Improving Visibility Across Market
Channels to Improve the Customer
Experience & Increase Sales

Managing Your Customer's Experience eBook

Tips to Make Customer
Order Management Simple

Freestyle
solutions™

Managing The Customer Experience

On average, it costs companies five times as much to acquire a new customer than it does to retain an existing one. If a retailer is not accurately identifying and effectively marketing to maximize sales from existing customers, they are missing one of the biggest opportunities to grow the business.

Understanding what your customer wants is not hard – to receive the product(s) they ordered and to receive them on time. Sometimes, delivering on that commitment can be complicated and often overwhelming, especially when your business is growing.

For online retailers, providing excellent customer service sets you apart from the competition. Having a well-defined customer service strategy in place can no longer be an afterthought. Keeping all customer order history, ship-to addresses, and more from all sales channels in one inventory, order & customer management system provides your customer service reps with the tools to service customers better.

Having customer information readily available helps sell more items with each visit to your website(s) and/or marketplaces. A system that will enable you and your shoppers to access a complete history of their purchases, creating a virtual closet, delivers an enhanced level of personal service. Utilizing this information will enable you to up-sell and cross-sell and will also provide the ability to make relevant purchase suggestions based on customers' preferences from past shopping trips.

Having access to a complete history of customer orders, payments and other account specific information, enables you to better anticipate your shoppers' needs.

According to SalesForce.com, 81% of companies with strong customer experience are outperforming their competition.

Why Customer Service Matters

94% of all online retailers provide email customer service.

81% of companies with strong customer experience are outperforming their competition.

Resolve a complaint in the customer's favor and they will do business with you again 70% of the time.

3 in 5 Americans (59%) would try a new brand or company for a better service experience.

42% of online shoppers said they had contacted a retailer about an online purchase in the last 6 months.

41% of consumers expect an email response within six hours.

SalesForce.com - Desk.com Blog | 2014
Preparing your small business customer service team for the holidays

Top Requested Customer Order Management Features

So what features are online retailers looking for to better manager their customer's experience?

1. **Tracking customers from all sales channels**

   Storing everything you need to know about a customer in one central location, no matter which sales channel they purchased from. Having the ability to review a current order, search on a past order or update/modify a customer record, or customer management information.

2. **The ability to create strategic marketing campaigns**

   Being able to report on customers and their buying behavior to create strategic marketing campaigns. For example, running a report on customers based on products purchased can be used to create a complementary product offering campaign. Or reporting on customer location, how often they order, and how much they spend is useful information for knowing where to allocate your marketing budget.

3. **Managing multiple shipping & billing addresses**

   Sometimes a customer wants to purchase a gift for a friend and have it delivered directly to them, or make a purchase and decide to use a different form of payment from the last purchase. Storing multiple shipping and billing addresses on a customer record is an essential requirement.
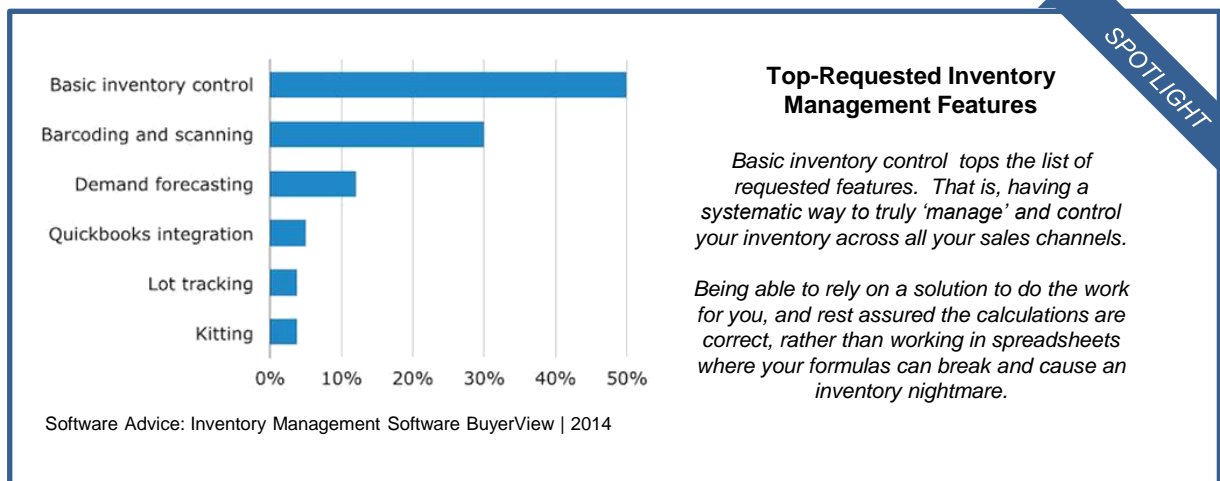
Gain Visibility Into Your Inventory Across Sales Channels

The last thing an online retailer needs is to have is too much inventory on hand and too few orders coming in, leading to reduced margins. Excessive inventory ties up the cash that you could have invested in new equipment, enhancing your eCommerce store, or boosting your marketing efforts to drive additional revenue. At the same time, not having enough inventory on hand results in stock-outs, backorders, cancellations, and lost customers. It's a balancing act and it is a major issue for all companies.

