CROSS-CHANNEL FULFILLMENT STRATEGIES LEAD TO SEAMLESS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

An executive conversation with **Peter Brereton,** president and CEO, Tecsys

In the wake of COVID-19, as order volumes spike, customers' delivery expectations continue to tighten—leading many retailers to expand their fulfillment networks to better respond to those demands. To discuss how building a retail fulfillment and delivery solution that can flex and adapt while remaining hyper-efficient is the way to success, Digital Commerce 360 spoke with Peter Brereton, president and CEO of Tecsys.

How has fulfillment and delivery changed for retailers recently?

Consumers are becoming more interested in options like click-and-collect and curbside pickup, and press retailers to step up in kind. To effectively accomplish curbside fulfillment, a retailer's warehouse system must extend its reach further down the supply chain. It also must be far more integrated into the order management process.

What are the biggest challenges retailers face?

Complete networkwide inventory visibility, and the ability to orchestrate orders across channels and locations are two big challenges for retailers struggling to be profitable in this economy. Getting orders routed to the most economically viable location and ensuring that the exact available-to-promise inventory is recorded correctly at that location drives e-commerce order profitability. This has always been a challenge, but the surging and demanding delivery expectations exacerbate the issue.

Another challenge is the cost of the last mile. Retailers are increasingly taking control of the last 50 feet of order delivery to offer differentiated service to their e-commerce customers. This means they're extending their reach beyond the traditional warehouse dock all the way to the customer's door, and this leads to significant changes in the way orders are scheduled, routed, packed and managed.

How can they overcome these challenges?

Adopting modern technologies like distributed order management and micro warehouse solutions are vital, but must be interwoven with a culture of innovation and adaptability. Addressing organizational hurdles like disjointed online and offline strategies and siloed fulfillment begins with getting the right technology and having the right mindset.

With the rise in online ordering and parcel delivery, courier costs are cutting into margin, and retailers need to find ways to optimize their routing and lower their shipping costs with a fully baked omnichannel strategy.

What strategies can they pursue to ensure business continuity now and in the medium term?

To compete, retailers should focus on the customer order fulfillment experience. This means having access to inventory visibility across different channels, ensuring items are in stock and available, and offering multiple delivery options. Ultimately, if true omnichannel fulfillment is the destination, a common order management system across channels, capable of pivoting in a changing ecosystem, is an important objective.

Meanwhile, retail loyalty relies on retailers providing consistently delightful customer experiences. Tecsys' retail supply chain platform, for example, connects the disparate fulfillment and delivery workflows typical of legacy systems, equipping retailers with an efficient and adaptable retail supply chain practice that revolves around positive customer buying journeys.

Where is the future of omnichannel retail headed?

Retailers will be increasingly focused on providing a seamless and augmented brand experience across their brick-and-mortar and online channels. Stores will become showroom destinations that customers will seek out. Online shopping will become more transparent, providing robust product and sizing information to help with purchasing decisions and reduce returns.

As retailers generate buyer profile data across fulfillment channels and locations and funnel that data into their business intelligence interface, they will gain insights into how their customers behave, what they want and how they want to interact with it. Omnichannel retailers, with that data in hand, will be much better at making strategic business decisions as it relates to supply chain and customer satisfaction.

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Power Your Omnichannel Retail Success

The future is now. It's time to embrace how your customers shop and to reimagine how you fulfill your brand promise to them.

That's exactly what a leading international retailer of upscale design and home interiors did when the company selected Tecsys to integrate its store operations, warehouses and e-commerce into a unified end-to-end supply chain solution.

Equipped with Tecsys' scalable and adaptable systems, they were able to achieve inventory visibility across all locations, offer click-and-collect service and create in-store micro fulfillment and order consolidation. By investing in omnichannel technology, our customers also gain access to powerful business intelligence data to learn deep insights about its customers and make quick, informed decisions.

If you're ready to deliver seamless buying experiences to your customers, Tecsys is here to power your omnichannel retail success.

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www.tecsys.com
info@tecsys.com