

Boost your business with smart delivery

 By [Morné Stoltz](#)

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It can be difficult to carve out a competitive advantage in today's cutthroat business environment. For some companies, investments have been focused on creating digital advantage through measures like apps or fancy websites, or improved processes with clever technology to make things run faster and better.



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While all those strategies have their place, there could be a far simpler way to put your business ahead of the competition. Deliver the goods, in a very literal sense.

The internet revolution has made today's markets very competitive in all sorts of ways. Barriers to entering many markets have tumbled and new competitors are everywhere. Consumers have greater choice than ever and can easily compare prices and service. That is good for consumers, but it makes it hard for companies to attract and retain a loyal following.

By now, it should be no secret that people are willing to pay for convenience. In fact, many of the digital initiatives we see today are succeeding because of the convenience they provide. Take the Uber example: using technology services, it brings together willing sellers with willing buyers, with the ultimate convenience of being able to see where your Uber is, who the driver is and what car to expect. Even more convenient, your Uber shows up when you need it.

Extend the same concept to physical goods, no matter what they may be and it is not difficult to see how a delivery service can easily put a big smile on your customers' faces. Whether you are selling horse saddles, operate a bicycle store, run the local grocer, hardware outlet or restaurant: bringing your goods to your customers saves them time, makes it easier to buy and has the added effect of establishing further rapport to build trusted relationships.

Value of speedy delivery

According to Forbes, the internet has habituated today's shoppers to instant gratification. While physical goods obviously cannot be accessed at a click, there is no doubt that speedy delivery has become a driver of competitive advantage.

Getting a delivery service set up can be easy and low-cost provided your market is fairly local and your product relatively easy to transport. There is a range of options for vehicles, from a versatile bakkie or minivan capable of handling large loads or bigger items, through to a delivery motorbike or scooter.

For those providing smaller items, scooters or motorbikes are a great option, as they enable convenience when your customers might most need it: during rush hour. A bike can zip through the traffic, impressing your customer by ensuring that they get what they need, without wasting time stuck in the car due to traffic or lack of parking.



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In-house or third party

A big question would be whether your deliveries are handled in-house or by a third party. There are pros and cons, but there is an increasing trend for many smaller businesses to make use of specialised logistics/delivery operations. After all, this means you do not have to make the capital investment in a vehicle or scooter, pay a staff member to do the job and take on the insurance and management issues. Not only are you engaging an expert, you are also doing your bit to support another business.

Third-party delivery partners also work well for deliveries in far-flung areas, or if your product is bulky. It is a good idea to see what other businesses of your size are doing and who they are using. It is important to choose a delivery partner whose service ethos matches your own.

Whatever option you choose, make sure you understand the risk and have the right kind of business insurance in place. It is also a good idea to have the ability to monitor where your deliveries are in real time. If you have a third-party partner, they should be able to provide this for you.

With most big stores offering delivery services as part of their value proposition, adding this choice to your service offering increasingly makes good business sense. Customers are quite prepared to pay a slight premium to get what they want, right to their front door – and they will keep on coming back for more.

ABOUT MORNÉ STOLTZ

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