable space that they can move in to and use from day one, to accommodate increased inventories of raw material, work in progress, and finished goods but also for kitting, picking, packing, returns processing and a host of other tasks. They need services, and at least a minimum of fit-out, already installed. Their current requirements are strictly tactical – they need to be able to move out again as strategies become firmer.

But most new development is aimed at flagship brands and 3PLs making long-term commitments to big sheds where long leases and multi-million investments are needed to equip a facility. A 100,000 sq ft shed counts as 'small' even though



that is 20% larger than the playing surface at Wembley. New spaces are drip-fed from the developers' land banks, keeping rentals high and ensuring further yield compression.

The smaller and mid-size businesses we meet, the heart of the UK economy, are manufacturers and retailers, not property companies. Their balance sheets can't support such long-term liabilities. And most new build sheds are offered as just that – a bare shed. The tenant has to fit out and equip the facility, from automation to basic services. It could be six or nine months before the business can ship its goods in, perhaps longer. Businesses don't have that money, or that time.

Timescales are critical. Savills say that last year 12% of transactions were for 'short' leases – but we know this greatly understates the need for high quality, yet flexible, warehouse provision. To developers, a five-year lease is 'short', but many companies are pushed to see clearly for five months out. They need short-term provision, to buy breathing

space while they develop their longer-term strategies, or to keep the business operating while new solutions are applied to existing warehousing.

They need to move in quickly and, when appropriate, move on. They need something akin to space-as-a-service, not an investment. Most property companies are reluctant to have that conversation. As such, businesses are turning to well-connected warehouse operational space brokers like ourselves to develop a solution that meets their immediate and quite often longer-term needs whilst avoiding an expensive long-term lease agreement.

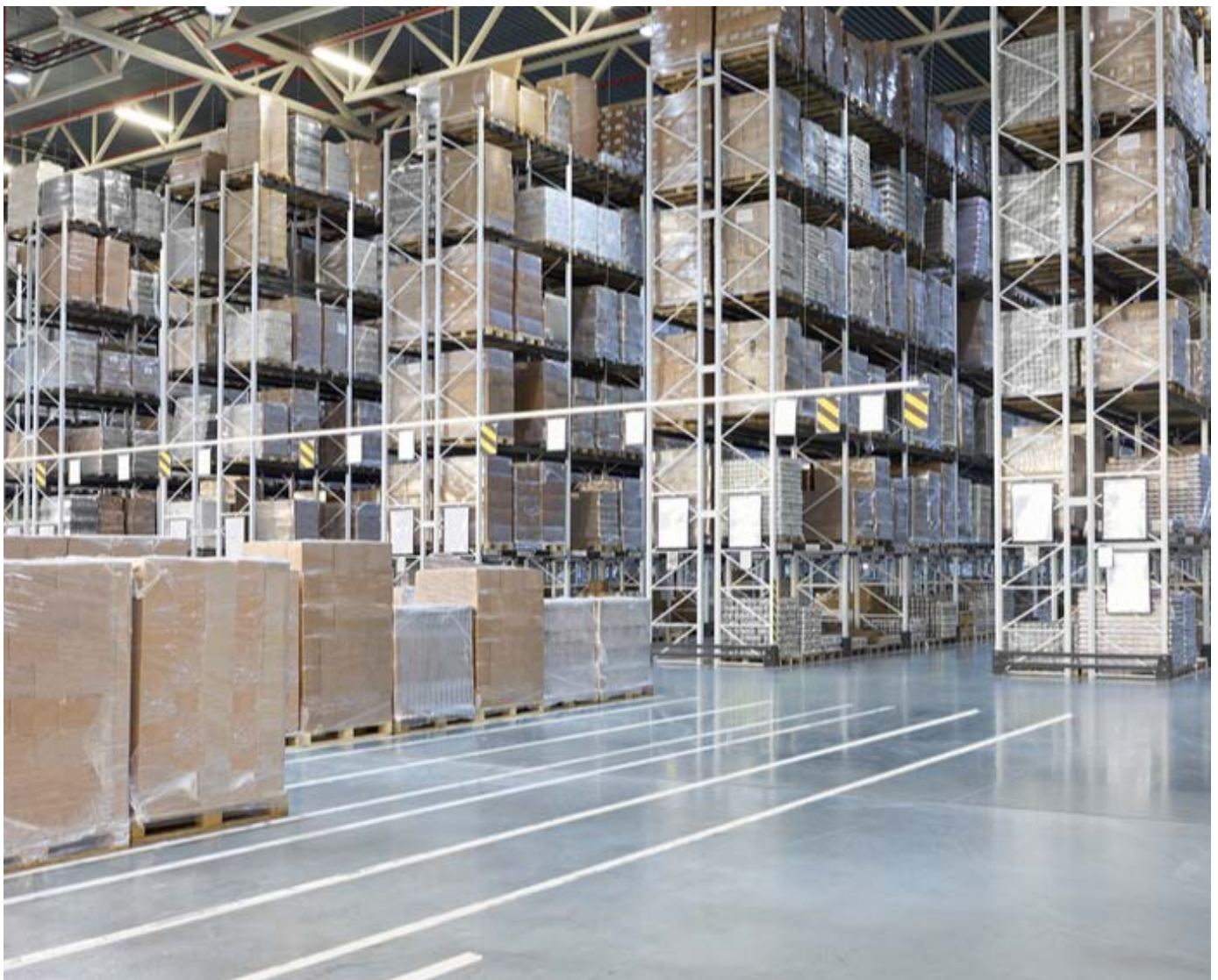
Over many years we've developed a wide network of warehouse suppliers – we introduce businesses with a need for additional capacity to providers who have spare operational space available on a flexible basis. Often facilitated deals are as short as 3-9 months, (although in practice these can roll over for several years) but any term of less than three years is better than can be obtained in the current investor-driven market.

Such premises will usually have at least a basic, perhaps even a quite sophisticated, fit-out, suitable for immediate occupancy for little additional capital outlay. Shared labour and services can sometimes be an option. A further advantage for many companies is that as a short-term service agreement there is no five-year liability hanging over the balance sheet.

For any company considering how to rebuild their supply chain to combine flexibility and resilience, this approach could be a game changer. Any business that needs to take care of cash as they trade out of the present crisis, that needs a short-term tactical solution while working out the long-term strategy, or that needs to trial new markets or business models without overstretching, can find a viable and well-proven alternative to a constrained, rigid and uncompromising property market through working with a well networked broker. Look no further.



“For any company considering how to rebuild their supply chain to combine flexibility and resilience, this approach could be a game-changer.”



Make the most of Fulfilment by Amazon

Fulfilment by Amazon (FBA) is a way to remove the stress of dealing with fulfilment, enabling you to scale your business. Giving retailers access to one of the most dynamic fulfilment networks in the world, there are many reasons that this is a great method of fulfilment.



Contributor:
Holly Worthington

If you're considering using FBA, here are some of the main considerations that you'll need to know:

How does FBA work?

Once a retailer has decided to use Amazon FBA, they send their products to one of Amazon's warehouses to be stored. When a customer places an order, Amazon pick and pack the products, shipping it directly to the customer.

This simple process means that once Amazon receives the products, the retailer does not have to be physically involved in the fulfilment process.

