

TRANSPARENCY AROUND DELIVERY EXPECTATIONS IS KEY TO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION DURING COVID-19

An executive conversation with **Rob Glover**, vice president of sales at OSM Worldwide



During this pandemic, as more customers shop online, retailers are scrambling to fulfill orders and deliver products as quickly as possible. But with disruptions in the supply chains caused by COVID-19, many retailers are struggling to meet fast-delivery expectations—and it's having an impact on the customer experience. To discuss the importance of being transparent with customers about fulfillment and delivery during these unprecedented times, Digital Commerce 360 spoke with Rob Glover, vice president of sales at OSM Worldwide, a domestic and international shipping company.

What have been the biggest fulfillment and delivery challenges retailers are facing because of COVID-19?

The largest issues revolve around outbreaks in certain distribution centers and warehouse locations. These outbreaks not only impact staff levels, but also affect a company's ability to process shipments and orders within normal efficiency levels.

Also with airlines reducing freight lanes, delays on inbound materials from overseas have occurred. As a result, many supply chains have experienced significant disruptions due to these travel restrictions.

What common mistakes are retailers making during this pandemic?

Many retailers aren't transparent enough with buyers about how long deliveries will take due to the disruptions in the supply chains. This is having a profound impact on the shopping experience—which is key to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customers are becoming dissatisfied because some products can take much longer than expected to be fulfilled and delivered, or can get stuck in foreign countries without a defined path into the U.S.

What strategies can they implement to address these challenges?

Above all else, retailers need to consider the customer

experience first. To do that, they must be able to manage what inventory they have available to sell and set customer expectations for how long those deliveries will take. It is important to clearly communicate to customers when they should expect their orders. This is critical in keeping high customer satisfaction scores during this pandemic.

What opportunities have emerged from this crisis?

Many retailers now realize that they need to have multiple options in delivery networks and distribution centers. This will help when they are trying to spread the risk of having any one network or distribution center being hit hard by the virus.

To better diversify their networks, retailers should research delivery and fulfillment partners to identify the ones that would work best for their business. They should also consider the strengths of their agreements with their existing delivery and fulfillment partners.

How can retailers implement these changes quickly to navigate the crisis better?

They should find a fulfillment and delivery partner that is implementing best practices to weather this storm safely and successfully. OSM, for example, was quick to react and keep our employees safe. We provided extra cleaning services in our buildings and enacted employee distancing. We also developed a new policy for workers to stay home if needed and introduced new human resources policies in coordination with local health officials.

COVID-19 is a unique pandemic. It impacts retailers differently based on geographic location, and the specific industry involved. Every day is an opportunity to do good for employees, customers and the surrounding communities.

