

Click-and-Collect Revolution: The Rise of Omnichannel Shopping in Retail





The retail landscape is undergoing a significant transformation with the rise of click-and-collect services, a pivotal component of omnichannel shopping strategies. This model allows customers to purchase items online and retrieve them from a physical store, merging the convenience of e-commerce with the immediacy of in-store shopping.

The Emergence of Click-and-Collect in Australia

Recent research from ShopFully revealed that 70% of Australian consumers prefer click-and-collect services when shopping online, highlighting how the digital and physical shopping worlds are converging. This service allows customers to shop online and pick up orders in-store, often on the same day. The integration of digital convenience with in-store immediacy has positioned click-and-collect as a pivotal element in modern retail strategies.

Furthermore, ShopFully's data showed that 78% of Australian shoppers often make additional purchases when collecting their orders, with 24% doing so systematically and 54% occasionally. This trend underscores the revenue-driving potential of click-and-collect for retailers, as it encourages customers to engage with physical stores and explore additional products. As Brendan Straw, Country Manager for ShopFully in Australia, noted, "Click-and-Collect has offered shoppers the best of both worlds, providing both convenience and time efficiency. However, it's retailers who are reaping the most reward, as it allows businesses to capitalise on their digital channels to drive in-store footfall and increased sales."

Despite Australia's reputation as a digitally progressive market, the attachment to physical stores remains strong. According to the same research, 90% of Australians prefer in-store shopping, driven by the enjoyment of the shopping experience (34%). This dual preference for online convenience and in-store interaction demonstrates why click-and-collect is so effective in meeting consumer expectations.





The Role of Technology in Streamlining Click-and-Collect

Technology plays a vital role in the success of click-and-collect systems, enabling retailers to address some of the inherent challenges of this service. Real-time inventory tracking, for instance, helps ensure that customers can only purchase items that are actually available in-store. Additionally, mobile apps and SMS notifications keep shoppers informed about the status of their orders, reducing wait times and enhancing overall satisfaction.

NetSuite, a cloud-based ERP solution, has become an indispensable tool for Australian retailers implementing click-and-collect services. By integrating sales channels and providing real-time insights into inventory and operations, NetSuite helps businesses deliver a seamless omnichannel experience. DWR, an Australian NetSuite reseller, has demonstrated significant success in helping retailers deploy these solutions to streamline operations and enhance customer satisfaction.

The Software Problem Click-and-Collect Creates

Inventory Synchronisation Challenges

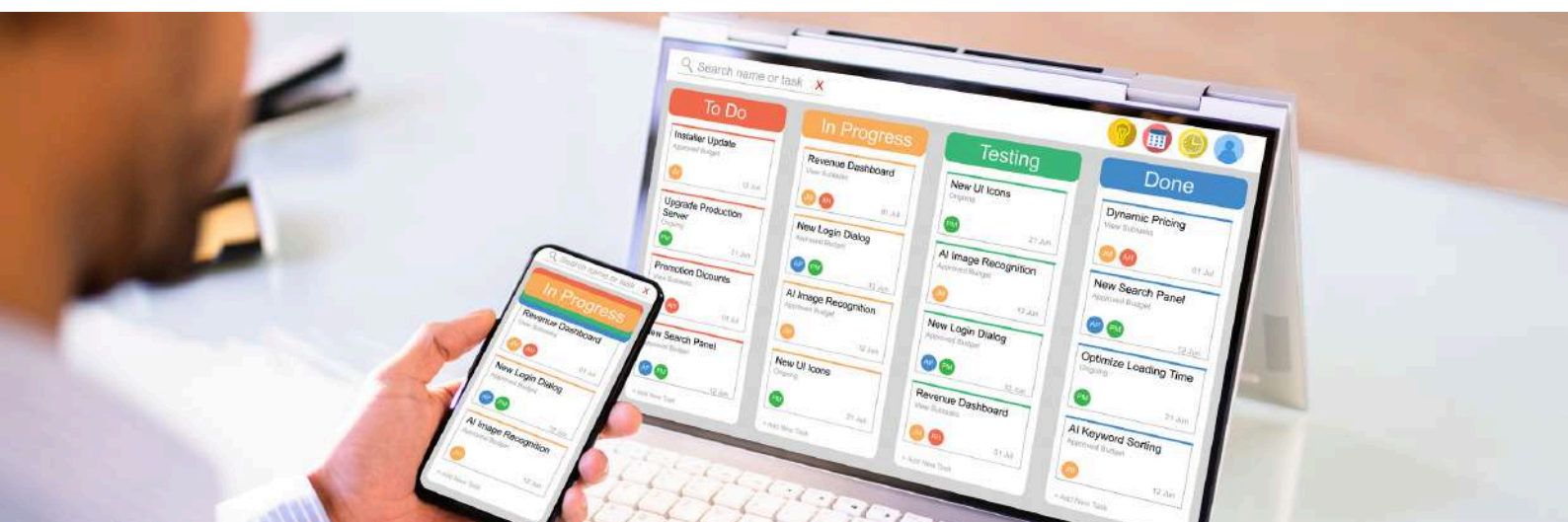
Click-and-collect services, while convenient for customers, pose significant challenges for retail software systems. A key issue lies in synchronising online and in-store inventory in real-time. Retailers must ensure that the items displayed as available for purchase online are physically present in the selected store. This requires robust and dynamic inventory management capabilities that can keep pace with customer demand and minimise errors like double-selling.

