

8 tips

to deliver a
superior
eCommerce
experience





Consumer behavior is moving extremely fast – and many retailers are finding themselves unable to keep up. Online shopping had been rising in popularity for years, but its exponential growth during the Covid pandemic has left many retailers struggling.

But **consumers aren't waiting for retailers to get their act together**. If there are issues – or even simply friction - in the online journey, you may not get a second chance. With so many other retailers offering similar products, consumers will just shop with someone who offers a better experience.

There's no time to waste. To keep customers loyal, you need to offer smooth shopping journeys on all your channels, and offer timely, clear information and support throughout the shopping journey.

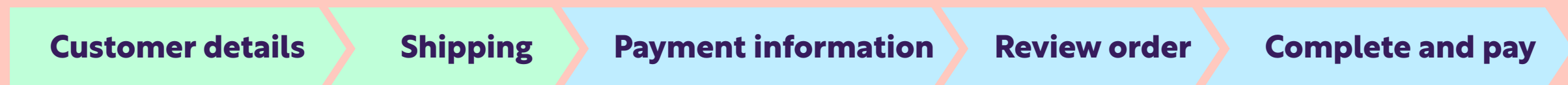
We have identified **eight areas retailers should focus on to offer more satisfactory online shopping experiences.**

- 1** - Say the important information up front
- 2** - Show product availability
- 3** - Make up for the lack of physical cues
- 4** - Prioritize mobile shopping
- 5** - Simplify navigation
- 6** - Tie the online and offline experience
- 7** - Offer flexible delivery options
- 8** - Build resilience in your supply chain

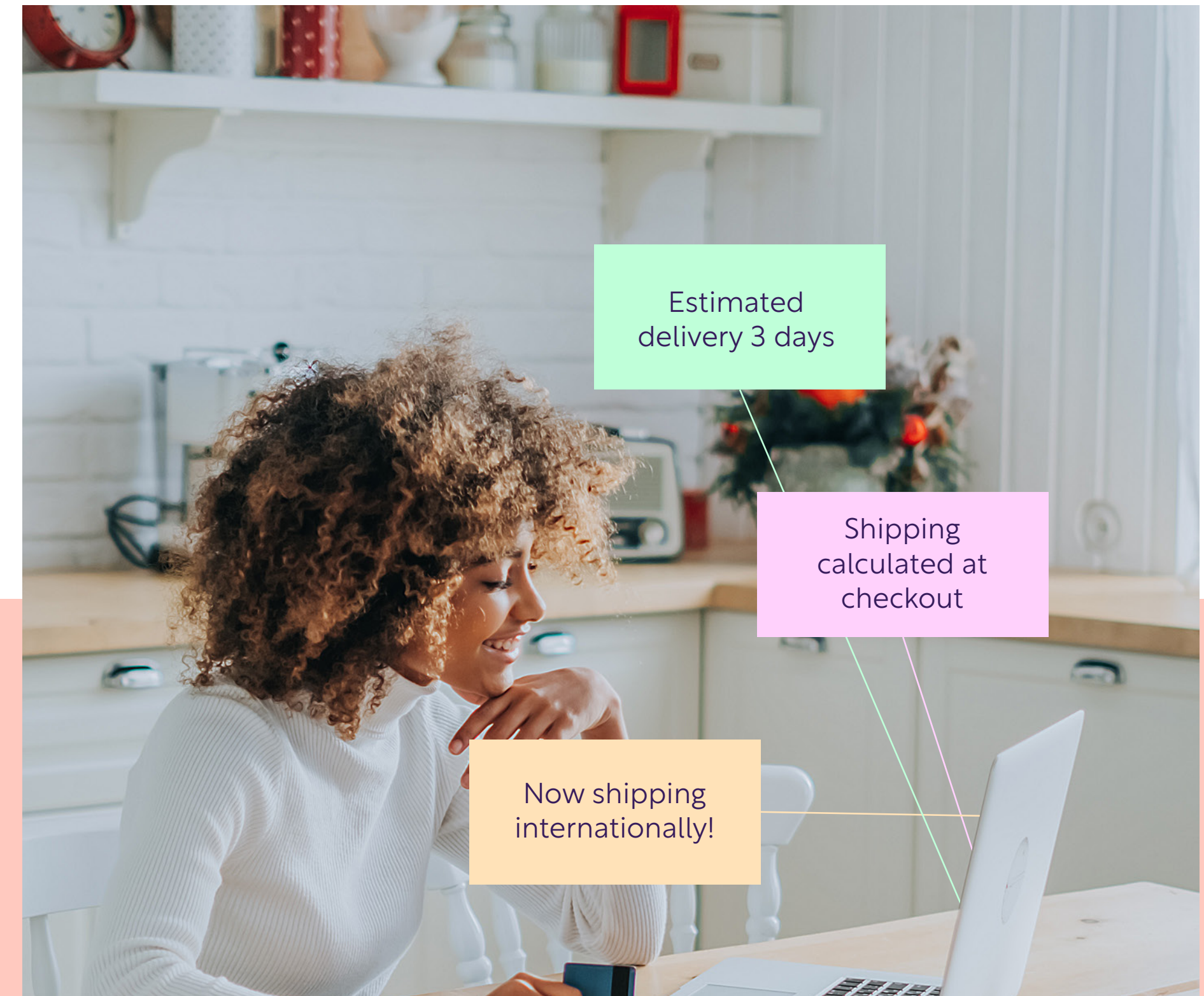
1 Say the important information up front

