

Optimizing The Order Fulfillment Process  
Ensures Orders Are Processed Efficiently.

# Multichannel Order Management for eCommerce eBook

Back Office Strategies For  
Multichannel Retailers



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# Understanding Order Management

“More than half (62%) of US consumers with Internet access now shop online at least once a month.” - investspBlog

More stable and reliable eCommerce platforms have improved online shopping experiences significantly. Online shopping saves money and time for shoppers and retailers alike.

Small to medium-sized multichannel merchants operate in a business environment that is vastly different from even a few years ago. Consumers have an abundance of information at their fingertips and can interact with businesses through many different channels. As a result, retailers need to operate across multiple sales channels as efficiently as possible while finding new ways to differentiate themselves in the market to consumers. More and more merchants are now using an automated order management system to solve this need.

Order management encompasses everything that happens behind the scenes once the customer places their order. It refers to the entire back-end process including order processing, inventory verification and management, order fulfillment and shipping. It ensures that the order is processed efficiently, shipped promptly and arrives quickly, with as little hassle as possible. The ultimate goal of an order management is to make the merchant's life easier and customers happier!

Order Management Systems (OMS) help retailers organize and expedite the process of taking customer orders from the point of shopping through the point of shipping and delivery to the customer. An OMS helps you keep accurate customer and order records, maintain accurate inventory levels and manage the process of shipping products to customers. Companies implement order management systems to enable the business operations to remain efficient and accurate, resulting in customer satisfaction and repeat business. With proper tracking and monitoring of the entire order process, you can delight customers, experience sa





## Operational Efficiencies Through Automation

If you sell something, put it in a box and ship it to customers or outsource that function, then research confirms that you can benefit from an Order Management System; particularly if you're processing more than 10 orders a day. An OMS frees you to focus on the essential back office activities to fuel the growth of your business. If you're like most retailers looking for an OMS, you're looking to technology to give you flexibility and to make your life easier. You want a solution that's easy to use, intuitive, and uncomplicated. You want a solution that handles all of the time-consuming yet important details that need to be dealt with behind the scenes from the time a customer buys from you to the package arriving at their door. In short, you want to process more orders faster, cheaper and without error.

At the end of the day, you want satisfied customers who will say good things about you in the court of social opinion. According to Yelp, "focus on great customer service and the ratings and reviews will come." If a yelper mentioned good customer service, they are over 5 times as likely to give a 5 star review rather than a 1 star.

In order to provide the best customer service possible, you need to:

- Have visibility into your customers' orders across all of your sales channels.
- Quickly respond to customer inquiries and engage them.
- Provide customers with the ability to view the status of an order online or be able to call up and get information in real-time from a customer service team member.

If you're wondering why you can't use the order management features in your accounting system or eCommerce system to take you to the next level of growth, the answer is simple - visibility! If you sell through multiple channels, these systems can't give you visibility into all of your orders and all available inventory at any given time.

# Use Multiple Channels To Grow Your Business Faster

Even the smallest of retailer can reach a market of millions. Do you take advantage of the many sales channels available to expand your reach and grow your business as fast as possible? If you do, are you managing them in the most efficient manner? Adding sales channels can grow your business but it can also add bottlenecks if not managed properly. To efficiently manage and ensure you make the most of your multichannel sales strategy, make sure the order management system you choose can:

- Seamlessly integrate your business operations across all of your sales channels into a single workflow from the entry point of shopping to the delivery point of shipping!
- Enable you to sell your entire inventory or just a small sample through your storefront and other channels.
- Automatically download new orders, publish product information, and synchronize your inventory.

If you're looking for affordability and convenience, a cloud-based OMS can save you money in the following ways.

**1. Infrastructure Costs:** You don't need the technology infrastructure or back-up systems you would for an "on premise" solution that you manage and maintain. These infrastructure costs generally account for a large portion of the annual IT budget including physical maintenance, upgrades, personnel salaries, and so on. By shifting to cloud computing, you are free of such expenses. No more expensive servers or software licenses to purchase.