Benefits of FBA

There are many reasons that FBA can be a suitable fulfilment option for retailers. Benefits include:

- **Unlimited storage space**
There is an unlimited amount of space that you can have access to through FBA, meaning you don't have to worry about finding additional storage space when you increase your inventory.
- **Saves time**
While it does cost to use Amazon FBA, it also saves significant amounts of retailers' precious time, making it possible to focus on other areas of the business.
- **Flexible**
There are various options, meaning FBA is suitable for almost any type of retailer. You can reduce the cost of fulfilment if you ship small, lightweight items, you can offer discounts through 'subscribe & save' and you can even sell from third party ecommerce sites but still have Amazon take care of your inventory.
- **Fast delivery**
Products listed on FBA can qualify for free shipping and Prime badges, meaning fast deliveries are made simple.
- **Customer service**
Amazon offers customer service as part of FBA, including 24/7 support in various languages. This can significantly reduce the amount of



- time spent by retailers trying to deal with customers' queries.
- **Easy returns**
Retailers using FBA can tap into Amazon's seamless returns processes, taking care of all aspects of returns on the retailer's behalf.
- **Hassle-free shipping throughout Europe**
There are many different fulfilment options to choose from. As an example, you can store inventory in different countries, despatching them from specified fulfilment centres, depending on the customer's location.

Disadvantages of FBA

- **Specific preparation requirements**
To ship products to Amazon, they must be prepared in accordance with very specific guidelines. This can be time consuming to make sure all packaging, labelling and shipping is done according to Amazon's instructions.
- **Cost**
The fees for FBA can add up quickly per unit, making it a less viable option for lower priced items. Amazon has a **calculator that allows you to see how profitable FBA is** as a solution for your products. Fees include:
 - **Inventory storage fees**
These are charges on all items stored in an Amazon fulfilment centre, based on the space that your products take up.
 - **Fulfilment fees**
You are charged per unit when each unit is picked, packed, shipped, handled, returned, or requires customer service.
 - **Unplanned service fees**
If your products arrive at the fulfilment centre and are not adequately prepared or labelled, an additional fee is charged.



“Amazon FBA gives retailers access to one of the most dynamic fulfilment networks in the world.”

- **Long-term storage fees**
Products stored by Amazon for more than 365 days result in fees, however this can be avoided by careful inventory management.
- **Returns processing fees**
When a customer is given free return shipping by Amazon, a returns processing fee is charged.
- **Removal order fees**
If a retailer wants their inventory to be disposed of, Amazon is able to do this for a specified cost per item.

How to get started with FBA

1. Set up FBA

To set up FBA, create an Amazon selling account and head over to Seller Central.

2. Create product listings

After adding your products to the Amazon catalogue, specify your inventory for FBA.

3. Prepare your products for transportation

The next step is to prepare your products for their journey to the fulfilment centre, making sure it meets all Amazon packing guidelines and adheres to shipping and routing requirements.

4. Ship your products to Amazon

Finally, you need to create your shipping plan, print Amazon shipment ID labels and send all of this with your products to the Amazon fulfilment centre.

5. Get selling

As soon as Amazon has received your shipment, your products are ready for purchase.

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Excellent



4.7 out of 5

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7 ways to hire the right warehousing staff

As online sales have skyrocketed, the number of warehousing staff has increased. Hiring temporary and permanent staff has become a priority in order to keep up with demand, however a warehouse is only as effective as those that it employs.

It's essential to hire staff in a way that will maximise productivity and create a positive working environment. Having a strategic approach to hiring warehouse workers will help you to find the best and most suitable talent to boost your business' operations.

These top tips will help you choose staff that will benefit your business in the long-term:

1. Be honest about the physical demand

Make sure your job description explains how physically demanding the role will be, to make sure workers understand the amount of lifting and carrying that they will need to undertake. Failing to mention this when hiring can lead to having unsuitable employees, which can disrupt workflow and take time to find a replacement.

2. Explain skill requirements

List your skill criteria clearly when hiring. Explain any specific skills that are essential, as well as those that are desirable, to make sure that suitable candidates apply.

3. Train effectively

Whether a member of the team is full-time or a seasonal employee, they should be trained properly. Regardless of how qualified a person is, every warehouse is different and without training, they won't reach their full potential. Having a designated manager or point of contact for each new employee helps to ensure they understand the role they are expected to perform. It also makes them feel a valued part of the team immediately, which can grow employee loyalty. Having new employees shadow another member of staff is a successful method of training them up while contributing to the team's productivity.

4. Encourage recommendations

Recommendations are a fantastic way to source suitable warehouse staff. Offering a referral scheme can work to reward candidate suggestions that are right for your business, as well as creating positive working environments. Other benefits include reducing recruitment costs, finding great employees and boosting team morale.



Contributor:
Holly Worthington

Tarlu specialises in third-party fulfilment services



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Multichannel Fulfilment

Tarlu provides third-party fulfilment services to customers of all types and sizes from different countries across a variety of industries.

Through its cloud based Warehouse Management System Tarlu supports customers selling via a range of UK and international trade and online sales channels.

With 24/7 online access, customers benefit from 100% live visibility of inventory levels and order progress.

Tarlu trades with many parts of the world and aims to increase its presence by opening up new markets for itself and its clients.

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Tarlu is committed to helping businesses grow through the provision of its services.

In support of its commitment, Tarlu offers tailored price plans to help all its clients develop in a competitive climate.

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1. Pay competitively

Paying staff fairly and competitively can make it easier to find and retain great warehouse workers. Cutting costs on wages can result in high staff turnover and workers that have little experience. Offering competitive pay helps to attract talent and find staff that are keen to work hard and progress their careers.

2. Hire for skill and character

There are various attributes that a successful employee should have. As well as having the right skills for the role, it is essential that they are a good fit for the workplace. Hiring people that are great at their job, but likely to cause confrontation or disharmony in the workplace, can damage productivity and

other employees' enjoyment of the job. During interviews, those hiring should pay attention to the candidate's personality, checking their communication skills and work ethic are suitable, as well as their work experience.

3. Re-evaluate your hiring efforts

If your new hires are not working out, it could be time to reassess your strategy. There may be red flags that you are ignoring during the hiring process and you should adapt your interviews and selection processes to take these into account.

These seven tips will help you to hire effectively, increasing the likelihood of growing a workforce of reliable, skilled and loyal warehouse staff.



“Having a strategic approach to hiring warehouse workers will help you to find the best and most suitable talent.”

Connecting your ecommerce components to thrive in 2021 and beyond

Throughout the past year, consumer trends have indicated that the accelerated adoption of ecommerce is here to stay. For many brands, 2020 was a year of unprecedented growth online, from lockdowns forcing brick-and-mortar stores online to companies bringing forward plans to launch established products on ecommerce platforms to capitalise on growing demand.

As consumers shift online, the competition for digital space can be just as intense as high-street retail. Brands now have to shift focus towards streamlining and connecting operations with fulfilment, marketing, and sales activities. This is where using automated systems to manage supply chain processes becomes increasingly important: intricate marketplaces such as Amazon utilising and offering their own fulfilment, sales and marketing systems can be beneficial for sellers, however, expanding channel offerings may prove difficult as they are often not cross-compatible with other channels.

Establishing interconnected systems that can communicate and interlink sales, marketing and fulfilment processes across various channels can help merchants adapt to ongoing changes in market regions and stand-out from the ecommerce crowd. Aside from automating day-to-day manual tasks and data gathering, connecting your commerce components helps to provide a seamless experience to ensure that each customer touchpoint and interaction reflects the correct brand values. It also enables businesses of all sizes to create

a tailored, consistent experience across all channels that can challenge even the most established brands.

New findings from McKinsey have even discovered that 62% of European consumers have tried a new shopping behaviour during the pandemic, with over 70% of those consumers intending to continue their new shopping habits. So, as the world of ecommerce is here to stay, is your business prepared for the new normal?

For more information or advice about connecting your ecommerce components, get in touch with the Activ8 team.

ACTIV8

Contributor:
Activ8



“As consumers shift online, the competition for digital space can be just as intense as high-street retail.”





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Micro-fulfilment – a game changer for online grocery?

