Freestyle's Ultimate eCommerce Holiday Order & Inventory Management Ebook
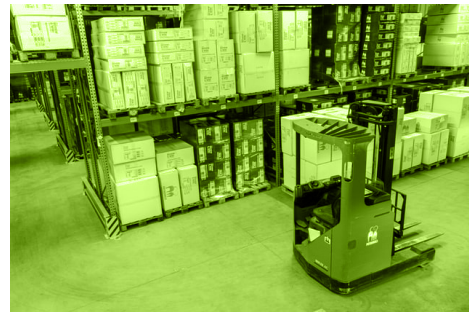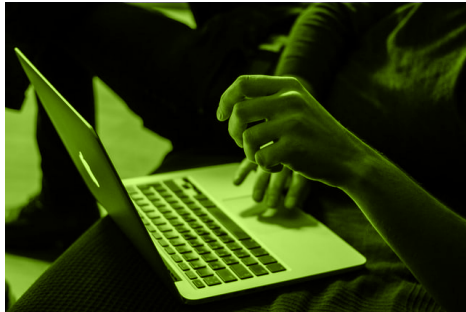
Table Of Contents

Freestyle's Ultimate Holiday Order & Inventory Management eBook

For years, Freestyle has published timely, relevant, exceptional content geared towards helping retail brands and eTailers get through the busy, hectic, profitable holiday season. Now, we're pulling some of our hottest pieces together in a seasonal collection just for you.

Learn everything you need to know about the holiday season in the world of eCommerce, including tips on:

- Order management
- Inventory management
- Best practices
- Warehouse productivity
- Customer satisfaction
- Holiday shipping & fulfillment
- eCommerce
- Returns management
- Privacy and compliance
- And more...

Get our top 15 blogs about how to survive and thrive this holiday season. Every eCommerce brand who deals with order and inventory management needs this eBook.

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How to Take on the Holiday Retail Season Like a Pro

You can be a holiday season retail pro with these tips on keeping your customers happy, avoiding shipping woes and ensuring your inventory is plentiful and streamlined.

(Hint: You'll also get access to another valuable eBook here when you can download Top 5 Capabilities Your OMS May Lack)

With consumers spending more and more online each year, you want to learn the best ways to get your website up to speed, recover from the high-volume shopping days like Black Friday and Cyber Monday and most of all, keep your customers content and coming back.

Keeping Your Customers Happy

The holidays tend to create anxiety among consumers. They are no longer only trying to find the best deal, but with the never-ending buying options, they need the quickest and most seamless shopping experience out there. Think about your strategy for the upcoming holiday retail season and consider implementing the following:

• Email Marketing & Planning

Having a successful email marketing strategy can really help during the holiday retail season. Feel free to get creative with promotional emails that highlight specific deals for certain holidays. Most importantly, gather as many emails as possible so you can promote more when the busy time hits.
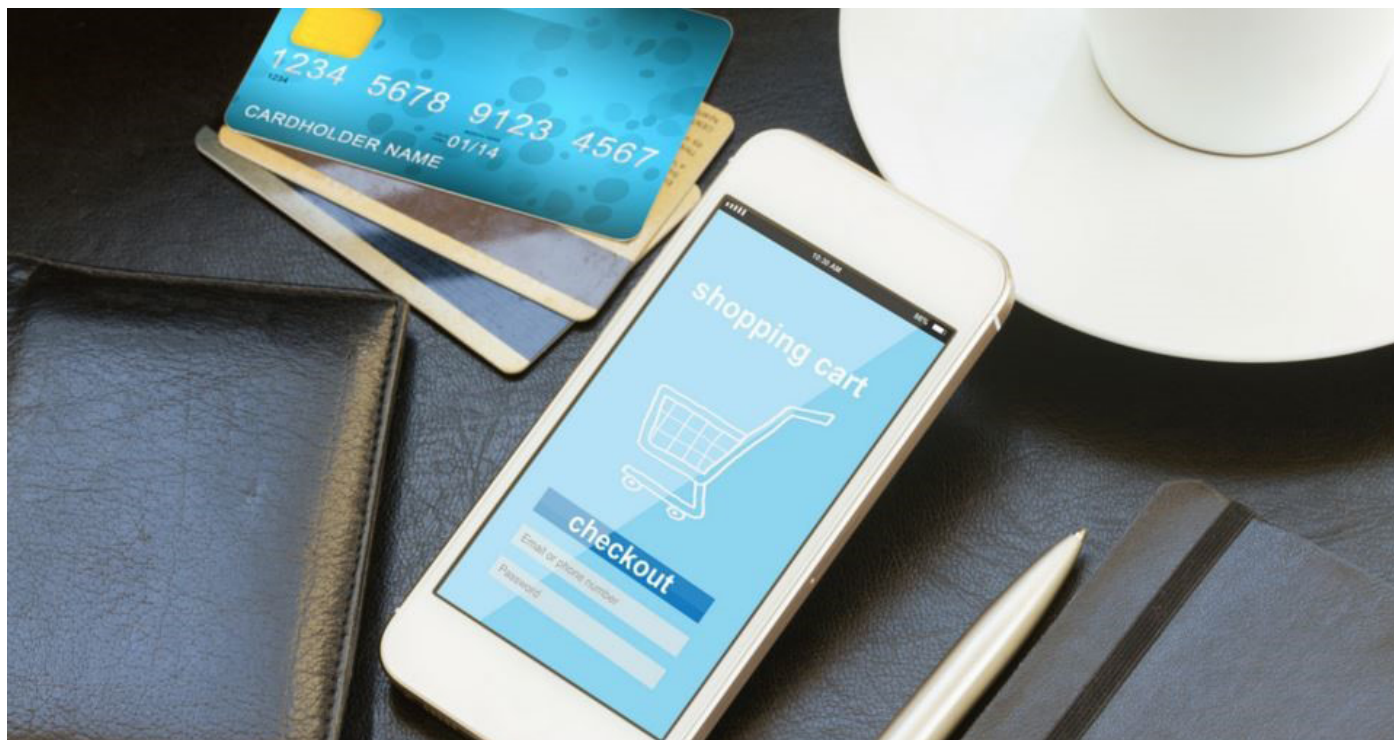
Start planning ahead by finding a way to bring customers back. Avoid shopping cart abandonment by looking into adding extra features to your business model, like Bigcommerce's cart closer app. You can learn to keep up with the competition this holiday retail season if you take some time to implement the proper planning and tools necessary. You'll be glad you did in the end.

• Offer Promotions, Without Going Overboard

Offering crazy deals during the holiday retail season is a given, but if you can't afford to run deep promotions, don't feel pressured to. Always do what makes sense for your budget and customers. Even though it may be tempting to run a high discount, planning ahead for targeted promotions is your best option. You can always try to offer free shipping, or even incorporate eCommerce kits and bundles for a chance to stand out from the competition and offer discount pricing at the same time.

• Mobile Commerce

Mobile traffic made up 45% of all online circulation during last year's holiday season, which was a 25.5% increase from the previous year. –IBM

Mobile sales increased 27.2% and made up 22.6% of all online sales as well.

Keeping these numbers in mind, if your site is not fully optimized and mobile-friendly, now is the time to do so.

With the increase in mobile sales comes highlighting the critical days during the holiday retail season. Compared to last year, online orders from small and medium sized businesses increased by 24% between Thanksgiving and Cyber Monday, according to a Bigcommerce report. With online sales continuing to rise and mobile purchasing becoming more common, numbers are expected to grow for the upcoming holiday retail season.

• Load Testing

Is your website ready for the traffic spikes the holidays can bring? Businesses are easily targeted during this time of the year, so it is better to be safe than sorry. Testing load time for API's, site security and more is always beneficial to avoid running into any issues.

Avoiding Shipping Woes

Fulfillment and managing the purchasing process around the holidays are often overlooked, leaving room for error, and keeping your customers waiting. Shipping woes tend to come up during popular shopping days, such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Issues with shipping have been known to arise no matter what distributor you are using, such as UPS or FedEx. UPS attempted to avoid the holiday shipping delays, and by doing so, contributed to a $175 million rise in operating expenses last year.