Infrastructure Pressure and Integration Hurdles

The increased reliance on software systems to manage order processing, customer notifications, and pick-up scheduling also puts pressure on existing infrastructure. Many legacy systems struggle to integrate with modern e-commerce platforms, leading to inefficiencies such as delayed updates, misplaced orders, or inaccuracies in stock availability. These integration hurdles highlight the need for scalable and flexible technological solutions that can evolve alongside the demands of omnichannel retailing.

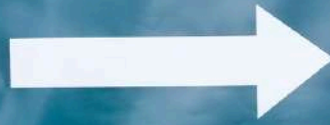
Security and Data Privacy Concerns

The implementation of click-and-collect services introduces additional touchpoints for sensitive customer data, such as payment details and personal information. Ensuring the security of these touchpoints is critical to maintaining consumer trust. Retailers must invest in advanced cybersecurity measures, such as encryption and secure authentication processes, to protect both customer data and business operations.





Click & Collect
this way



"Click-and-collect has become a cornerstone of modern retail in Australia, offering unparalleled convenience while driving in-store engagement and additional revenue opportunities for businesses."

– Tiernan O'Connor, Sales Director, DWR Consulting

Staff Training and Operational Alignment

For click-and-collect services to run smoothly, store staff must be adequately trained to handle order fulfilment, customer inquiries, and inventory updates. Without proper training, operational inefficiencies can arise, leading to longer wait times and decreased customer satisfaction. Aligning store-level operations with online systems through comprehensive training programs is essential for success.

Scalability for Seasonal Peaks

Click-and-collect services often experience demand surges during seasonal peaks, such as holidays or sales events. Retailers need software systems that can handle these spikes without compromising performance. Scalable ERP solutions and robust server capabilities are necessary to maintain service quality and avoid disruptions during critical shopping periods.

Leveraging ERP Solutions for Efficiency

To address these challenges, businesses must invest in comprehensive ERP solutions like NetSuite. Such platforms offer real-time inventory tracking, seamless channel integration, and automation tools to streamline operations. By implementing these solutions, retailers can ensure their click-and-collect services are reliable, efficient, and customer-focused, enabling them to meet the complexities of omnichannel retailing head-on.

Click-and-Collect Trends in Specific Retail Sectors

Grocery Sector

The grocery sector has embraced click-and-collect services as a way to cater to busy consumers who value convenience. Major retailers offer dedicated collection bays and streamlined online ordering platforms to reduce customer wait times. Innovations like temperature-controlled lockers have further improved the practicality of collecting perishable items. Smaller grocery stores are differentiating themselves by providing personalised services, such as curated order suggestions based on past purchases.

Fashion Industry

In the fashion sector, click-and-collect has been adopted to bridge the gap between online and in-store shopping. Fashion retailers often allow customers to try on items upon collection, offering instant exchanges for better fit or style. This strategy reduces return rates and enhances customer satisfaction. Additionally, integrating virtual try-on technologies into their online platforms enables a more interactive shopping experience, making click-and-collect more appealing to tech-savvy shoppers.

Electronics Retailers

Electronics retailers have leveraged click-and-collect services to expedite the shopping process for high-demand items. Same-day collection options are increasingly common, especially for products like smartphones and gaming consoles. To stand out, many stores offer expert advice and demonstrations at the point of collection, ensuring customers leave with confidence in their purchase. These retailers are also adopting advanced inventory systems to prevent overselling popular items.





Benefits of Click-and-Collect for Customers and Retailers

Enhanced Convenience for Customers

Click-and-collect eliminates delivery wait times, allowing customers to pick up items at their convenience. For those who live near retail locations, this service offers a quick and efficient alternative to home delivery. Customers can also save on shipping costs, which makes it an attractive option for budget-conscious shoppers.