Online grocery may be booming but keeping it profitable will be the challenge. Louisa Hosegood, Digital and Strategy Director at Bis Henderson Consulting, believes Micro-fulfilment could be the big game-changer.

The pandemic has advanced consumer engagement with online grocery by between five and 10 years, and since it's strongly believed that over half of the current online behaviour will be maintained, retailers are scrambling to come up with faster modes of delivery and more efficient ways to fulfil orders.

Delivery timelines for online orders have been shrinking rapidly, ranging from a couple of days to just a few hours, leaving many grocers simply unable to compete with the retail juggernauts for the coveted superfast, premium delivery offers.

A number of grocers have invested heavily in huge automated warehouses, a few are using the strength of partnerships, while most retailers are relying on their existing store footprint to satisfy this massive surge in demand.

In-store fulfilment is by far the most widely adopted approach. It has the huge benefit of being close to the customer, which minimises delivery costs (or eliminates if the customer collects). However, there are drawbacks. Unrelenting online demand is taking its toll on the in-store customer experience, with online pickers roaming the aisles

competing with store customers for products on the shelves and large cumbersome picking trolleys causing congestion. What's more, retail stores are designed and laid out for browsing shoppers, which is not the most efficient format for order picking, impacting fulfilment costs.

A possible solution

However, there is an emerging solution. The concept of micro-fulfilment leverages the advantages of localised delivery, or pick-up, and combines them with the efficiency of a large, automated warehouse. These small-footprint, low investment, highly automated systems – typically occupying 3,000-10,000 sq. ft – can be built into the backroom or on the perimeter of existing stores or may be deployed as a stand-alone facility to serve a cluster of local geographies or housing several different retailers.

The technology makes picking much faster and more accurate, offering the capability to provide online grocery pickup in under an hour from placing an order, while saving on expensive manual

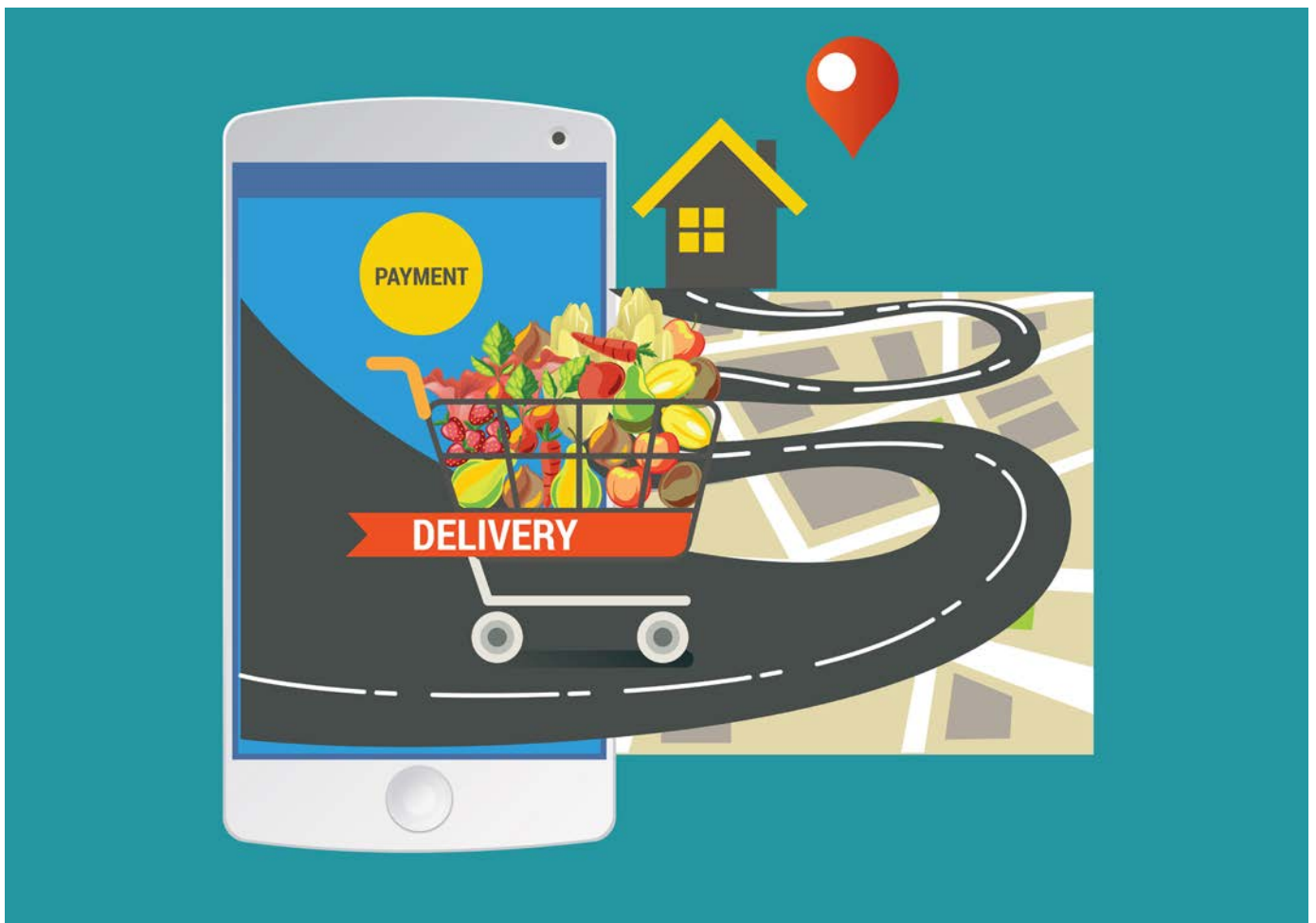


Contributor:

Louisa Hosegood, Digital and Strategy Director at Bis Henderson Consulting



“Micro-fulfilment addresses some of the greatest challenges facing the online grocery sector. It will just take resolve and expertise to deliver.”



labour and distancing picking operations from browsing customers. Most of an order is picked in the automated system and presented to staff for consolidation and delivery, supplemented by an element of manual picking for frozen, deli or loose weighed items.

The automation maximises use of the cube, enabling a wide range of products to be stored densely and retrieved quickly, enhancing product choice, availability and customer service. And locating a Micro-fulfilment Centre (MFC) inside an existing store does not require any additional replenishment points to be added to the network.

Importantly, MFCs are far less capital-intensive than large warehouses to set up and can be fully functional within just a few months – reducing risk, smoothing investment against volume growth, and providing opportunities to test and learn through modular implementation across a wider grocery network.

Sweating existing assets in this way enables creative property solutions in space-constrained locations, which not only helps to maximise returns on real estate commitments but enables proximity to the fast-growing urban eComm-shopping population.

Of course, micro-fulfilment is not limited to the grocery sector. The efficiency and cost-effectiveness of deploying such technology makes it appealing to many other sectors, from consumer goods to healthcare.

Overall, micro-fulfilment has the potential to deliver substantial labour savings, faster order processing, enhanced value from property assets, a strong local connection with the customer and a significantly reduced cost-to-serve, which addresses the all-important profitability challenge.

Bis Henderson Consulting has been working closely with leading grocers in this space, both in the UK and the

USA, and are also working with leading property developers in the urban logistics arena. Our comprehensive understanding of the challenges involved in grocery, retail and eCommerce, together with our independent relationships with a wide range of suppliers – from veterans to new entrants – puts us in a strong position to help businesses deploy this potentially game-changing technology. We help define requirements, offer vendor-neutral advice on supplier/solution selection; we collaborate on producing detailed designs, and take the project on through implementation to post go-live review.

Micro-fulfilment addresses some of the greatest challenges facing the online grocery sector. It will just take resolve and expertise to deliver.