If you have your own drop shipping business, make sure you are keeping up-to-date on back orders and any other deterrents that are extremely common during the holiday rush. Always revise your shipping methods for updated protocol and the most budget-friendly approaches.

Staying on Top of Your Inventory

Do you process and send out orders through multiple sales channels? With the holiday craze, managing multichannel sales can be difficult, as keeping track of certain products can get complex. But, it doesn't have to be with a streamlined order flow. Implementing an inventory software can help avoid running into any problems when the holiday flood gates open.

Unnecessary errors in your order process can be easily avoided with a simple solution to inventory management for retailers. With very little effort, you can be on your way to central-izing your sales channels, allowing for more accurate calculations, and giving you one less thing to worry about for the holiday retail season.

Check out the free eBook on the Top 5 Features Your Order Management System Must Have

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5 Tips to Help Retailers to Prepare for the Holidays

These top five tips will help you get everything from your website to your inventory and everything in between in tiptop shape so you can maximize the busy holiday season and earn the most profit as possible.

If you're a retailer, it's time to start preparing for the holiday season. Freestyle Solutions is here to help online retailers and brands survive and thrive during the busy season. Below are some tips that will help your business this holiday season.

1- Prepare Your Website

Is your website ready for the traffic spikes the holidays can bring? Testing load time for API's and your site's speed is a good idea before the holiday season.

If you collect customer data or accept credit cards online, you'll want to verify your site is PCI compliant. The Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) is a set of security standards designed to ensure that all companies that accept, process, store or transmit credit card information maintain a secure environment.

Is your website secure? Make sure your ecommerce and content management platforms have the latest updates installed and are using best security practices. If this is beyond your IT team's area of expertise, you may want to hire a security consultant to verify your website is not vulnerable to an attack. Businesses are frequently targeted during the holidays, so it is better to be safe than sorry.

Is your site mobile-friendly? If it isn't, it should be. Smartphones accounted for 45.1 percent of all shopping traffic online in the first quarter of 2016 according to a study from Demandware. This is more than computers at 45 percent. Also, Google search results are affected by whether a site is responsive. In May, Google rolled out an update to mobile search results that "increases the effect" of its mobile-friendly ranking.

2- Get Your Inventory Ready

The last thing you want to be during the holiday season is out of stock on a key item or items that are going to be the item of the entire holiday season. Looking at trends for specific products from last year or past holiday trends for top products will help you stock the products you need, and make sure that you are never out of stock. You can also analyze monthly or weekly sales volumes for trends. With the omnichannel landscape expanding, tying in your brick and mortar stores for in-store pick up as an option will drive the success you need for this holiday season.

3- Figure Out Your Sales Schedule

Sure Black Friday and Cyber Monday are a

given when it comes to massive sales during the holiday season, but maybe you want to consider other days during the holiday season that would help drive revenue. It also gives shoppers a reason to come and visit your site multiple times during the holiday season. You'll want to be a step ahead of everyone else, become the trend, don't join the trend.

4- Plan Your Promotions Schedule

You want to entice people to purchase something on your site, but you also want to figure out ways that will drive them to the site after the holiday season. Creating promotions is a great way to drive demand. Setting the right promotions will get people to not only increase the size of their cart, but increase the size of the sale. Also, consider running promotions for after the holidays to give shoppers a reason to come back after the holidays are over.

5- Get Your Seasonal Help Up to Speed

Having enough help to manage the spike in your business is a critical piece to help your business survive and thrive in the holiday season. You should determine which positions are most critical and can be trained quickly. It may be workers that help pack and ship out extra boxes of merchandise or answer calls in your call center. Using a staffing firm to hire temporary workers may be the quickest way to find temporary help.

Training these employees quickly and thoroughly will help reduce headaches and increase the efficiency of your business.

Holiday Shipping & Ordering: Did Someone Say Start Early?

We've talked a lot about how difficult shipping and ordering is going to be this holiday season. From supply chain issues, two new carrier surcharges and increased shipping rates, to slower delivery times, we're covering everything that's hot in the news regarding holiday shipping and ordering the season. A must read for anyone who deals with order and inventory management.

Hopefully you've already started thinking about your holiday shipping and shopping.

Of course, for eCommerce brands, the time is even more pressing. You need to have your inventory and marketing plans completely set by now, or you might not even have product to sell – or worse, end up paying more to ship during peak customer demand.

If it seems like we've been writing a lot about Supply Chain Issues, we have. It's a hot topic right now, and for all the related reasons we've been discussing. It's hasn't been this hard to source, purchase and take delivery of product from overseas since the days of the Clipper Ships. And once your overpriced and much delayed shipment reaches a US port, you then need to hope that inland services deliver your product to your door before the final push for the holidays.

At that point, you think you have all your problems solved. Not so fast...you can expect higher prices for holiday shipping services across the board for peak shipping times, and a fight for capacity. Starting in early 4th quarter, USPS, FedEx and UPS will be including surcharges on shipments.

There is some good news, though. Consumer demand is expected to remain strong through-out the holiday season. Even with supply chain challenges causing concerns across the country, eCommerce sales are still expected to climb.

We'll have more on the expected growth in sales in future posts, and of course we'll have an extensive, fresh take on holiday prep in the weeks to come.

But for right now, grab a Pumpkin Spice Latte and enjoy those first few days of Fall...and if you haven't already done so, you really should start thinking about shopping and holiday shipping while you still have time.

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Don't Let Shipping Fulfillment Workflow Mishaps Ruin the Holidays

Shipping fulfillment workflow issues can make a grinch out of the best customer. Learn how to set yourself and your operation up so you can push out the most orders as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Our four step process is the ultimate workflow self-diagnostic tool you've been looking for. It can reveal exactly how ready you are to ship this holiday season.

Imagine shipping 6,000 orders in a single day.

OK, we just said that to scare you, but one of our customers actually did just that...and lived to tell the tale. And as you might imagine, they're quite proud of it.

Whatever your normal shipping volume is, here's one thing you know for sure: it's going way up during the holidays.

Don't Let Shipping Fulfillment Workflow Mishaps Ruin the Holidays

Another thing we all know? Convoluted workflow is the greatest threat to meeting our commitments to customers and clients on time and at optimal cost during all-important peak business periods.

Convoluted workflows do not scale, but your retail shipping workload is going to grow…and grow.

According to Deloitte, "Sentiment and spending indicators are firing on all cylinders." Deloitte's annual forecast calls for holiday retail sales to rise a healthy 4-to-4.5 percent in 2017. Seasonally adjusted total holiday sales will hit $1.04 trillion between November and January. eCommerce sales are predicted to increase by 18 to 21 percent, reaching over $110 billion during the 2017 holiday season.

Oh my, that's a lot to ship.

Every merchant, from brick-and-mortar retailers to mail order companies to global omni-channel sellers must get a shipping workflow in order for the holidays. Lumpy workflow means fewer packages out the door. Hiring more people presents its own set of problems around training, quality and productivity.

> *Here's a "workflow self-diagnostic" exercise that may help reveal how ready you are to operate optimally.*

1- Are you integrated?

Nothing disrupts shipping success as greatly as having to rely on disjointed, fragmented systems to get the job done. From order creation to shipment set up and rate calculation, from picking and packing to tracking, manual information entry or re-entry, if your entire process is bogged down, you're not setting yourself up for success.

Checkpoint: How many of these activities require separate manual management?
1. Order processing
2. Optimal rate calculation and carrier selection
3. Warehouse operations: pick tickets, packing control
4. Shipping label/packing slip generation
5. Linking the tracking number back to the order – Each one of these operations is a potential workflow disruptor, unless integrated within a single, seamless system.

2- Are your shipping rates under control?

If you are calculating shipping rates in a separate system, you are introducing two very bad possibilities: delay and error. If you have to leave your order system to re-enter information into a shipping app, calculate rates, then re-re-enter the shipping cost into your order system, you've got a workflow segmentation problem with waaay too much room for error.