Increased Foot Traffic for Retailers

Retailers benefit from additional in-store traffic as customers visit to collect their online orders. This interaction often leads to impulse purchases, boosting overall sales. The ability to showcase complementary products near collection points further enhances revenue opportunities.

Cost Efficiency

Click-and-collect is more cost-effective than home delivery for retailers. By consolidating multiple orders at a single location, businesses can reduce logistical expenses and environmental impact. This efficiency is particularly advantageous during peak shopping seasons.

Comparison of Click-and-Collect Services Among Major Australian Retailers

Woolworths

Woolworths has been at the forefront of grocery click-and-collect, offering a variety of options that cater to modern consumer demands. Their drive-through collection points streamline the pickup process, allowing customers to remain in their vehicles while collecting their purchases. Contactless pickup ensures added safety and convenience, particularly valued during periods of heightened health awareness. Additionally, Woolworths' app integration empowers users to manage their orders efficiently, from scheduling pickups to receiving real-time updates on order readiness. The company continuously invests in enhancing its digital platforms to improve user experience and maintain its leading position in the click-and-collect space.

Coles

Coles differentiates itself by offering free click-and-collect services for orders over a certain value. Their integration of AI-driven recommendations ensures a personalised shopping experience, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Bunnings

Bunnings focuses on the hardware and DIY market, tailoring its click-and-collect services to meet the unique needs of its customer base. Their streamlined in-app guidance assists users in locating the nearest store and tracking their orders seamlessly. Bunnings' commitment to customer support is evident in the availability of expert staff to assist during collection, providing advice on tools, materials, and project requirements. This high-touch service model ensures customers feel supported and confident in their purchases. Additionally, Bunnings has started experimenting with same-day collection options for high-demand items, further improving the overall shopping experience.



JB Hi-Fi

JB Hi-Fi has made significant strides in adopting click-and-collect services to cater to the fast-paced demands of tech-savvy consumers. Their system supports real-time inventory visibility, allowing customers to check stock availability before placing an order. JB Hi-Fi's efficient processing ensures that most orders are ready for pickup within a few hours. Their stores offer a dedicated collection point, ensuring minimal wait times. To enhance the experience further, JB Hi-Fi staff are trained to provide product demonstrations or answer technical questions upon collection, adding value to the service.

Harvey Norman

Harvey Norman leverages its extensive network of stores to provide a comprehensive click-and-collect service. Their platform allows customers to browse an expansive range of products, from furniture to electronics, and reserve items for same-day collection. Harvey Norman also offers flexible pickup options, such as scheduled time slots, to better accommodate customer needs. By integrating their loyalty program with click-and-collect, they incentivise repeat usage of the service. In-store, customers benefit from personalised assistance, ensuring that they are satisfied with their purchase before leaving the premises.





How to Set Up a Click-and-Collect System

Step 1: Evaluate Business Needs

Determine whether your business infrastructure can support click-and-collect services. Assess your inventory management, staff availability, and customer base to identify potential challenges. Evaluate whether your current technology stack can integrate new systems, such as real-time inventory tracking or notification services. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to understand the financial implications of implementing click-and-collect, including potential savings from reduced delivery costs and increased in-store traffic. Address any logistical hurdles, such as space allocation for dedicated collection points or staffing adjustments.

Step 2: Implement Technology Solutions

Invest in tools like NetSuite to manage inventory synchronisation and real-time updates across multiple sales channels. These systems ensure accurate stock levels are displayed online, preventing customer frustration caused by unavailable items. Beyond inventory, technology can streamline operations by automating processes such as order allocation, routing, and tracking. Retailers should also consider integrating customer-facing tools like mobile apps and SMS notifications to keep customers informed about their order status in real time. Implementing AI-driven analytics can further enhance the system, providing insights into customer preferences and peak collection times to optimise service delivery.

Retailers may also benefit from adding technologies like automated locker systems or QR code-based pickup verification, which enhance efficiency and reduce reliance on manual processes. For businesses with limited technical expertise, partnering with technology providers or consultants can help accelerate the implementation process and ensure systems are configured to support long-term growth and scalability.

Step 3: Train Staff

Provide training for store employees on handling orders, managing inventory, and addressing customer queries. Staff must be equipped with both technical and soft skills to enhance customer interactions and ensure accuracy in order fulfilment. Regular training sessions can keep employees updated on system upgrades, new procedures, and seasonal demand patterns. Implementing role-based training programs tailored to specific responsibilities, such as inventory handling or customer service, ensures targeted skill development. Additionally, fostering a culture of continuous learning through workshops and online modules can help staff stay proficient and motivated, directly contributing to a seamless and efficient click-and-collect experience for customers.