More on Bis Henderson Consulting at www.bis-hendersonconsulting.com

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Perfecting omnichannel fulfilment: Salamander Cookshop

Winner of the Good Retail Awards' Bricks 'n' Clicks category, Salamander Cookshop, has created a successful omnichannel fulfilment model. David, owner of Salamander Cookshop spoke to Modern Retail about their approach to combining instore and delivery, making fulfilment work for the customer.

Consumer demands:

Salamander Cookshop has excelled in designing a complete shopping experience that impresses customers. David explained: "We use the shop like the tip of the iceberg. The big advantage of local retail is that you can touch, feel and see the products, speaking to an expert instore. We make sure we have a good range in stock for customers to view. Then you have access to the rest of the iceberg, which is the other colours, variants and models. Once you know which product you want, you can have it delivered to your home the next day, or choose to click and collect. It's the sweet spot because we show a variety instore and then have the full range and access to the distributor's warehouse, seeing if they're in stock and ordering them for delivery. Convenience, options, speed and competitive pricing are part of every decision we make, keeping customer experience at the forefront of everything we do."

Offering different delivery options

David spoke about the importance of offering suitable delivery options for customers. He said: "The speed and range of delivery companies available with guaranteed times of delivery and next-day options has made it easy to offer choice. Dropship to home is mainly used by those who don't live nearby, or if it's a big product. By being able to give customers the option to have large deliveries arrive at their house the next day, this is something that can help to facilitate a wide range of customers' requirements."

Working with suppliers

David explained the importance of working closely with suppliers. He said: "You need to understand the needs of customers and then speak with suppliers to make this possible. It's a case of working together to find ways to make fulfilment work. We worked with Le Creuset to have a guaranteed stock level instore, which is mutually beneficial, as



Contributor:
Holly Worthington



“The speed and range of delivery companies available with guaranteed times of delivery and next-day options has made it easy to offer choice.”

we know we have products to show customers and there is a significant range of their products for shoppers to choose from. I also show the catalogue to customers so they can see different options that aren't in store for them to see. It is possible to find a way to work with suppliers, particularly if they know you buy a lot from them and they can support you somewhat in that. Having these relationships with suppliers makes it possible to find solutions for customers. If you say yes to a customer, they'll come back. If you say no regularly, they'll go to a different retailer and find loyalty elsewhere. There's a mutual interest in making it work, selling great products and keeping customers happy."

Real-time stock availability

Having real-time stock availability makes it possible to deliver a seamless omnichannel process. David explained

how Salamander Cookshop utilises stock availability: "This can be somewhat reliant on the supplier and what they've invested in. When you have access to the warehouse, committed stock and available stock visibility, this is so important. It enables you to offer customers access to the full range of products without needing to have a large stock holding. People are bound to want the colour you don't have in stock, so being able to look this up is vital. You need to have the technology in place at the till, for staff to be able to quickly access stock availability and tell customers the options that they have available, as well as the delivery options and timescales for delivery."

Competing with Amazon Prime

While competing with the likes of Amazon Prime may be a challenging task, this is something that Salamander

Cookshop is aiming to achieve. David added: "If someone comes in and asks for a specific kitchen gadget, I want to be able to compete with Amazon Prime. If you have access to the warehouse of a big supplier with an extensive catalogue, you are able to compete. We've tried to be quicker and more responsive, always trying to find a solution for customers, even if it's something we don't have in our shop. People often assume that you might be more expensive because you're a small independent retailer, but that isn't typically the case. My desire would be that we are able to be as responsive as Amazon Prime, as well as being able to offer expertise and an unparalleled customer experience."



How using a handheld WMS app can improve performance in your storage operation

What do we mean when we talk of improving performance? Well, usually this means improvement in a number of specific areas, such as being more 'efficient', more accurate, working with good operational discipline, proper utilisation of personnel, and of course increasing 'productivity'. Improving all these areas together can deliver what we hope most warehouse managers would call increased performance.

So what is specifically involved in each of these areas, for example with efficiency which can be rather a general term? What we are really discussing here is the efficiency of individual tasks, in other words, the 'process' by which the tasks in your operation are performed. Think about some of your own processes. Are they as lean, simple and streamlined as they could be? Increasing accuracy on the other hand is more easily explained, it is purely the removal of as many errors as possible.

Securing good operational discipline is certainly an underrated improvement. Without this actions that take place in your warehouse could be unproductive or erroneous, which you would probably agree is unsatisfactory. This also relates to utilisation – keeping your personnel fully tasked as much as possible - and both will ultimately impact the quest for productivity improvement, the aim of getting more from your available resource without increasing labour costs.

So why will a handheld app make it easier to improve these areas? After all, the effectiveness of a handheld solution depends largely on the system to which it integrates. As advocates for the use

of the warehouse management system (WMS) in the e-commerce sector, we believe this type of system will deliver better results than other types of stock or order system. But whichever you use, you may derive benefits with an integrated handheld app which are not achievable without one.

The first requirement for a handheld app is that it should be purpose-designed for the tasks you want to perform – not a desktop process on a mobile device. This means task efficiency is inherently 'designed in' so it offers a streamlined process aimed at achieving the task quickly and easily. Add into that, for picking, putaway or any other process the means to validate actions using bar code scanning and you have the second requirement for major performance improvement.

After all, what do most errors in your operation relate to? Generally, it's because things are identified incorrectly (or not at all!) in terms of goods or locations for goods. A good handheld app will give you many options for validating accuracy, from the simple verification of a storage location to a range of product or batch identifiers. These options can be configured to your needs, adding

verification where it's needed and leaving it out where it's not.

So we can see how a handheld solution helps improvement in these areas, but we can also see that using a streamlined process promotes operational discipline. This is because the user is allocated a specific task which permits only necessary operational variations. It does not allow scope to diverge from that, or to decide on a different course of action. Clearly this means that any 'necessary' operational variations must be factored in, but with the right system, they will be.

When we look at utilisation we know that to achieve productivity gains your personnel should be utilised to the optimum level during their working hours. A good handheld app helps here too, as it means that tasks can be continuously drip-fed to the workforce. This minimises the breaks (which typically occur between groups of tasks) needed to collect instructions or confirm completion, as well as reducing associated supervisory time, resulting in greater focus on productive work.

How cleverly this can be done depends on the type of App. As a minimum it should receive available task instructions automatically from a central stock or WMS system, which can be selected by an appropriate user from a simple task menu on a handheld device. In the more advanced systems, parameters may allow a wide measure of control to direct task instructions to specific users, areas, equipment types or based on completion of other actions.

So when we come back to productivity improvement, we see that there is no one factor that raises your productivity. It is a combination of things that produces that outcome. It begins with the use of an efficient process, which supports the means to validate accuracy within it. It is facilitated by the maintenance of good operational discipline that allows staff minimal divergence from the process, and by promoting a workflow regime with the minimum number of interruptions.

It would be wrong to, and we don't claim that simply using a handheld App with your WMS or stock system will

deliver all the suggested improvements and create a perfect operation. There are various factors involved, beginning primarily with the kind of system to which your handheld app is integrated. You will have to determine based on your unique operational factors whether the processes you'd like to perform with a handheld app can be supported by that system.

On the other hand if you are looking to decide on a system for your business, and whether that should include a handheld app, then based on the above, the answer is probably yes. Even then you need to carefully evaluate the options it provides, and whether its features are flexible enough to incorporate your way of working, to deliver the benefits we've talked about. As always, a system is only ever a tool for a specific job, and you must decide whether the tool is the right one.



Make your warehouse work smarter

Use pallet racking for small parts storage and turn a ubiquitous storage product into a flexible order picking solution.