Checkpoint: We technically refer to this situation as "an unnecessarily bad way of doing it." Have you considered adopting an integrated order management solution that allows you to calculate shipping rates immediately, then automatically update your orders—and potentially your call center customers—in real time, with no risk of error. Based on distance and weight, an integrated system calculates your shipping cost and allows you to enter a markup, if appropriate, on a per box or per item basis, or a promotional discount, and more.

Checkpoint: Can your system do rate shopping, automatically finding the lowest cost shipping method and carrier (UPS, FedEx, USPS) for every order, taking into account any delivery time guarantees (2 day, etc.)? Can you create custom carriers and rates and zones to automatically generate rates? Freestyle's M.O.M. Shipping Service feature makes this a snap.

Checkpoint: The mandate to offer free shipping has made cost a key factor. When shopping carts do their own shipping charge calculations the shipping charge is frozen. An integrated order management system such as Freestyle's M.O.M. can generate a standard report that lets retailers easily match the price customers pay to actual carrier charges. M.O.M. makes it easy to understand the impact shipping cost has on profitability.

3- Are You Picking and Packing Productively?

Whether you operate a warehouse with separate crews of pickers and packers or do everything with just a handful of multipurpose workers, it's all about your ability to access the right products for each order and group them correctly for packing and shipping. Batch processing (picking items in bulk as a single step, then packing the batch as a separate, possibly overlapping step) introduces obvious potential for mistakes when you batch print pick tickets and shipping labels and marry them to large herds of orders and items. It's a time-honored way to handle volume spikes by working faster.

Checkpoint: Do you have a "packer workstation" set up to minimize mispicks? A packer workstation such as the feature found in Freestyle's M.O.M. system generates pick ticket paperwork automatically and displays a visual list of picked items onscreen that allows the packer to assign items to packages by literally sliding icons from left to right. Orders don't proceed to the shipping stage until all items are accounted for.

Checkpoint: Do you have the flexibility to execute a hybrid of batch and individual picking and packing? Can your system generate bar coded pick tickets so that packers can use a scanner to bring up the right order onscreen, as well as assuring the shipment is correct and accurate. Get me a packing slip/invoice and a printed label so I can close the box and put it on the dock.

Checkpoint: Does your system offer a packer workstation with automatic connection to the scales so that weighing is quick and accurate.Checkpoint: Rather than upset a customer, can your system offer options such as partial and advanced fill, and send the remaining items when inventory is received?

4- Do Your Outbound Shipments Automatically Tie Back to Orders?

In addition to calculating shipping rates, generating pick paperwork, and ensuring accurate packing, an integrated order management system can generate packing slips and shipping labels automatically with matching order reference number and tracking code in place. All the pieces match, including SKU numbers, order IDs, rates, and tracking numbers. Nothing has been entered twice or transferred manually from one system to another. No delays. No human errors.

Checkpoint: Does the system automatically send a shipping notification to the customer with the proper tracking number for customer DIY tracking. (This method vastly reduces the number of inbound calls checking on status.) All customers care about is 'where is my package?' With integrated shipping, everyone is in the know at all times.

Checkpoint: When a shipping label is requested from the integrated system, does it automatically notify the carrier about the order, so no shipping manifests are necessary? The driver simply scans the packages at pick up and goes. The merchant only gets charged for what actually ships.Checkpoint: How much do you spend on expedited shipping? Does your commitment to customer satisfaction despite delays and errors caused by high volume and a fragmented manual workflow lead to excessive spending on expedited shipping? How much could you save here?

The Takeaway:

Convoluted, crazy workflows may already be costing you money and causing customer satisfaction challenges. Worse, fragmented and manual workflows simply can't scale. And here is something else that's certain: when volume rises to a certain level, it always forces a change in process. You already know that integrating your shipping process saves time, reduces manual data entry errors and gets packages out faster. The question is, are you ready to get ahead of the curve and raise your order management maturity now?

Monitor Your Shipping Accounts Automatically and Manage Holiday Shipping Costs!

Keeping your customers happy can be difficult during the busy holiday season. Learn how to audit and monitor your shipping accounts automatically, so you can manage holiday shipping costs and keep everyone satisfied.

The busiest shopping season of the year is fast approaching. While merchants are compiling their own shopping lists, they are also focused on the busiest shipping season of the year. Two of the biggest considerations are meeting consumer expectations and preventing shipping costs from eroding the bottom line.

Servicing customers this time of year can be a challenge for today's merchants. One of the main factors consumers consider when ordering online is whether or not shipping is free. According to the Walker Sands Future of Retail 2016 study,

9 out of 10 participants said free shipping was the number one incentive when asked what would make them shop online more often.

Not only do consumers want free shipping, they want it fast, too! According to a survey conducted by Internet Retailer and Bizrate Insights,

47% of the consumers rated free shipping and fast shipping as equally important.

Merchants are confronted with absorbing part or all of these shipping charges while expediting deliveries to satisfy their consumers. If all of this were not complex enough, they are faced with ever increasing carrier rates and surcharges. For example, FedEx says its upcoming general rate increase (GRI), effective January 1, 2018, will boost rates a healthy 4.9% for Express, Ground, and Home Delivery. Merchants are faced with the challenge of whether to absorb the increase or to find other ways to address the impact on their business

One way to manage such increases and protect profitability is to work with an auditing company. 71lbs, a Freestyle Solutions Partner, helps businesses that ship with FedEx and UPS reduce the impact of shipping costs with their fully automated system. By monitoring a merchant's shipping account, we first identify late deliveries and invoice errors, then file refund claims on the merchant's behalf. Our dedicated team ensures the approved refunds are credited back to the merchant's shipping account. 71lbs also provides extensive data and reporting to better negotiate with the carrier and manage the impact of shipping costs on customer requirements.

With the support of Freestyle Solutions' inventory, order, and customer management software solutions, and 71lbs auditing service, merchants can optimize productivity and reduce their shipping expenses. As a result, they can provide the best level of service to their consumers, save money in the process and go back to completing their own holiday shopping lists.

To learn more about how you can process orders faster and monitor your shipping accounts automatically with Freestyle Solutions and 71lbs, please contact us.

Information is presented by 71lbs. 71lbs is dedicated to helping businesses optimize shipping spend. Solutions include late delivery refunds, invoice auditing, and lost and damaged claims to manage supply-chain expenses as well as shipping insurance and contract negotiations.

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5 Essential Tips to Take on Holiday Shipping

Holiday shipping is expected to be brutal this year. But even this blog from several years ago can offer some top ways you can keep your customers happy when it comes to shipping this holiday season.

What's that you hear? Could it be the faint sound of holiday jingles in the air? Perhaps you're thinking, stop this madness, Halloween hasn't even crept up yet. Or, maybe you're a bundle of holiday cheer all-year-round and can't stop singing along. Any hint of carols before Halloween is enough to make any retailer realize the busy season is quickly approaching.

People are starting to get excited and the tunes are just a tipping off point. Even though the holiday retail season still appears at a safe distance, Thanksgiving will be here before you know it, then we all know what comes next.

So, when should you make sure your holiday shipping plans are squared away? Some might say yesterday.

Over 126 million people plan to shop on Cyber Monday, and 6 million of those orders will be delivered late, eligible for shipping refunds. –71 lbs.

The orders may start to come in full-force, but what will that matter if your shipping isn't up to par. Should you look into offering free gifts with a purchase? Or, maybe honing in on those last minute shoppers by off-setting higher costs with a money back guarantee would be beneficial.

Check out 5 essential tips, and get through your holiday shipping like a pro this year.

Happy Holiday Shipping

Ship your way into savings this holiday season with smart tips from your friends at 71lbs!

71 lbs Fast & Automated
Shipping Refunds

Free Gift with Purchase

54% of consumers love this promo

74% of retailers find it effective

Remember, additional merchandise can add weight and volume to a package. Consider small, light weight gifts to avoid increased shipping costs.

Cyber Monday

More than 126 million people plan to shop online on Cyber Monday.

Approximately 6 million of those orders will be delivered late and eligible for shipping refunds.