Step 4: Design User-Friendly Interfaces

Creating intuitive online platforms for customers to place orders and schedule pickups is pivotal for the success of click-and-collect services. These platforms should prioritise simplicity, ensuring users can navigate the system with minimal effort. Reducing the number of steps required to complete a transaction, such as through autofill options and pre-saved preferences, significantly enhances user satisfaction. Retailers should also provide clear, step-by-step instructions at every stage, reducing the risk of errors or confusion.

To further improve the user experience, platforms can include real-time inventory visibility, allowing customers to see what is in stock before placing an order. Incorporating multiple payment options, including mobile wallets and buy-now-pay-later services, ensures accessibility for a diverse range of users. Visual design elements, such as easy-to-read fonts and mobile-responsive layouts, cater to customers using different devices. Finally, offering proactive customer support, such as live chat or a robust FAQ section, can address any issues immediately, ensuring a seamless journey from order to pickup.





Customer Experience and Expectations in Click-and-Collect

Ease of Use

Customers expect a straightforward process from order placement to pickup. Retailers must prioritise designing interfaces that are easy to navigate and free from technical glitches. An intuitive interface reduces the chances of errors and ensures a smooth transaction. Offering multiple payment options, including digital wallets, credit cards, and buy-now-pay-later services, caters to a diverse customer base and further enhances usability. Clear and consistent communication, such as order confirmations and reminders via SMS or email, helps to build customer confidence and ensures that the process is transparent from start to finish.

Fast Pickup Options

Consumers value minimal wait times and convenience when utilising click-and-collect services. Retailers can significantly improve efficiency by establishing dedicated collection zones with clear signage and convenient parking. Pre-sorting orders before customers arrive ensures a seamless handover process. Leveraging mobile notifications to alert customers of order readiness reduces congestion and improves overall satisfaction. Providing additional services, such as express pickup lanes or lockers for off-hour collections, adds flexibility and encourages repeat usage of the service.

Consumers value minimal wait times. Establishing dedicated collection zones and pre-sorting orders can significantly improve efficiency. By meeting these expectations, retailers can create a positive brand impression and encourage repeat business.

Customising NetSuite to Manage Click and Collect

Tailored Workflows and Real-Time Integrations

NetSuite provides a flexible platform that allows retailers to tailor their operations to the unique demands of click-and-collect services. Through custom workflows and real-time integrations, businesses can synchronise their online and in-store inventory, ensuring that products displayed as available online are ready for collection in-store. This seamless synchronisation not only prevents inventory mismatches but also enhances the customer experience by delivering on promises of availability and speed.

Automating Notifications and Order Fulfilment

Retailers can utilise NetSuite's SuiteScript and other native development tools to develop automated processes for managing customer notifications and order fulfilment. For instance, businesses can create scripts to trigger SMS or email updates when an order is ready for pick-up. These automated notifications keep customers informed and engaged, reducing wait times and improving satisfaction. Additionally, automating fulfilment processes minimises manual errors and streamlines operations, particularly during peak shopping periods.





The Future of Click-and-Collect in Australia

As consumer expectations continue to evolve, the future of click-and-collect will likely be shaped by innovations such as automated lockers and enhanced AI-driven inventory systems. Automated lockers, for example, provide a contactless option for customers to retrieve their purchases at any time, reducing the pressure on store staff and eliminating waiting periods. AI systems can predict demand patterns and optimise stock levels, ensuring that popular items are always available for collection.

Moreover, click-and-collect is poised to play a key role in sustainability efforts within the retail sector. By consolidating multiple orders for in-store pickup, retailers can reduce the carbon footprint associated with individual home deliveries. This aligns with the growing consumer demand for environmentally responsible shopping options.

The click-and-collect revolution marks a transformative shift in Australian retail, blending the best of online and offline shopping. With the right strategies and technologies in place, retailers of all sizes can leverage this service to thrive in a competitive and ever-changing market.

Leveraging Industry-Specific Customisations with DWR

DWR, a leading NetSuite implementation specialist, supports retailers by optimising their NetSuite setups with industry-specific customisations. These enhancements include tailored dashboards that provide real-time insights into click-and-collect performance metrics, such as fulfilment times, inventory turnover, and customer satisfaction rates. By leveraging these tools, businesses can identify bottlenecks, implement targeted improvements, and ensure a smooth and efficient service for their customers, maintaining a competitive edge in the evolving retail landscape.