While constant innovation generates a stream of new intralogistics solutions, 'classic' pallet racking remains the most commonly used storage system. Its relatively low investment costs and flexibility have made it an indispensable framework for storage and order picking systems.

The drive to minimise stock levels for each SKU and improve picking process efficiency to speed up order fulfilment, combined with demands for Just-in-Time delivery and online retail, is generating a greater need for small parts storage.

Adaptability & efficiency

This is where the adaptability of pallet racking comes to the fore because small parts picking can be easily integrated within pallet racks. One option is to create small parts pick locations on the reachable ground level, with upper storage levels serving as a buffer store for replenishment.

This will result in a reasonably efficient picking process but ground floor locations within a pallet rack will, of course, be limited. Solutions are therefore required

to maximise the available floor space to create a pick face with sufficient locations for the required SKUs, and enough stock to ensure availability during picks.

Flow shelves for fifo

Flow, or roller track, shelves can be easily installed into pallet racking to increase the number of pick locations and volume of SKUs located on the ground level pick face. Goods are easily picked from the front of the racking – the rollers on the flow shelves allow bins and containers containing small items to be picked roll smoothly to the front of the shelf. A full container of items will roll to the operator each time the empty one at the front is removed.

Shelving

Standard shelving is another option to create flexible small item pick faces within pallet racking. The simplest solution is static shelving at right angles to the racking, with space in between each run to facilitate picking. An alternative option is pull-out mobile shelving that



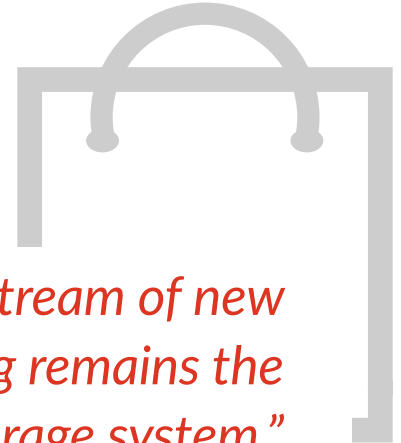
Contributor:
BITO

maximises the available space under the racking – though movement of shelving has a negative impact on pick time. A third solution involves static shelving parallel to racking, which makes front items easy to pick. In all cases, shelving dividers can be fitted to organise pick locations better.

Inclined supply shelving within a pallet racking bay will make items clearly visible for picking. Cardboard cartons or plastic bins can be used, though the latter option enables preparation in advance at the goods-in area by filling the plastic bin with the items to be picked.

Bins complete the solution

BITO's comprehensive range of plastic bins and containers includes different sizes, with all kinds of accessories, for use in shelving and in flow racks. Working as a one stop shop solution with BITO pallet racking, shelving and flow racks, they will keep goods protected throughout the intralogistics process and during transport to ensure the quality of products are delivered to the customer in prime condition.



“While constant innovation generates a stream of new intralogistics solutions, ‘classic’ pallet racking remains the most commonly used storage system.”





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The importance of choosing a reliable delivery partner

Name the brands that you regularly shop online with. How many times have you been let down by their delivery service? Chances are, they've never disappointed you with delivery and there is a reason that these businesses gain customer loyalty.



Contributor:
Holly Worthington

However good a purchase journey is, delivery is the part that most customers remember. After all, what good is a seamless ecommerce experience, if you have to go through stress to receive your parcel?

This article will list some of the reasons that finding the right delivery partner for your business is essential, as well as the ways that you can simplify the selection process.

Why does your choice of delivery partner matter?

1. It impacts your reputation

First impressions matter and disappointing a customer that is expecting a delivery is one of the quickest ways to lose future business. In fact, **71% of shoppers say they are likely to switch to an alternative online retailer after a poor shopping experience.** If problems are encountered, whether it is the retailer's fault or not, shoppers will associate their negative experience with the brand that they bought from. Word can also travel quickly,

with customers often recommending great ecommerce sites to friends, or voicing their opinions on social media. By having a reliable delivery service, retailers can complete a great customer journey and become known for their positive reputation.

2. Timely delivery

Delivery promises are typically made at the point of purchase. Once a customer's expectations have been set, these must be met. A reliable delivery partner will understand the importance of this and have a track record of delivering items on, or before the expected date. Offering multiple delivery times is also beneficial, with **46% of people choosing to shop with a retailer because they offer more delivery options than competitors.**

3. Customer service and product tracking

'Where is my order', also known as **WISMO calls make up 70-80% of all customer service enquiries during peak.** The best delivery partners will offer an effective tracking system, allowing customers to know the whereabouts of their

1. package. As well as reducing inbound enquiries, having this information makes it straightforward for retailers to provide accurate shipping information and creates an opportunity for positive interaction with customers.

2. Packages are handled safely

Great delivery partners take pride in making sure your products arrive in perfect condition. Storage, transportation and delivery play a vital part in customers receiving items that are not damaged. As well as ensuring packages are handled carefully, this includes making sure they are not left outside in the rain and that they are handed successfully to customers.

3. Cost

Fees can impact a retailer's decision to work with a specific delivery partner, or choose a more affordable option. Having a clear, easily understood pricing structure means that retailers will be able to predict upcoming shipping costs and that this can be done without having to charge customers extortionate prices for fast delivery.

4. Time-saving

Choosing the right partner to take care of your fulfilment can save time and allow you to focus on other areas of the business. Choosing an unsuitable delivery partner can do the opposite, requiring additional time and effort to rectify mistakes.





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“The right delivery partner can enable retailers to balance customer satisfaction and profitability.”

How to choose a reliable delivery partner

When sourcing a delivery partner, it's important to make sure you have all of the relevant information.

Ask the right questions

Take the time to write a list of all points that are important to your business and its customers. Before deciding on a delivery partner, ask them all of the questions that you need answers to. These could include:

- How long does delivery typically take?
- Do they offer different delivery options?
- How do their delivery processes work?
- How are shipments handled?
- What are the costs and do they offer bulk discounts?
- What are their security and data policies?
- Are shipments insured?
- What happens if the customer isn't home to accept delivery?

Do your research

The best way to understand the typical customer experience is to find out what others have to say. Do your research online to find customers' reviews and see how potential delivery partners compare to other options.

Summary

The right delivery partner can enable retailers to balance customer satisfaction and profitability, making it easier than ever before to create a seamless ecommerce experience.

Scale up with warehouse automation

Whether traditional retail or pureplay, if your operation is growing and you need to handle greater volumes quickly and accurately, warehouse automation is the answer.

Reducing your labour costs while boosting the productivity of your workforce is an attractive option – especially with labour shortages being exacerbated by Brexit and the growth of labour-intensive e-commerce – but the benefits of warehouse automation do not stop there.

Unrivalled speed

Warehouse automation delivers unrivalled speed, an important factor in retail today. Shipping orders to customers more quickly, conveniently and cheaply secures competitive advantage – especially with the later cut-off times demanded by e-com customers. For example, at the distribution centre of Wehkamp, a leading online retailer in the Netherlands, automation from KNAPP enables customer orders to be ready for shipment within just 30 minutes.



Contributor:
Knapp

Minimising returns

Automating the fulfilment process – through technologies such as zero-defect workstations – enhances order picking

accuracy, thereby minimising the number of costly returns. In addition, automated systems are able to handle returns more efficiently, making them immediately available for resale.

Handling peaks

Investing in logistics automation gives retailers the flexibility to handle peaks, such as Black Friday and Christmas, more easily. The modular design of KNAPP's systems also means that the automation is scalable, in order to deal with rising volumes over time. Value-added services – such as gift-wrapping – can easily be integrated, while packaging, labelling and sorting of dispatch cartons can also be handled fully automatically, with all processes seamlessly managed by KNAPP's own software.