More than 80% of the due shipping refunds will go unclaimed.

MBG Exceptions

NOV 23 Money-back guarantee temporarily suspended

DEC 11-24 Ground services money-back guarantee suspended

DEC 18-24 Delivery time guarantee extended by 90 minutes

Price Slashing

Discounting merchandise to stay competitive this season?

Shipping refunds can help make up for the revenue difference in your special holiday pricing.

The average e-Commerce business gets 5-7% back on total shipping spend.

Last Minute Shoppers

Last minute orders are often times paired with exceedingly high shipping costs.

Offset higher costs with the money-back guarantee on late deliveries this holiday season.

It's the gift that keeps on giving.

Sign up for 71lbs automated FedEx and UPS refunds today.

www.71lbs.com

Get your first refund free with promo code HOLIDAY.

Happy Holidays from your friends at 71lbs!

Don't Make These 5 eCommerce Mistakes This Holiday Season!

Learn the top five e-commerce mistakes most brands make every holiday season. Just in time for you to course correct if you need to, so you can sail through the holidays making the most in profit and customer satisfaction.

To achieve eCommerce success this season, don't make these critical mistakes. Read on for our:

Top 5 eCommerce Holiday Don'ts for 2019

1- **DON'T:** Underestimate the amount of inventory you need – It's so true: you can't sell what you don't have. You only have a few minutes to make that first impression, and data proves what we all know anyway: if you don't have product, customers will go where they can get it (and they're likely to never return). Use your historical sales data to get the order quantity right for your leading products so you can avoid costly stockouts!

2- **DON'T:** Kick off that great, complex pricing promotion you thought of on Black Friday! To win the cyber sales war, keep your pricing attractive, competitive and logical so you can avoid the shaking of heads. If it doesn't make sense to your customers so you can avoid the shaking of heads. If it

doesn't make sense to your customers or your sales agents, your traffic will go to your competitors. Innovation is great, but sales are better.

3- **DON'T:** Promise shipping deadlines that you can't meet – What makes customers mad? An empty box under the tree. Accommodating customers might be the name of the game, but if your deadlines are off or if your staff can't get orders out the door, you might lose a customer forever instead of just missing one sale. Be realistic when you promise deliveries.

4- **DON'T:** Update your website at the last minute – Feel free to update inventory , some promotions or product descriptions, but don't make major changes to your website after mid-November. We all know that mobile sales will be king this holiday season, and sure, a fresh look can improve sales. But don't run the risk of failure by rolling the dice at the last minute. We suggest locking down your site, monitoring its performance and spending time reviewing competitor's sites during the holidays. That way you can have a plan in place to improve your site leading up to the next holiday season.

5- **DON'T:** Neglect marketing – You worked hard all year to build your brand. Your social media looks great and sales are streaming in – now is not the time to stop! Once the flood gates open, don't go silent and let them close. Continue to promote your products and watch the sales roll in. Email marketing, blogging, social, promotions and sales…when done well and consistently, they all add up to a potentially very lucrative holiday season.

<p align="center">★ ★ ★ ★ ★</p>

eCommerce: How to Keep Customers Happy by Making Returns a Breeze This Holiday Season

It may seem like all we talk about is returns these days. But the truth is, they're a big problem. Knowing how to handle returns in a convenient and easy way makes your customers happy. And we all know that's the name of the game.

Learn everything you need to know about how to handle returns in a way that pleases everyone. Automating and integrating your process and training your staff are two key elements to keep in mind. We take a deep dive into the process and show you everything you need to know here.

Why not make this coming return season (Dec 26 through Jan 15...and beyond) your golden opportunity to build customer loyalty?

During the holiday surge, a flood of orders originates from all different channels: including online shopping carts, postal mail order forms, inbound calls to customer service centers and physical points of purchase at brick and mortar store locations. As we've discussed in this blog series, an integrated order processing, inventory management, and shipping system puts you in a perfect position to profit by following back office system best practices.

But let's not forget that, after the holidays, some of those flawlessly stocked and shipped items are coming back.

In fact, according to an NRF report, 75% of last year's (2016) holiday shoppers checked a merchant's return policies before making a purchase. Happily, over 80% described the return process as somewhat or very easy. Bottom line? This sets the bar very high for your own returns handling processes. Here are 5 ways you can streamline your return policy to make it seamless and easy, for customers and for you.

#1 Define effective returns policies and procedures in advance.

The most critical step you can take to finish out the holiday season successfully is to set up a good strategy for processing product returns and customer refunds now. Now is the time to define policies. Think about and decide on:

• which items are returnable/exchangeable
• time period exchanges are accepted
• condition requirements
• proof of purchase requirements
• how to get return shipping labels
• if you'll offer free return shipping
• and more

Also take into account the increased number of returns from gift recipients, analyze your forecasts to anticipate what's coming (10% of in-store purchases and 15% of online?), game-plan your workflow (inspection quarantine?) and train customer service reps and warehouse staff with appropriate procedures and scripts (when and how to restock – discount – dispose)

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

• Will you do bulk processing of returns and refunds, or handle them individually in real-time—or a combination of both approaches?
• Are all the possible facets of a return scenario defined in the system?
• Will your customer service reps (CSR) have full visibility and freedom of action to handle the range of customer expectations?
• What tools do your warehouse staff need in order to receive returns and quickly reconcile order records and issue refunds?

The goal is to predetermine what store staff, CSRs and your warehouse team need in order to make customers happy with the full retail engagement.

#2 Automate and integrate the return process.

Whether a return is initiated at your eCommerce site, through contact with a CSR/call center team or via a store point of purchase system, the amount of integration and automation in your back office systems can make the difference between satisfied, long-term customers and a slow, confusing, profit-sapping grind.

A comprehensive order management (OMS) system lets CSRs, warehouse staffers and others quickly access the correct order using several means of customer identification, such as address, credit card number, item purchased and more. A return code can then be assigned for the item (for example, flagging it as damaged, unopened, etc.). A return ID number should be automatically assigned and a shipping label generated, either printed for mailing to the customer or emailed for the customer to self-print.

An integrated system can generate reports showing exactly how many returns will be coming in, allowing warehouse teams to prepare with confidence for the impending workload.

#3 Train your customer service staff.

Inbound phone calls are the most common initiation method for product returns and refunds. Your CSRs should interact with a "lookup screen" or returns dashboard facility that helps quickly and accurately validate and connect the customer to the order and the item being returned. The CSR can quickly match the client identifier to an order record number, or search for the item and customer name.

Depending on your return policy, the customer may be entitled to an immediate refund without return (think: perishable items), a product exchange or a return-for-refund. Any refund amount should be issued in the payment medium used for the purchase—cash, check, or credit card.

#4 Brick and mortar considerations.

Returns to the store usually include a scan of the product or receipt that submits item information to the system to initiate a refund or exchange transaction. The point of sale system may be part of an advanced order management solution (OMS) like Freestyle's M.O.M., or may be a third party software system. The return policy may call for sending the returned items to bins at the warehouse (especially in the case of damaged goods), or returns may be recycled directly into stock at the store location for resale, perhaps on an open-box basis.

#5 Don't forget online eCommerce.

In the case of an online return process, where the customer expects a do-it-yourself process, the web site customer interface should trigger an interaction with the order management system (OMS) to generate a return ID and return shipping label and immediately start the refund process.

#6 Tie it all together—customer, order, item, warehouse, refund.

When returned items arrive at the warehouse, staffers scan or type in the shipping label's return ID to the integrated system, and instantly the circle is closed. The OMS immediately matches the return ID to the specific order. Warehouse staffers can designate where the item should reside (purpose- or channel- or inventory-specific bin) and validate that the customer refund can proceed (e.g. Return Merchandise Authorization).

Refunds can be processed as batches or interactive refunds. Freestyle's M.O.M. system automatically flags customers designated to receive refunds, and the responsible person can execute the refund at the order level or batch up refunds for processing in bulk as part of a scheduled credit card refund process. M.O.M. checks the transaction ID to make sure it's for the right item and does not exceed the purchase amount, so there can be no over refunds. M.O.M. records and displays all stacked discounts, applied coupons and credits so it can be made clear to the customer why the refund amount is what it is. Promo credits can be issued as refunds, as well, for customer appeasement.