Avoid stock-outs or double-selling with a multichannel inventory management system, tracking inventory across all sales channels in one solution. Managing inventory in one place will lead to better analysis of your products in terms of performance, peak selling periods, and more.

Accurate inventory data is critical to delighting customers and driving growth. Multichannel selling significantly complicates inventory management and other business processes. Visibility into your inventory and forecasting is critical to a healthy operation. You need to be able to track inventory across all sales channels – your eCommerce store(s), offsite fulfillment centers or shopping channels like Amazon, eBay or any of the many marketplaces available - in one solution.

This information will help you determine what products are selling, what periods may require more inventory, and ultimately give you 'the big picture' on how your business is performing across all channels at quick glance without having to log in to multiple systems and/or weeding through various spreadsheets!

Software Advice: Inventory Management Software BuyerView | 2014

SPOTLIGHT

Top-Requested Inventory Management Features

Basic inventory control tops the list of requested features. That is, having a systematic way to truly 'manage' and control your inventory across all your sales channels.

Being able to rely on a solution to do the work for you, and rest assured the calculations are correct, rather than working in spreadsheets where your formulas can break and cause an inventory nightmare.

Keep Your eCommerce Store & Back Office On Track

Once shoppers have selected their items, orders need to be processed and shipped. Multichannel retailers have specific demands as far as shipping methods and order processing. At minimum, you would need to be able to capture and stage orders automatically for all sales channels so that there are no delays in shipment – especially during holiday and gift giving seasons. Having a multichannel order management system would enable you to automatically download new orders from all sources, publish product information and keep inventory synchronized.

Being able to automatically queue orders for processing based on available inventory, being able to track the orders by stage – from picking and packing to delivery – and being able to keep shoppers informed every step of the way is one way to differentiate service after an order is placed.

Doing all of this effectively requires full and complete information automatically available from each link in the process - from inventory planning, purchasing and warehousing, to shopping and shipping. Distribution networks and logistics take on increased importance for the business along with the ability to integrate inventory from multiple suppliers and locations across all channels to know what is in stock and ready for shipment.

Today's connected environment enables even the smallest retailers to reach vast audiences for their products. To take advantage of the many channels available to grow your business, an order management system needs to be able to address the following crucial requirements:

- Automate order processing flows
- Capture and stage orders automatically for all sales channels
- Quickly track, view and expedite orders
- Integrate directly with leading shippers

Effective back office order and inventory management, warehousing and payment integration coupled with efficient logistics help online retail operations to utilize technology to control the business while providing superior customer service to win and retain shoppers.

Finding The Best Solution For Your Business Issues

Customer service is especially critical in this age of the empowered customer. To succeed, retail businesses must be able to effectively engage with their customers and provide a pleasant, effective and efficient user experience. An integrated order management system would give you the visibility into orders across channels and lets you provide instant responses to inquiries. Customer service teams can use the information to deliver the best possible customer experience by having immediate access to accurate customer, order, shipping and inventory information when needed.

Putting technology to work to capture, integrate and utilize data across the entire operation to understand and respond to consumer demands can give small to medium-size multichannel merchants a definite advantage.

Ready to Freestyle?

Our solutions put everything you need in one place.

Freestyle Commerce® enables online retailers to grow faster by expanding their eCommerce presence & automating back office operations to manage critical aspects of their business: multichannel order management; inventory visibility & control across multiple channels; drop ship management; rapid, reliable order fulfillment; customer management; integration with Magento, Amazon & more.

"Drop-ship orders used to take 10-12 hours to process. With Freestyle we do the same work in 1-2 hours" - CEO, Online Luggage Retailers

Freestyle Solutions is changing the way that the industry thinks about order and inventory management. Freestyle Solutions is dedicated to providing growing multichannel retailers, etailers, catalogers, fulfillment and distribution firms with best-in-class inventory, order, and customer management software solutions that help them increase sales and grow their business.

Freestyle Solutions' products integrate easily with eCommerce platforms to drive efficiency, productivity, insight and growth. Freestyle Solutions' proven on-premise & cloud-based solutions enable small to medium sized retail & fulfillment businesses to grow faster by expanding their eCommerce presence & automating back office operations to manage critical aspects of their business: multichannel order management; inventory visibility & control across multiple channels; drop ship management; rapid, reliable order fulfillment; customer management; integration with Magento, Amazon, Bigcommerce, eBay & more.

The Freestyle Commerce cloud-based solution is tightly integrated with leading third-party eCommerce platforms, including Magento and Amazon, providing users with the smartest order management dashboards for the always up-to-date business insight they need to grow sales.

Over 2,000 multichannel merchants rely on Freestyle Solutions to automate their back office operations and drive business growth. Freestyle's clients engage over a million shoppers daily, generating nearly 10 million in gross merchandise sales every day. For more information, visit www.freestylesolutions.com and follow us on Twitter @freestylesolutions.