Shuttle technology

At the heart of many KNAPP solutions is the OSR Shuttle™ automated storage and retrieval system. When goods are required for an order, the high-density OSR Shuttle™ store retrieves the

relevant product and delivers it to an ergonomically designed picking station. Here, an intuitive user interface (GUI) ensures that fulfilment is consistently fast and accurate.

Precise sequencing

Another KNAPP technology that often features in retail solutions is the Pocket Sorter. Based on overhead conveying technology, this system sorts suspended pockets containing goods that have been picked in different areas of the warehouse into the precise sequence required by the packing/dispatch stations. For fashion retailers, there is the added advantage that the Pocket Sorter can handle hanging garments and flat-packed items in the same system.

Powerful combination

When used together, the OSR Shuttle™ and Pocket Sorter can enable one-touch distribution for all types of order – store replenishment, direct-to-customer or click-and-collect. Retailers including ASOS, REI and Zalando are already benefiting from this potent combination of KNAPP technologies. At just one type of workstation, goods retrieved from the shuttle store can be picked into cartons or totes (for store orders) or into pockets (for e-commerce orders), meaning the OSR Shuttle™ system accommodates a single inventory for all sales channels. Pockets with single-item orders travel automatically to the packing area, while pockets with items from multi-line orders are sequenced by the Pocket Sorter prior to packing.

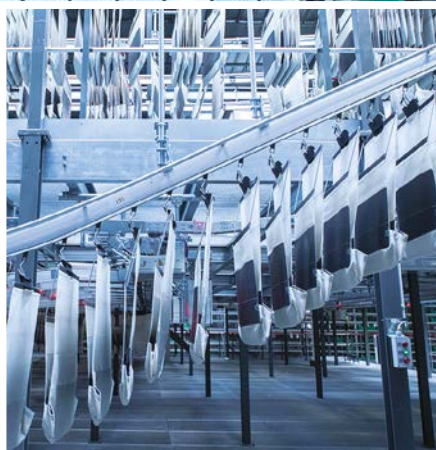
Retail expertise

With over 40,000 shuttles and 2.5 million pockets installed across more than 2,000 systems worldwide, KNAPP has vast experience in logistics automation. Customers in the retail sector include Boots, M&S, John Lewis, The Very Group, Clarks, Hugo Boss and Parfums Christian Dior. In addition to an enhanced customer experience through greater availability of stock, higher picking accuracy and faster delivery, these customers have secured the benefits of reduced handling costs, improved efficiency, optimal use of space and flexibility to handle peaks.

www.knapp.com



Precise sequencing by the Pocket Sorter



making complexity simple

KNAPP is a leading global supplier of warehouse automation solutions, with over 2000 active systems worldwide. The group's advanced conveying, storage and fulfilment technologies are combined in solutions that feature seamless integration and intelligent software. Successful projects in the UK recently include systems for John Lewis, Boots, M&S, Staples, Clarks, British Gas and Well.

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Oxfordshire OX44 7RW
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www.knapp.com

KNAPP



Break boundaries.

Grow your business internationally.

FedEx Cross Border can help retailers expand their horizons and reach customers globally.

Our flexible e-commerce solutions are designed to help make international e-commerce available to businesses of all sizes, whilst helping to provide a localised consumer experience.

fcb.fedex.com

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FedEx®

Cross Border



Cost Efficient

Unexpected delivery costs are the cause behind many abandoned shopping carts. Our delivery solutions can help you reduce costs and encourage your customers to complete their orders.



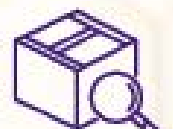
Managed Locally

Our strong relationships with global final-mile delivery providers allow consumers to receive a familiar delivery experience.



Delivery Timeframe

During the checkout process, consumers are increasingly expecting an estimated delivery date. FedEx Cross Border helps you make your customers aware of when their package is arriving.



Tracking

When selected, our tracked service option provides visibility throughout a parcel's journey in the recipient's local language, where available.

Whistl: fulfilment that fits

Whistl is the leading independent provider of e-fulfilment solutions and has experienced significant growth in recent years, most recently announcing the opening of three further fulfilment sites in 2021 to meet customer demand.



Contributor:
Whistl

We offer a complete range of fulfilment services for established businesses, providing a high-quality, seamless experience from the first click to final delivery.

Our outsourced order fulfilment services are tailored to support established brands and businesses receiving a minimum of 300 product orders a day. Whistl's outsourced fulfilment solutions and managed support make sure product orders are delivered out to end customers on time, building increased loyalty.

We are the perfect order fulfilment partner for established brands and businesses. As a multi-channel fulfilment company, we can support all fulfilment order needs, from business to consumer, business to business and even dropshipping. We create a partnership approach, with our flexible IT support and integrations ensuring transparency of stock and batch control.

With our **14 national fulfilment locations** and a combined capacity of over 1.5 million square feet, we are the right outsourced partner to support business and order growth. Our full account

management support, combined with our cost efficiencies throughout the fulfilment process, delivers a fulfilment solution that can fit a business's individual needs.

We also offer a range of order fulfilment and international distribution options. For example, if an e-tailer is looking to import or export items, we have solutions to get items picked, packed and shipped to customers within the UK, Europe or beyond.

Our bespoke solutions are created to meet the individual needs of our customers. Whistl has the experience to deal with daily volumes whether they are generated from ad-hoc activities, marketing campaigns, daily deal sites or subscription business models. Our dedicated team of picking and packing experts ensure all aspects of order processing are covered, optimising stock levels and efficiently reworking, selecting, scanning and packing your items ready for distribution.

Outsourcing international fulfilment with Whistl has many benefits; delivery management costs can be minimised, improving your revenue opportunities. With Whistl's **third-party fulfilment solutions**, a business can access



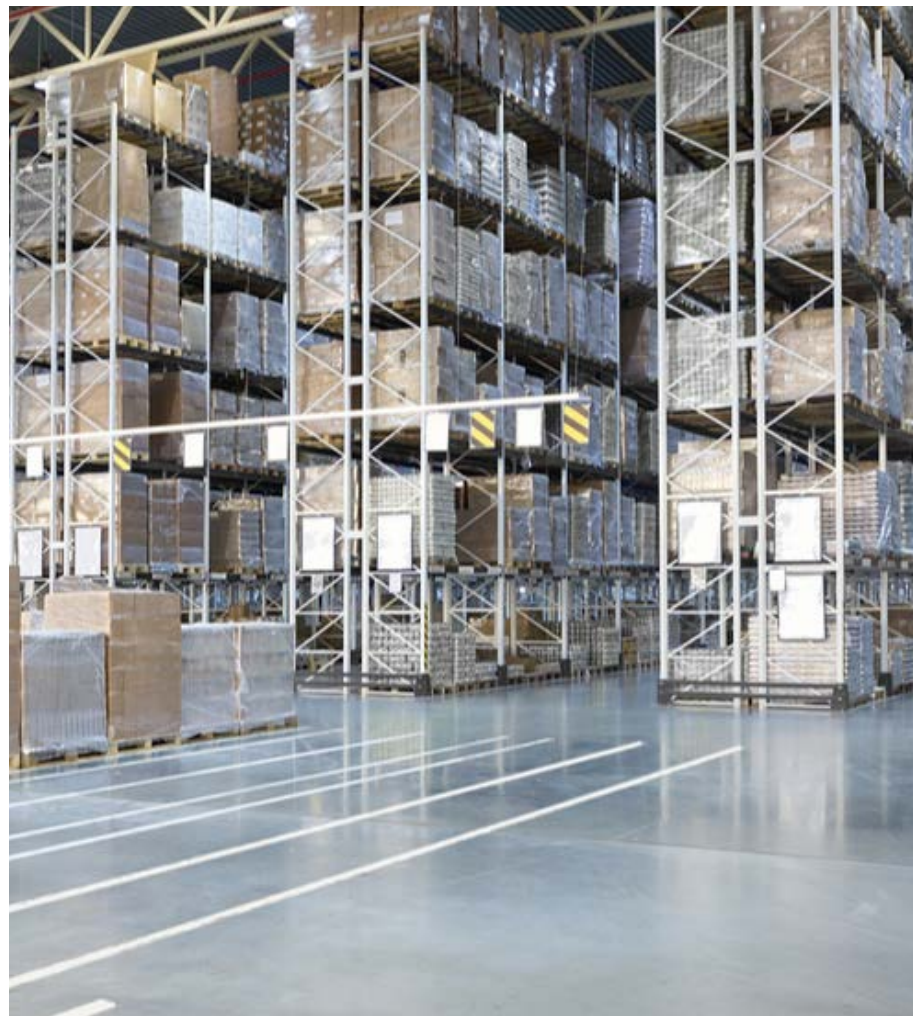
“From order processing to supply chain management, Whistl offers an organisation a multi-carrier solution to mitigate risk and facilitate a business’s growth.”