The Takeaway: Getting items back into stock quickly and reconciling inventory accurately.

With a powerful integrated system, your call center, warehouse, finance and marketing teams don't need to bounce back and forth from one system to another, re-enter information or manually execute steps that can be efficiently automated. Updating separate systems is a catalyst for holiday return errors and issues.

A powerful OMS should allow:

• All stakeholders, if enabled by role, should be able to see orders and inventory clearly on-screen, with accurate, visible tracking of each item's location and status (e.g. return to inventory).

• Fields for extra notes that are valuable for communicating special instructions between, for instance, CSRs and warehouse staff.

• The system to produce refund status reports daily and support automatically filling back orders by order age, priority or customer status on receipt of returns into the system.

A long-term impact on business success can result from analyzing which products are being returned the most, by type, manufacturer, channel or other attribute. This tracking can lead to decisions that avoid problems in the future.

Whether you have a moderate-but-growing business footprint or are struggling to handle large numbers of sales orders, Freestyle's M.O.M. creates confidence that you can follow a fair, customer-friendly, efficient returns strategy that will optimize customer loyalty toward your business for years.

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Save Time & Money – Prepare for Seasonal Warehouse Order Surges

When weekend surges come in and your warehouse needs to rush to fulfill and ship ASAP, you need to be as efficient as possible.

How can you do that? More importantly, do you really need to care? Let us just give you a resounding yes!

Studies show that one single warehouse pick, pack or ship order error can cost an average of almost $40. Learn how to avoid errors and process and ship as effectively and efficiently as possible. (Hint: Your WMS is a big piece of the puzzle.)

As a busy eCommerce retailer, you're probably acutely aware of the "Monday Rush." Those orders that have been accumulating since they were completed and paid for on your eCommerce platform Friday afternoon, all day Saturday, all day Sunday AND early Monday morning.

Now it's "Monday Rush" AM and your warehouse staff is faced with their biggest pick, pack and ship day of the week.

What's even worse is the 3-day weekend "Tuesday Rush." Add in the upcoming "Black Friday," "Cyber Monday" and the rest of the upcoming holiday seasonal rush, and it's easy to see how bogged down warehouse systems can get!

Well, thank heavens for your experienced warehouse workers. They know what they're doing, they're very familiar with your product and they know the layout of your warehouse. They've been through a lot of Monday or Tuesday Rushes, and you have a high level of confidence that the backlog of orders will get out the door with little or no errors. Besides, you probably pay them more for this extra knowledge and experience, right?

But the fact is: even the most experienced, seasoned, high-paid warehouse employees make errors, especially when greater pressure is put on them because of larger volumes, new products, warehouse expansion or any other number of factors.

Studies have shown that a single warehouse pick, pack or ship error can cost you $38 to correct! And these are just the errors that customers report. What if you send out too many of an item, or a more expensive item than was ordered? Will you hear back from the customer? Probably not.

Then there are those times that your experienced warehouse workers quit, or they go on vacation or they call in sick. What happens during the holiday season when volume increases and every warehouse employee is working as hard as they can? What if (we all wish for this problem) your order volume goes up and doesn't come down? Overtime? Temp employees?

What if you could:

• Increase your warehouse efficiencies so current staff could process more orders AND make fewer errors?

• Hire inexperienced permanent or temporary employees, give them a half hour of training and confidently turn ALL the picking duties over to them, leaving the more important packing and shipping duties to more experienced employees?

• Keep track of all your warehouse employee's productivity?

Enter the Warehouse Management System (WMS)

Today there is available a WMS for Freestyle's M.O.M. 10 that can give you all these benefits and more.

Advanced Barcode Systems, LLC d.b.a. Barcoders.com has released a WMS for Freestyle MOM 10 that can help you immediately.

For example, our RFPick module uses a portable scanner to help the employee pick orders. The scanner will guide the picker through the warehouse, location by location, asking the picker to pull the item and scan the barcode/UPC. Immediate audio and visual feedback is given to determine the correct item has been picked. If wrong, the picker can then make the correction, putting back the wrong item and selecting the correct one, with minimal labor time involved. Pick error avoided, $38 saved.

Greater efficiency is also achieved since the scanner speeds up the hunt-and-find process and the pick-correct-item process. Looking at the scanner helps the employee avoid all those back and forth glances at the paper picking list.

Additional efficiencies can be gained by using our RFMulti Pick module. This program allows the pickers to simultaneously pick AND sort up to 100 orders while making only one pass through the warehouse, gaining as much as 43% efficiency over current manually picked, sorted and packed orders.

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Get Yourself Ready for the Holidays By Deciding Your OMS
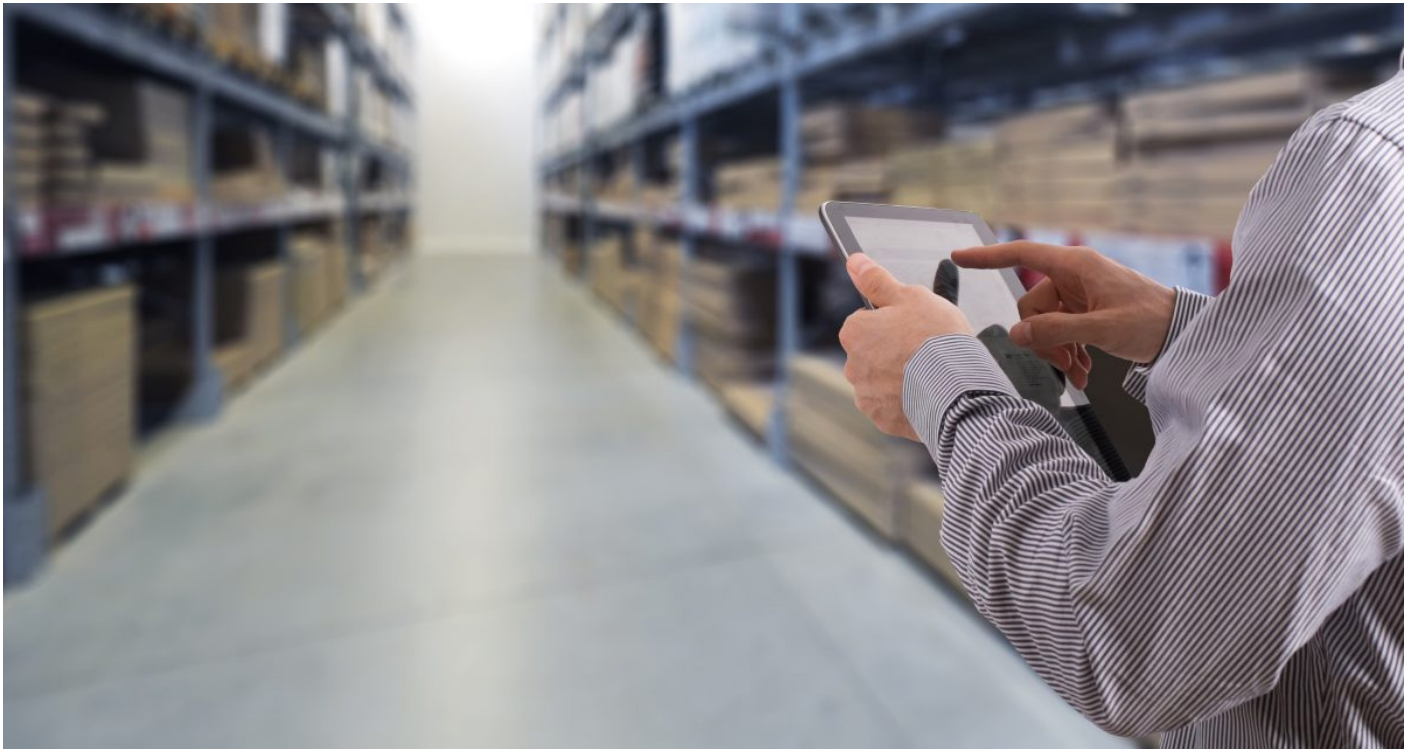
The right order management software (OMS) can be a real game changer this holiday season. Learn what to consider if you're thinking about updating your OMS, so you can hit the ground running throughout the holiday season and into 2022.