Be clear, and provide all necessary information from the start. Finding out that your postcode is not eligible for delivery from an eCommerce store is annoying enough. Discovering it after spending an hour adding products to the shopping basket is *extremely* annoying.

- Buyers should be aware of shipping prices and times, delivery restrictions, geographical areas included in the service and special conditions **before** they have added a single item to their cart.
- **Checkout** is one of the most critical moments in a shopping transaction. Make sure that all stages of the process are clearly labelled, and that shoppers **know what's coming up**. Consider adding lines that clarify current and upcoming steps, such as “You can still modify your order in the next step” or “By clicking here, you confirm your order and accept to pay. You won't be able to modify your order afterwards”. For extra clarity, you may want to include a **progress bar** that shows the various stages of the process



- Once the order has been placed, make sure you display an “order completed” page where all the key information is summarized: items purchased, delivery and payment information, time of order, and **what the customer should expect next** (A link to track the shipment? A confirmation that the order is ready to pick up at a store location? Other information?).



Around 70% of online shoppers abandon their shopping cart before finalizing their purchase.

Baymard Institute, data from 41 separate studies on cart abandonment

What is unified commerce?

Unified commerce combines all the capabilities retailers need to run an omni-channel business in a [single software platform](#). Since all the information - from sales going through the Point of Sale and eCommerce, to inventory, to prices and offers, to customers - is collected in the same system, retailers get total visibility over their business, and get a clear, single version of the truth.

In terms of omni-channel, a unified commerce platform enables retailers to

- Maintain information (product details, prices, promotions, and more) just once, and distribute it across the chain.
- See what products are available, and where they are located, in real time.
- Accept returns across the channels, for example exchanging in a store an item bought online.
- Offer services that tie physical and online locations like click & collect, or like ordering items from a different store or warehouse.

[Discover more benefits of unified commerce](#)



Show product availability

According to Forrester research, **71% of customers expect to be able to see available inventory online**. Leading retailers are taking note, with some even taking it further: on its eCommerce website, furniture giant [IKEA](#) lists the stores where each item is available alongside the **quantity left in stock**.

Even if you don't want to go to such lengths, your product listing should be as **complete and up to date** as possible. Customers should be able to see if the product they want is available in their preferred variant, and in which store they can find it. If you use a **unified commerce system** in your online and physical stores, you can maintain all inventory information in one database. The system then automatically updates all channels - eCommerce, POS and back office. This way, employees and customers can access the same **real-time data**. And if the inventory changes, for example if an item is sold or needs to be removed from the stock, this is instantly reflected on all touchpoints.



Only 3 left!



3 Make up for the lack of physical cues

In the past, most consumers wouldn't think of buying items like a sofa or a pair of shoes online without seeing them and trying them out first. That's no longer the case – but consumers may still need **extra information and reassurance** before they click the “buy” button.

- Include **detailed product information**. When shopping for items online, customers can't touch and feel the products. List materials (or ingredients), and include any special care warnings, warranty information, and return policies. If you stock similar products, make sure you provide consumers with **enough information so they can make an informed choice**. Better yet, include a comparison view or table.
- Feature clear, high-quality **pictures**. According to research by Field Agent, 83% of consumers believe product images are **very important** when selecting and purchasing a product. If you can, include videos: a survey by Wyzowl revealed that, for 80% of people, product **videos give more confidence** when buying a product online. When deciding what kind of video - one showing the item in detail? A tutorial? A how-to? – think about what format that will better resonate with your audience, and how you can best give them the information they need to close the sale.
- Include product reviews. According to research by the National Retail Federation, **96% of shoppers read reviews on the retailers' site**, and a quarter of them say that **reviews are the most influential factor** in buying decisions, mattering more than price comparisons or advice from friends.