discounted international shipping rates, reduce their overheads, increase cross-border reach and improve shipping performance, all while connecting seamlessly with sales channels, inventory management systems and technical infrastructure.

Whistl is a global eCommerce fulfilment provider, supporting customers to ensure increased delivery options at the point of checkout and enhancing a consumer’s buying experience. From order processing to supply chain management, Whistl offers an organisation a multi-carrier solution to mitigate risk and facilitate a business’s growth.

For more information about Whistl’s fulfilment services, visit:

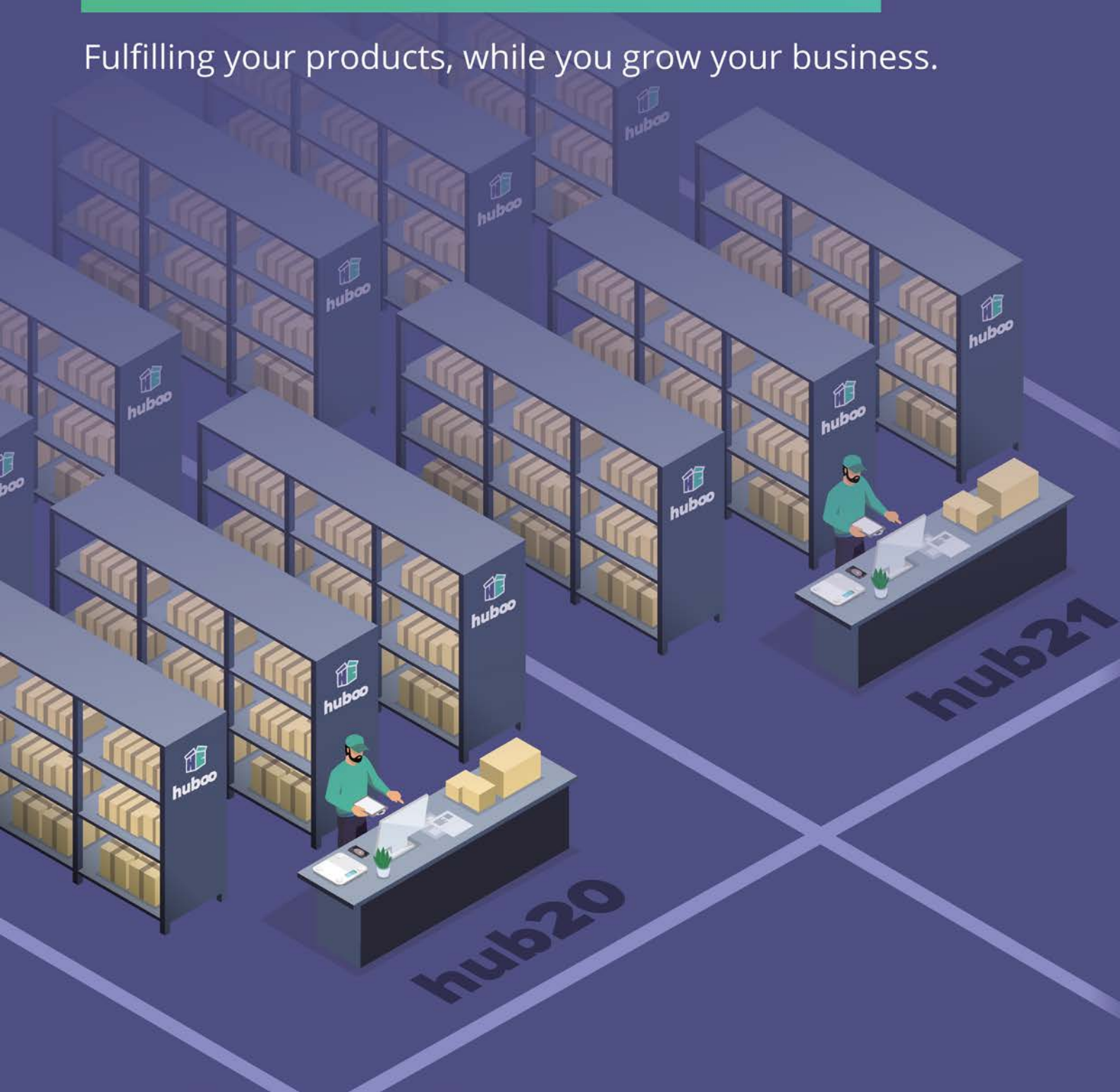
<https://www.whistl.co.uk/fulfilment>





The Innovative B2C Fulfilment Solution

Fulfilling your products, while you grow your business.



What do we do?

We store, pick, pack and dispatch your parcels so your customers get their precious orders on time and in perfect condition. Whether you are a large established online retailer sending thousands of packages a day, or you have just outgrown your current premises and are exploring the outsourced model, then come and talk to us. Our fulfilment service could be the perfect solution.

Here's how it works:

STEP 1

First, sign up at **Huboo.co.uk** or give us a call on: **01722 444 025** to talk about your fulfilment needs and challenges.

STEP 2

We'll make sure we understand how you want your stock to be packed and dispatched, and your Business Development Manager will work with you.

STEP 3

Your Business Development Manager will help you complete our Key Operating Assumptions document.

STEP 4

We will then integrate with your sales channels.

STEP 5

Then you can prepare your stock with your Business Development Manager and send your first shipment to us, where it will be received by your Huboo Humans.

STEP 6

When your stock arrives, we train our team on your fulfilment promise to your customers, ensuring brand loyalty and values are consistent.

STEP 7

Our well trained warehouse team pick your orders then pack, parcel and dispatch your products according to your brand and shipping guidelines.

There is no minimum term or complicated contract with Huboo. We want to make it easy for you to benefit from our offering.

CONTACT US —————→  info@huboo.co.uk  **01722 444 025**

What is green fulfilment and how can you achieve it?

Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious about the impact that delivery can have on the environment.

At a time where **80% of shoppers want same day delivery**, **51% of those aged between 16 and 34 are more likely to shop with a retailer that has made consistent efforts to be sustainable**. This conflict between offering quick delivery and sustainable methods of transportation has left retailers with a balancing act on their hands.

There are opportunities to reduce environmental impact throughout the supply chain, many of which do not require much investment.

We look at some of the best ways that you can implement green fulfilment practices:

Environmental projects that can offset carbon emissions, include forestry protection, tree planting, and even funding methods of generating clean energy, such as wind and solar power.

Electric vehicles

Electric home delivery vehicles are being used by more retailers, reducing the use of fossil fuels and the amount of carbon dioxide produced. John Lewis announced its mission to completely eliminate the use of fossil fuels for its 4,800-vehicle fleet by 2030, saving around 20,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide every year.