The holiday season is fast approaching. Even if you don't want to admit it yet.

You just cleaned up and re-organized your warehouse back to that pre-holiday look and feel and you're already thinking about another holiday season. You've set goals for the revenue and traffic you expect to reach, and just as important, you've realized that your current order & inventory management solution just cannot handle the increased volume.

So you start thinking, when is a good time to change your order management software (OMS) to get yourself ready for the holiday season?

While it's something that is on your plate as a must do item, how quickly should you consider switching so you and your team are properly trained and ready for the holiday season using the new software?

Get Yourself Ready for the Holidays By Deciding Your OMS

Some Facts to Consider

You have everything checked out and ready to go. You have your wish list of improvements and the "nice to haves" from every department that wants to see improvement in their current process.

You compile that list together and off to the races you go to find a new OMS. The calls, the demonstrations, the back and forth. You want to make sure you're considering everything possible. The changes, the amount of time it will take to implement the new software.

That includes:

• Merging your data into the new system
• Tying in your eCommerce solution
• End to end testing
• Training you and your staff

You want to give you and your staff ample time to get everything set before the holidays, but it seems like an impossible task. How do you go from impossible to Mission Possible? Talk to the Freestyle team, we have decades of experience margining transitions just like yours and empowering our customers to be up, tested and shipping orders for the holiday season.

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Holiday Returns – When Less Truly is Better Than Many

Returns can be a headache for eCommerce brands any time of the year. But the holiday season is particularly challenging, especially in recent years. With return rates at an all-time high, now is the time to start thinking about how to put a plan in place so you can breeze through returns and keep your business on track and moving.

You've wrapped all your gifts and now you wait and see if the person you bought the gift for actually likes the gift.

Starting December 26, it's the most wonderful time of the year, for that rare person who loves to take a thoughtful gift and return it for something they want even more.

In 2016, return rates were 30% after the holiday season and the fashion industry led the way with a whopping 40% return rate according to an article written by CNBC.

Now why the high return rates?

Did someone else get the same gift? Did they get the wrong size or color if it was a piece of clothing?

Multichannel Merchant, did some research on an online fashion retailer who dropped their return rate to under 20% by providing their customers more insight to the product they were selling. A range of projects from size charts, adding more detailed photos and having their customer service reps enter in feedback from customers on fit and product quality helped them dramatically lower their return rate.

Why not consider a system that can handle this for you and more?

With Freestyle Solutions Multichannel Order Manager, you manage every step of the return process from the initial order to the potential return, and help prevent your customers from returning a product by ensuring the correct information is easily available on the website for your customers to determine if a product will be the right fit for them.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Keep Your Data Protected This Holiday Season

Data protection has been a hot topic for years. With the influx of sales and online purchases throughout the holiday season, there's increasing demand to ensure that your encryption and digital payment processes are top notch.

Get practical steps on how to protect you and your customers with this informative, useful piece.

The holiday season is here and with it comes the rush to meet ever increasing demand. While you plan how best to maximize customer transactions it's equally important to ensure that your infrastructure keeps pace from a security standpoint. We all remember the two big malware threats that caused such damage earlier this year, and surely there are more on the way. It's important to think about how you are going to protect yourself from ever more sophisticated threats in the future.

Every eCommerce business heavily relies on sensitive information such as credit card and transactional data. Keeping this data safe and secure is a key element in building trust with your customers t so they know their sensitive information is kept safe from hackers who may try to steal it.

A recent article from TechRadar, provides you with some tips on how to successfully control, protect, backup and manage your data.

We would also like to highlight some other, practical steps you can take to protect you and your customers:

• Enable automatic updates for your key desktop and application software, hackers often target vulnerabilities in older versions of popular software and regularly updating your OS will go a long way to protecting you

• Purge old accounts and basic passwords, nothing says steal my data like 1234 as your password

• Don't let anyone go phishing in your pond – Phishing is one of a variety of tricks that hackers use to steal passwords and access, so let your employees know that they must look carefully at any request via email to change a password or to track an order that they think they forgot about. The best clue that the request is fake is usually in the email address

If you are concerned about your ability to secure your critical eCommerce applications, we can help, our flagship order and inventory management system, Multichannel Order Manager (M.O.M.) is now available in the cloud giving you the peace of mind of knowing that your data is in safe hands.

With M.O.M. in the Cloud, you no longer need worry about dated technology or running your own infrastructure in house to keep it secure, we'll manage and keep it secure for you, while giving you the best in order and inventory management.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

How to Master Inventory Management During the Holiday Season

Mastering your inventory management is important every month of the year, but particularly during the busy holiday season, it becomes increasingly something that needs your attention.

Take a look back at how to plan everything around your inventory management needs, so you can have the most cost-effective way to make the best inventory management decisions throughout the busy holiday season and beyond.

If poorly planned and handled, multichannel inventory management can get very ugly during high-volume order surges around holidays. Without question, the Number One holiday inventory mandate is: avoid stock outs. All of your resources and expertise must be focused on having the right items in the right mix at the right place to meet holiday demand. Poor omni-channel inventory management can create stock outs for one channel while other channels suffer overstocks. Inventory must be managed holistically across channels, from ecommerce shopping carts to call centers, from catalog orders to point of sale at brick and mortar stores.

Forecast, Deploy, and Flex

Forecast, Deploy, and Flex may sound like the name of a law firm, but in fact they are the three keys to winning the battle against inventory mismatches. First, generate an inventory plan that comes as close to actual demand as possible (understanding that, by definition, all forecasts are wrong, of course). Second, position the specific amount of inventory at warehouses, racks, bins, stores, and third party drop shippers for on-time fulfillment...and customer satisfaction. Finally, develop the flexibility to transfer, replenish, and reorder product as your line of defense against the inevitable disparity between predicted demand and real-world actuals.

Forecast

Deciding how much inventory to order is a lot easier if you have a set of sophisticated algorithms working for you. An advanced forecast system can automatically generate new forecasts based on smart interpretation of the sales histories of existing products. For new product introductions, the system should allow you to select the history of a similar existing product and apply that to the new product. The forecasting tool should allow you to edit demand calculations to take into account anticipated sales trends, seasonal factors, and any planned promotions that will affect the demand curve.

This intelligent forecasting system should break forecasts down to annual, quarterly, monthly, and weekly periods in order to specify how much inventory you will need when, thus making your purchasing decisions more accurate. When the forecast feeds into an integrated purchasing module, the system can automatically incorporate inventory-related factors such as back orders and on-hand stock to net out exact purchase quantities, then take into account factors such as vendor minimum buys, purchase order limits, and more. The forecasting and purchasing processes should also be broken down by sales channel and physical warehouse or distribution center.

Deploy

In an omnichannel world, orders may originate at a physical point of purchase, online shopping cart, call center, and more. The location and availability of retail inventory can be crucial to filling these orders on time. Because inventory is horizontal across channels and purposes, visibility to inventory—incoming, on-hand, committed to customer, transfers—is the priority. Does your system present a comprehensive view and understanding of where inventory is, how it is moving, and where it is needed?

Can you analyze each channel separately? Are your 'available to sell' levels accurate across all sales channels? Are the levels published to your sales channels to avoid 'stock outs' or over selling?

Once inventory is received at the warehouse (or distribution center), it moves to inventory bins from which it can be picked. Bins should be assignable so that inventory can be dedicated to any purpose. Examples include reserving stock for a specific store location, or assigning items to an individual channel. Your packing manager must be able to see all orders and choose which bin to pick from.

For instance, in a situation where multiple warehouses are in operation, the packing manager may pick a Web order from a bin at the warehouse located closest to the delivery address. Methods and practices like this and many others can be codified in the order management system as "warehouse rules" that automatically guide operations according to established priorities and best practices. An advanced warehouse system should be able to stack rules so that, for instance, when one bin stocks out the pick is assigned automatically to the next bin in priority order.

