



LEVELING THE ECOMMERCE PLAYING FIELD

By simply offering customers a wide range of delivery options, e-tailers can gain a competitive advantage – and can look to delivery experts for help.

Internet shoppers want reliability and a wealth of choice when it comes to receiving their orders, yet many small e-tailers struggle to provide delivery options that are speedy, trustworthy and affordable. With numerous reliable and low-cost options like same-day delivery and free shipping, the world's Online retail giants have radically altered customer expectations for e-commerce.

Shoppers want to know purchases will arrive at their front door at a specific hour, that they can keep tabs on it the whole time, and, crucially, return it hassle-free if need be. Customers said they were 87% more likely to return to a business after a good delivery experience, according to research conducted by Metapack.

The data show that beyond keeping customers happy with products and goods, businesses must meet growing consumer needs just to win them over in the first place. Some 61% of online shoppers opted for one business over the other simply because of better delivery options. Nearly half (47%) rate free delivery as their number one priority. Simply by offering an express shipping option for customers has a positive impact on a company's business. A recent report from DHL about cross-border e-commerce indicates that companies offering express shipping options grow 60% faster than those who only offer standard deferred shipping.

Shoppers and e-tailers both want to know that they can schedule a package to arrive at a certain time, on a certain day, nearly anywhere in the world. E-commerce firms must be able to tell their customers exactly where their order is in real time, and, should an issue arise, where a breakdown in the system occurred.

"By offering a range of delivery options that address issues like order visibility, unexpected delays, and the quality that goods arrive in, you're sending a clear signal to potential customers that you care as much about the reliability of your logistics as they do," says Andy Lim, Vice-President, Sales Development and E-commerce, DHL Express Asia Pacific.

For the world's online retail giants, having the capacity to meet modern customer demands is a standard part of their shipping infrastructure. But managing a worldwide delivery network is a daunting and costly affair. How, for example, do small businesses offer a comprehensive international return policy? Reliable global package tracking, coupled with trustworthy insurance, is expensive to guarantee. And when customers have problems or questions, they expect a 24-hour support network and complete transparency.



So what can e-tailers do to level the playing field? The answer: Let the delivery experts handle the logistics. Crucially, established delivery experts already have the infrastructure and name recognition that many online customers are looking for when they place their orders. DHL currently services some 8 million customers annually, to more than 120,000 destinations across the globe.

And you can rest-assured that the delivery experts are at the forefront of shipping innovation. Changes in last-mile delivery options are key areas where customers are looking for flexibility. This means that e-tailers need access to solutions that allow them to rapidly make changes to orders, have them filled at the last minute, and even offer alternatives once a package has already left the warehouse.

“Those who specialize in higher-end services such as international door-to-door delivery by a specific time will be able to meet your more demanding customers’ requirements,” says Lim. “DHL, for example, covers a variety of delivery options including parcel lockers and delivery to its network of retail outlet partners.”

Teaming up with one of the leading names in global logistics is a natural step toward taking any business to the next level in e-commerce. E-tailers can build on the customer trust that is already in place, and offer the delivery solutions needed to compete in the word of online shopping.



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