**2. Pay As You Go:** Cloud computing providers operate on a pay for use model. In other words, you only pay for the services you use. This works out to be much cheaper than acquiring equipment you hardly use, especially for smaller or rapidly growing businesses.

**3. Operational Costs:** When your OMS is hosted in the cloud, you don't have large up-front cash outlays. When you acquire expensive equipment, that's considered a capital expenditure, and a big one at that, one that depreciates over time. With cloud computing, your one-time expense is spread across many operational cycles, becoming part of operational costs. As any corporate finance professional will tell you, this is a much better alternative.

The cloud delivers a scalable and affordable way for you to grow your business. It does so by tying the back-office to the front-office, improving how and where your small business could utilize resources to help it grow.



## Evaluating Order Management Solutions

So why are retailers evaluating order management solutions? What’s pushing ‘first-time automators’ to invest in their back office operations? Most of the reasons go hand-in-hand and relate back to the fact that using spreadsheets or accounting solutions to perform tasks they weren’t designed to do just isn’t efficient or effective.

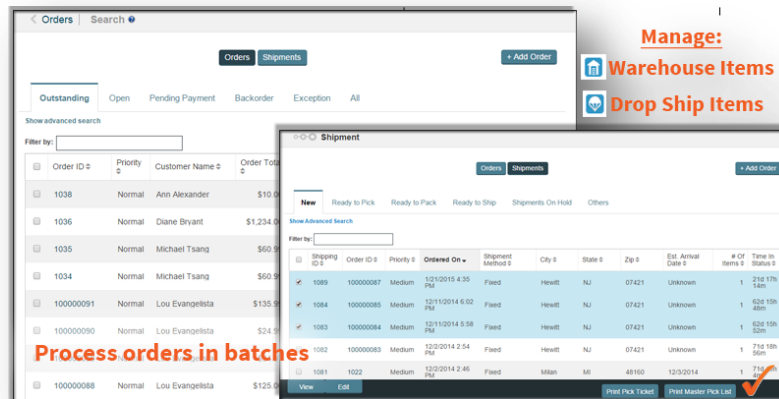
According to the Aberdeen Group, order management tops the list of solutions that “greatly enhance a small to mid-size enterprise’s ability to succeed”

Module / Extension	Best-in-Class	All Others
Order Management	86%	77%
Warehouse Management	63%	54%
Sales and Marketing	63%	47%
Forecasting / Demand Planning	60%	39%
Ecommerce	67%	45%
Estimating / Quoting / Job Costing	48%	35%
Document Management	44%	24%
Quality Management System (QMS)	35%	14%

Source: Aberdeen Group | June 2012

Excessive inventory ties up your cash that could be re-invested into the business to help you drive additional revenue. At the same time, not having enough inventory on hand results in backorders, cancellations, negative social buzz and, potentially, lost customers.

It’s a balancing act and an issue every company faces. An OMS helps you more quickly adapt, in near real-time to inventory fluctuations, keeping each channel running smoothly.



## Finding The Best Solution For Your Business Issues

For customers, it's all about their order. Reduce your manual operations and automate your order fulfillment processes to ensure fast delivery and happy customers with our online order management system. Spend less time picking and packing orders, and more time focusing on selling and growing your business!

An integrated order management system will give you the visibility into orders and inventory across channels and let 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 order, inventory, shipping and customer information when needed.

In order to operate effectively across multiple sales channels, you need to differentiate yourself in the market to consumers. More and more merchants are now using an automated order management system to solve this need.

## 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.

*"With the help of Freestyle Commerce, we were able to improve our business processes and position ourselves for future growth. The improved visibility allows us to accurately manage inventory, issue and track purchase orders, as well as forecast sales." CEO, Online Retailer*



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](http://www.freestylesolutions.com) and follow us on Twitter @freestylesOMS.