The key to managing multiple warehouses and enforcing optimal picking preferences is knowing how much inventory you have in each bin within each warehouse. There's no sub-stitute for being able to see inventory live so you know exactly what has and has not been picked across channels. Bins can be dedicated to many purposes and categories of stock, such as returns, damaged, bulk storage, and much more. Auto-replenishment rules can ensure stock is available at high-priority locations, and even suggest which units to transfer. One comprehensive system lets managers at multiple warehouses see where everything is, facili-tating smart cooperation in getting product to the best staging location as conditions change over time.

An inventory management system that supports barcode scanning can take inventory track-ing to a new level of automation and accuracy. It's the sure-fire way to record what's going on in inventory and adjust levels to reflect sales and shipments. A comprehensive inventory dashboard facility lets managers at multiple levels in the organization see what's selling, what's not, what's backordered, individual picker and packer productivity scores, and more.

Flex

When you can automatically and accurately match orders and sales to inventory levels in purpose-dedicated bins across one or more warehouses in an omnichannel sales environment, you've got the support it takes to keep up with the volume surges of a Black Friday or a Cyber Monday or anything else the holiday sales period throws at you. Without a comprehensive system for coordination and visibility, you are in the dark…pouring over spreadsheets to make decisions manually based on lagging information. And when it comes to reordering and replenishing during the most time-critical part of the sales year, it builds confidence just to know you have proper inventory counts that accurately reflect inventory depletions, etc. Your inventory system should display a purchasing screen that lists low stock items and lets you decide to re-order, then automatically produces purchase orders and sends POs to the vendor.

Repurchase thresholds can be set to whatever levels work best for your business, taking into account factors like lead times, vendor minimums and more. The system should produce reports daily, and support the purchasing actions needed to replenish and receive goods back into the system… including automatically filling backorders on receipt, prioritized by order age, priority, or customer status,

A comprehensive order management and inventory system can balance the needs of your ecommerce channel with brick and mortar point-of-sale inventory, using separate bins dedicated to different purposes—store reserve, warehouse location, item status, and so on. The system should allow managers to easily transfer items from any one bin to another with just a mouse click, even if that bin transfer initiates a move from one physical location to another, places inventory "out of reach" in Do Not Sell bins, or puts inventory "back in play" by moving it out of Returns or Hold for Inspection bins.

The Takeaway:

Freestyle's Multichannel Order Manager (M.O.M.) is a comprehensive system that lets you do all the forecasting, deploying, and flexing tricks of the trade with ease. Whether you have a moderate but growing inventory footprint or are struggling to handle large numbers of stock items, M.O.M. is a cost-effective way to gain confidence, helping you understand what's going on at all times so you can make better inventory management decisions. Every time you replace a slow, error-prone manual procedure with an accurate, automated alternative, you win one more victory in the battle against overwhelming holiday workloads. With a powerful, full-range system like M.O.M. you can implement new capabilities at your own pace, yet grow your efficiencies without limit to optimize your business processes as you grow to any size over the years.

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Holiday Season Best Practices: Order Entry Essentials

Taking and processing orders is the number one effort you should be focusing on entering the holiday season this year. Don't sabotage your success by not having best practices in place for your ordering and processing processes.

Learn the top three top ways to ensure your order entry processes are as efficient and safe as possible.

Efficiently capturing and processing orders is the backbone of your holiday retail business. It's no secret that the order entry processing capabilities you don't have can hurt you. Here are some all-too-common gaps in order management systems that can sabotage your success this holiday season.

Best Practices Department: Order Entry and Processing Division

The influx of online orders during the holiday season can put maximum stress on any brand's ability to fulfill customer expectations. But even beyond digital sales, whether orders come via catalog sales, your website, your brick and mortar marketplace or through any other sales channel, you need to be ready to up your game. Research by BigCommerce and Statisa shows just how powerful the holiday shopping surge can be. eCommerce sales reached $3.5 trillion globally in 2019. And with the pandemic resulting in wild numbers of online orders over the first three quarters of the year, holiday online sales in 2020 are expected to exceed any and all previous years.

If you're not selling online, you're missing a huge opportunity.

So how do you stay on top of those surges in sales and orders? During highest-peak periods, here's a look at what some companies do:

• About half of retailers increase their temporary staffing, which raises training and management expenses
• Almost half of businesses pay employees overtime, which is expensive and creates fatigue errors
• Over a third reallocate staff, which requires cross-training and starves other departments of resources

Retailers are fully aware they must become more lean and flexible, building service differentiators that impress customers. Order processing is a key part of this effort because within order management are dozens of factors that dramatically impact efficiency, customer satisfaction and profitability.

Let's focus on three keys to order entry excellence:

1- Knowledge is power

Outstanding order entry and management can only happen when you have a wide range of knowledge at your fingertips—and outstanding visibility to go with it. Your comprehensive order management system (OMS) should be able to span all sales channels as well as live customer interactions. It should have a full record of existing customers and order histories, supporting customer lookup by name, address and other details. Customers should be taggable by type, such as wholesale, retail, VIP, special offer recipient and even the shopping cart typically used.

When interacting with customers, CSRs should be working in an OMS environment that presents instant visibility to inventory so they know whether an item is in stock or not, stock level, backorder estimates and current estimated delivery date. CSRs should also know what related products and offers are available for cross-sell and upsell. But one fact is inescapable. Knowledge is certain to be fragmented—or simply unavailable—when CRM and fulfillment functions are performed by separate systems. An integrated OMS is the best way to achieve consistency. Freestyle's Multichannel Order Management (M.O.M.) manages every stage of order processing and shipping from one comprehensive interface. It also enforces discipline, such as not allowing the order management team to move to the shipping stage before an order has been picked!

2- It's all about workflow

Workflow starts the moment an order is placed. Not only should your OMS system be able to process a first-time order from a partial SKU or a full lookup of the SKU number, it should also ensure that the order being processed matches what the customer expects. This requires flexible built-in tools to resolve inconsistencies by adjusting discounts, changing the item price, applying source keys for promotional offers and more. A direct override capability should be powerful and flexible enough to ensure that any order can be modified to honor any promotion offered online.

When the workflow for order entry, warehouse processing and shipping is fragmented, bad things happen. Disjointed, segmented processes result in slow execution, costly mistakes, poor staff productivity and the ultimate contributor to customer dissatisfaction: returns and refunds. In a world where "mispicks" cost an average of $38 each, achieving optimal accuracy and quality of service requires mastering both batch and manual workflows. An ideal order fulfillment system is flexible enough to span picking, packing and shipping by batch for increased speed, while also excelling at individual order management from a packer's workstation to maximize accuracy and minimize returns.
Bottom line: your order management team should be able to input an order one time and get all the information they need to process that order—including tracking numbers and shipping labels—from one place.

There are many other capabilities that drive efficiency and productivity. For instance, Freestyle's M.O.M. system remembers batch processes and can repeat them automatically for faster execution and shipping. Another example: Freestyle's "recent order" feature remembers the last 50 orders and customers, allowing CSRs to return to work on any of them instantly, thereby significantly improving productivity.

3- Payment process must be secure

An OMS can be the deciding factor in making payment transactions smooth and safe. To maximize both efficiency and the customer experience, Freestyle executes credit card autho- rizations in real time, rather than generating a callback after processing the order. Tokenizing credit card transactions (using customer and payment tokens generated by the gateway rath- er than actual account numbers) protects personal credit information and complies with PCI regulations. For maximum effectiveness and accuracy, authorized credit card transactions can be settled through both batch and individual processing. Best practices advice for reducing fraud recommends the following abilities:

• Client configurable settings to bar shipments to an address other than the billing address (or at least flag the order for review)
• Hold first orders, or orders over a certain amount, or orders for high quantity of an item for review
• Require the CCV/CVV number as validation
• Flag customers using many different credit cards

There is much more that can be done to optimize order processing for holiday peak demand. M.O.M. has been actively updated and improved with direct customer input for more than three decades. Today, it stands as the most feature-rich OMS solution available anywhere— uniquely capable of growing in any direction your business is heading by handling hundreds of potential needs over time. In fact, the just-released M.O.M. 11 is the most powerful, most robust order and inventory management software on the market!