Packaging

Retailers can re-think their packaging options to cut out single-use plastics and minimise waste wherever possible. This can be done by sourcing suitable packaging that can be reused or recycled, as well as using branding to educate customers on the ways it can be utilised or disposed of.

Carbon offsetting

There are many carbon offset programs available, meaning retailers can invest in projects that reduce carbon emissions, compensating for those produced by delivery processes.

Etsy was the first global ecommerce brand to offset 100% of its emissions from shipping in 2019, setting a precedent for others in the industry to follow.



Contributor:
Holly Worthington



Streamlining operations

Looking at the efficiency of existing fulfilment operations is a great way to reduce carbon emissions. While it may take time and money to set up, designing a strategic approach can make green fulfilment much more simple, as well as bringing long-term financial benefits.

By grouping orders, having specific pick-up locations, or planning delivery routes, retailers can reduce the cost of deliveries, saving unnecessary emissions as well as drivers' time. As an example, offering reduced price delivery for time slots when a delivery van is already in a customer's area is a great initiative to encourage more eco-friendly delivery.

Environmentally friendly storage

It's not only delivery processes that can be re-designed. Storage and warehousing plays a large role in retailers' impact on the environment. Whether you manage

your own warehousing, or outsource it, small changes can make a big difference.

Methods of reducing emissions from storage and distribution facilities include using efficient lighting and clean energy-powered electricity. For those that don't manage their own warehousing and distribution centres, requesting more environmentally friendly processes, or switching to those that invest into reducing their carbon footprint, can be a great idea.

Retailers making a difference

The Good Retail Awards 2021 highlighted some of the retailers making a difference in the industry. Here are some of the great initiatives that they are showcasing.

Harts of Stur

As well as recycling over 300 tonnes of wooden pallets, cardboard, plastic and other materials each year, **Harts of Stur**

3PL SOLUTIONS YOU CAN RELY ON

We are not just your logistics provider we are your long term partner

Our eCommerce fulfilment solutions are modelled to be scalable and flexible, providing the perfect platform to help businesses grow with our domestic and global eCommerce delivery, returns and eCommerce integration solutions.

We have experience in B2B, B2C, wholesale and retail eCommerce markets and are specialists in supporting customers of all sizes, from start-ups to larger enterprises, with their innovative business strategies and growth objectives.

- Inventory management
- Returns processing
- 100% quality check processes
- Courier & despatch management
- Bespoke KPI reporting
- Full IT eCommerce integration
- Pick & pack services
- Product presentation
- Labelling
- Re-packaging
- Kitting
- Product assembly



WE HELP YOU

- ✓ **Remove complexities from your operations.**
- ✓ **Build a scalable & flexible model to support your growth objectives.**
- ✓ **Drive both operational & financial efficiencies.**
- ✓ **Delight your customers**

Dispatch Management

Delamode provides the expertise and service coverage to meet your multi channel distribution requirements in the ever evolving world of eCommerce and online shopping.

- Comprehensive European and National distribution network
- International freight management services
- Daily parcel, courier and pallet services
- Express/urgent shipments by van, truck and trailer
- Late cut off and collection times



Essex Fulfilment Facility

Our facility offers palletised storage racking and dedicated areas for fulfilment operations

- Total warehouse floor area of 91,000 sq ft
- Circa mezzanine area of 76,000 sq ft across 4 floors
- Secure gated and palisade fenced site
- CCTV coverage and monitoring internally and externally
- Modern alarm system, incorporating sensors throughout the facility
- Facility located in Essex with easy access to London, other major routes and ports



IT Integration

Our WMS is designed and built to support every aspect of warehouse management, from improving picking efficiencies to maximising operational capacity.

- Multi-channel integration
- Real time inventory information visibility
- Order status and returns details
- Tailored KPI and report dashboard
- Access to courier order tracking and reference numbers

EDI and API interface with any system enables fast and efficient ordering and stock management processes



shopify



Magento®



Woo COMMERCE



NETSUITE

CONTACT US

info@delamode-group.com

www.delamode-uk.com

began reusing cartons and boxes to ship orders to customers, as well as sourcing a 100% biodegradable alternative to polystyrene chips. Additional initiatives include installing LED lighting, an air source heat pump system and solar panels.

Small Stuff UK

Small Stuff has swapped to 100% renewable energy, making continuous improvements to the ways that they work. Continuing their mission to be as environmentally and socially sustainable as possible, they are set to implement a circular system of buying back clothing, with the aim of having zero waste by 2022.

Leaf and Ground

Leaf and Ground has a commitment to recycling and low mileage, locally sourced, ethically produced products. Reusing pallets, cardboard boxes and many other materials, Leaf and Ground has significantly cut down the amount of retail packaging used.

Pure Bundle

Pure Bundle encourages a lower carbon footprint, allowing customers to enjoy fashion that already exists.

Educating customers on the importance of sustainability, they send orders to customers in reusable packaging.

Aesthetic Laundry

Aesthetic Laundry operates a 'made to order' business model, keeping waste to a minimum. They source 95% of their fabric within the UK to keep their carbon footprint low and use compostable mailing bags to send orders to customers.

True Vintage

True Vintage has overhauled its internal practices to be as green as possible. Partnering with innovative businesses like Ecologi to offset carbon emissions, they also sell clothing manufactured locally, to reduce the impact of transit.

The English Soap Company

The English Soap Company makes products on the premises from raw materials, sourcing ingredients that have a low impact on the environment, as well as employing local people to reduce the amount of travel needed. They have designed products that require minimal protection in transit, as well as reducing the amount of waste by reinventing their packaging.



“Whether you manage your own warehousing, or outsource it, small changes can make a big difference.”

Is your warehouse prepared for tomorrow's challenges?

Throughout the retail sector, competitive pressures are driving the demand for fast, more accurate order fulfillment. Your customers everywhere are demanding faster access to the goods they purchase – Covid-19 has speeded up a process that now demands same day and next day delivery as well as in-store pick up.

kardexremstar

Contributor:
Kardex Remstar

According to research firm eMarketer, last year the global ecommerce market reached a staggering \$25 trillion. To keep up with this demand there has been major innovation taking place behind the scenes and out of sight of customers. But without the right combination of people, processes and systems, retail companies will quickly find themselves falling behind in the order fulfillment game.

The advances in warehouse-automation technologies and the increased use of optimised picking and fulfillment design strategies is now readily available. Retail companies need advanced strategies in order to stand out from their competitors but for many they may feel its cost prohibitive.

The beauty of today's automation options for retail companies is that it's inherently modular in nature and can be implemented in phases. This allows your inventory, picking and packing operation investment costs to be spread over time, enabling a phased movement of processes. This will deliver support for the training of staff as well as a step by step analysis of the experience over time to determine time and labour saving as well as overall return on investment.

To find out more about modular automated storage and retrieval systems Kardex has developed their Automation Knowledge Center which provides comprehensive, research-based materials to effectively navigate your retail challenges and suggest ways to integrate accurate, fast, and reliable processes. Gain advice from industry experts and find out the latest automated warehouse solutions to accelerate returns management processes, optimise order fulfilment, and improve warehouse logistics.

Kardex is the market leader in dynamic modular storage and retrieval systems. If you wish to learn more about Kardex Remstar visit us at www.kardex.com

Increase your Automation Knowledge



Kardex is offering Modern Retail readers the ability to download direct from Kardex Automation Knowledge Centre. [Click to gain access](#) to industry expert advice and research-based papers to help optimise your retail processes.

Covering challenges, trends and solutions



Cost efficiency



Material flow Analysis



High Profitability



Modernisation

[kardex.com](https://www.kardex.com)

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