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Holiday Season Best Practices: Order Promotion Pitfalls Many Retailers Face
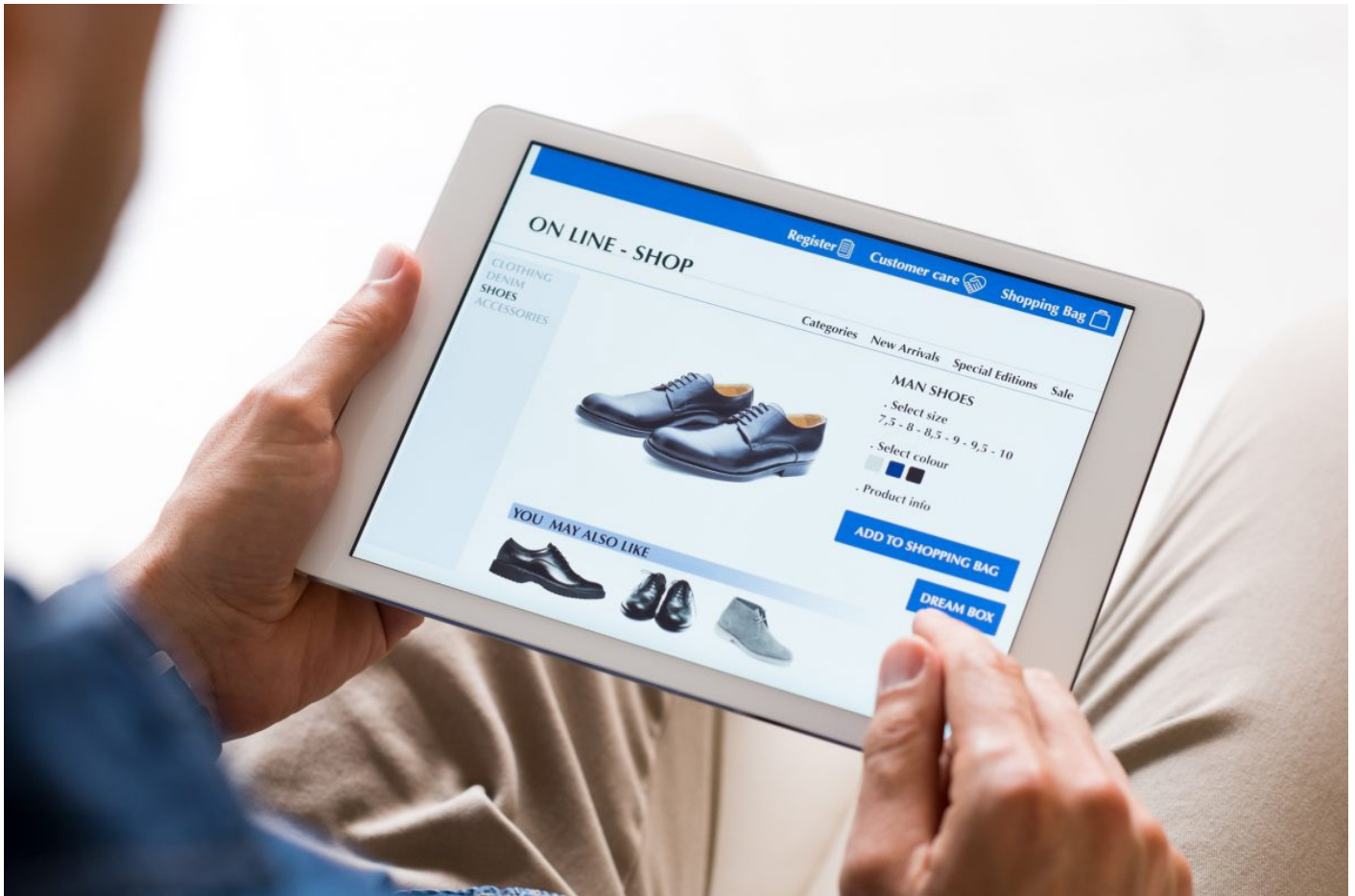
Sales and the holidays go hand-in-hand. But what happens when your promotions aren't developed using best practices? Don't fall into the common pitfalls so many other brands do, when their promotions end up costing them profits.

Read about the top three mistakes most people make, and better yet...learn how to avoid them altogether.

Executing World-Class Order Promotions Is Key to a Successful Holiday

Among the thorniest challenges retailers face during the holiday period is creating and executing successful promotions that motivate customers and drive business. Don't let these common order management pitfalls sabotage your success.

Best practices department: order promotion division.

When planning your marketing strategy for Black Friday, Thanksgiving, and the entire holiday period, the first step is defining the promos you will offer your eCommerce consumers to drive more business. Step Two is setting up and testing the promotions you have planned. In the weeks ahead of launch, each promo must be vetted to be sure it works as designed, won't overwhelm your systems with volume, and is easy to handle.

Warning, Pitfalls Ahead!

Here are some common pitfalls that prevent retailers from setting up and executing holiday promotions efficiently:

1- Limited range of promo types

Ideally, you have access to a wide range of promotion types and your shopping cart technology supports the promos you need (e.g. free shipping, buy one get one, buy one get a different one, percent off whole order, dollars off whole order, percent/dollars off individual line item, etc.) It is just as important that your back office can support any promos your shopping cart supports, otherwise you can't implement your marketing plan without a big manual lift.Does your order management system support a wide-enough range of promotion types and shopping cart systems? Does your Order Management System (OMS) handle stacking of promos to satisfy the expectations of call-in customers?

2- Promos not firing right

Results at checkout must conform to what the customer expects. Consistency between what the customer sees on the web site and how the promo is applied—well, that's a fundamental requirement that all too often proves hard to achieve. Without consistency between what the site promises, what the shopping cart delivers, and what the order system charges, your call center is doomed to be flooded with complaints that are costly to deal with and solve.Does your OMS integrate seamlessly with your eCommerce system to guarantee every customer has the same consistent, error-free
experience? Can you set up a promotion in your back office and publish it to all your channels? Or do you find yourself having to set up promotions separately in multiple systems? If so, you have a lot of company. Many retailers must assign personnel to the cumbersome task of coordinating promo implementation across systems. A fallible process like that cannot deliver full confidence that everything will execute smoothly as intended.

3- Painful inflexibility

All too often, making changes to a promo after launch throws your team into turmoil and can leave you wondering whether the change was made correctly everywhere.Here again, the ability to make changes through your OMS in the back office and then publish those changes automatically and reliably to all channels is crucial. It all comes down to setting up and syncing back office and ecommerce, with the OMS sitting in the middle of a circle of sales channels running a variety of systems (Magento Shopify, BigCommerce, or our own SiteLINK) which report back to order management to fill orders. Note that Freestyle's SiteLINK eCommerce system is fully integrated with our order management solution and will prevent these very problems from occurring.

Moving Up, or Moving Beyond?

Whether you are a small, growing merchant adopting an Order and Inventory Management solution for the first time, or a mature merchant who wants to move beyond your legacy systems (so many APIs!), make it a priority to enhance your back-office operations with an order management solution that:

• Handles the widest range of shopping cart technologies
• Enables the setup of promotions in the back office with consistent publishing to the channels
• Guarantees agility and confidence when changes need to be made

In addition, a full-range order management solution offers coordinated warehouse functions to ensure that picking, packing and promos are all managed from one place.

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Conclusion

The holidays are busy. The last thing you need is to drop the ornament ball on your order or inventory management practices, shipping, customer satisfaction rate, or anything else that comes with your e-commerce business.

Freestyle and M.O.M. make it possible for you to sail through the holidays seamlessly, with orders flying out the door and your bottom line breaking records.

Reach out today to learn more about how Freestyle can help you and your brand get through the holidays.

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Thank You.

Freestyle solutions®