53% of mobile website visitors will leave if a webpage doesn't load within three seconds.

Google

Prioritize mobile shopping

Even before Covid-19, 92% of eCommerce growth was happening **via mobile commerce**, Shopify reports. As the preference for shopping on mobile is only going to get more common, you need to ensure that your website performs well on devices of all sorts and sizes. Here are some questions you should ask yourself:

- Is the entire website **responsive**? Do all tables, payment forms, menus, etc. **scale to fit** any browser size?
- Are the buttons **big and easy** to tap? Are the text fields large enough to type into easily?
- Are the pictures clear? Can people **zoom in** to see extra details? Is it easy to move through different images?
- Is all information visible on **small screens**, or do some lines disappear or end up off screen?
- Can customers easily move **between items and categories**?
- Is the **payment process** simple to follow?
- Do pages **load fast**?

Many consumers **start a transaction on a device and continue it on another one**. If when they resume shopping they lose all the items they had already added to the cart, they may not be bothered to start over again – and you'll lose that transaction. Let logged-in customers save the cart, and make it easy to pick up transactions on different devices at the shopper's pace and convenience.

5 Simplify navigation

On the eCommerce site you can offer a larger product selection than in physical locations. If you decide to go for the “endless aisles” style with many items in several categories, make sure you **organize the products** so that customers can quickly find what they need.

- Offer **top-level categories** that can be accessed from the top menu.
- Let users **filter and sort** items by price, brand, group, review scores, etc.
- Help shoppers **skim through information**. Use bullet points and organize texts consistently (first materials, then package size, then weight...) so users can find what they need at a glance.
- Make sure the “buy” **button** is clearly visible. When a user adds an item to the basket, it should be evident. Don't force shoppers to open the basket to double-check – add a checkmark, or confirmation text to clarify.
- Support returning shoppers. Give customers the possibility to **see their buying history and re-order the same items** in a few taps.

Include a search function with **predictive suggestions and autocorrects** (“Did you mean...?”). Your customer may call “kitchen robot” what you call “food processor” on your site; you wouldn't want them to leave without it just because the search gave no results.





More than three-quarters of consumers said they were interested in BOPIS (click and collect); over 90% of those who have tried it said curbside was convenient.

————— NRF, Consumer View survey —————

Tie the online and offline experience

According to research by global payment firm Adyen, omni-channel shoppers – customers who buy both in your online and physical stores - **spend 30% more per purchase** than those who shop only on one channel.

Connecting your online and offline stores is good business – but to do it right, you need a clear understanding of your shoppers’ needs and customer journey. As you focus on making the experience consistent and frictionless across all touchpoints, ask yourself:

- Can I offer popular services like **click & collect** (buy online and pick-up in the customer’s preferred store location)?
- Can I offer **contactless order pick-up**, like curbside, or pick-up at a locker?
- Can I handle **in-store returns** of items bought online, or in another store location?
- Can I sell to my online shoppers items that are available in my **store locations**?

If your online and physical shops are disconnected, you won’t be able to offer true omni-channel shopping experiences. Consider moving your IT to a modern [unified commerce platform](#), where all channels are united within the same view, making the experience consistent both for you and for your customers.

7 Offer flexible delivery options

Delivery is a well-known pain point for online retailers. Yesterday it had to be fast and traceable; now, it also needs to be safe and contactless. When planning your strategy, consider that:

- You need to dispatch and route items within **short and predictable timeframes**.
- You need to offer **precise delivery windows**, and allow people pick the one that best fits their schedule.
- Relying on third-party delivery services can simplify organization, but it may lead to **higher costs and reduced visibility** over the status of the shipment.
- You must be able to **track drivers as well as items**, and give this visibility both to your employees and to your customers who are waiting for their order.
- You need **digital proof of delivery** to make sure each order reaches the customer.
- **In-store pick-up**, whether it's click & collect or pickup at the curbside, is cheaper to set up and has **lower additional costs** than home delivery. On top of that, it may lead to **larger baskets**: according to Forrester research, 35% of shoppers who pick up an online order in-store will **buy something else as well**.



Build resilience in your supply chain



Many factors can affect the experience on your eCommerce. In the spring of 2020, UK chocolatier Hotel Chocolat saw a surge in online sales prior to Easter. With both consumer habits and regulatory requirements changing quickly, the brand was caught unprepared, and missed out on the opportunity. “Every day at Easter, the **online demand exceeded the quantity of orders we could accept**, due to the requirements to ensure safe working, combined with the short adjustment period,” said Hotel Chocolat chief executive Angus Thirlwell.

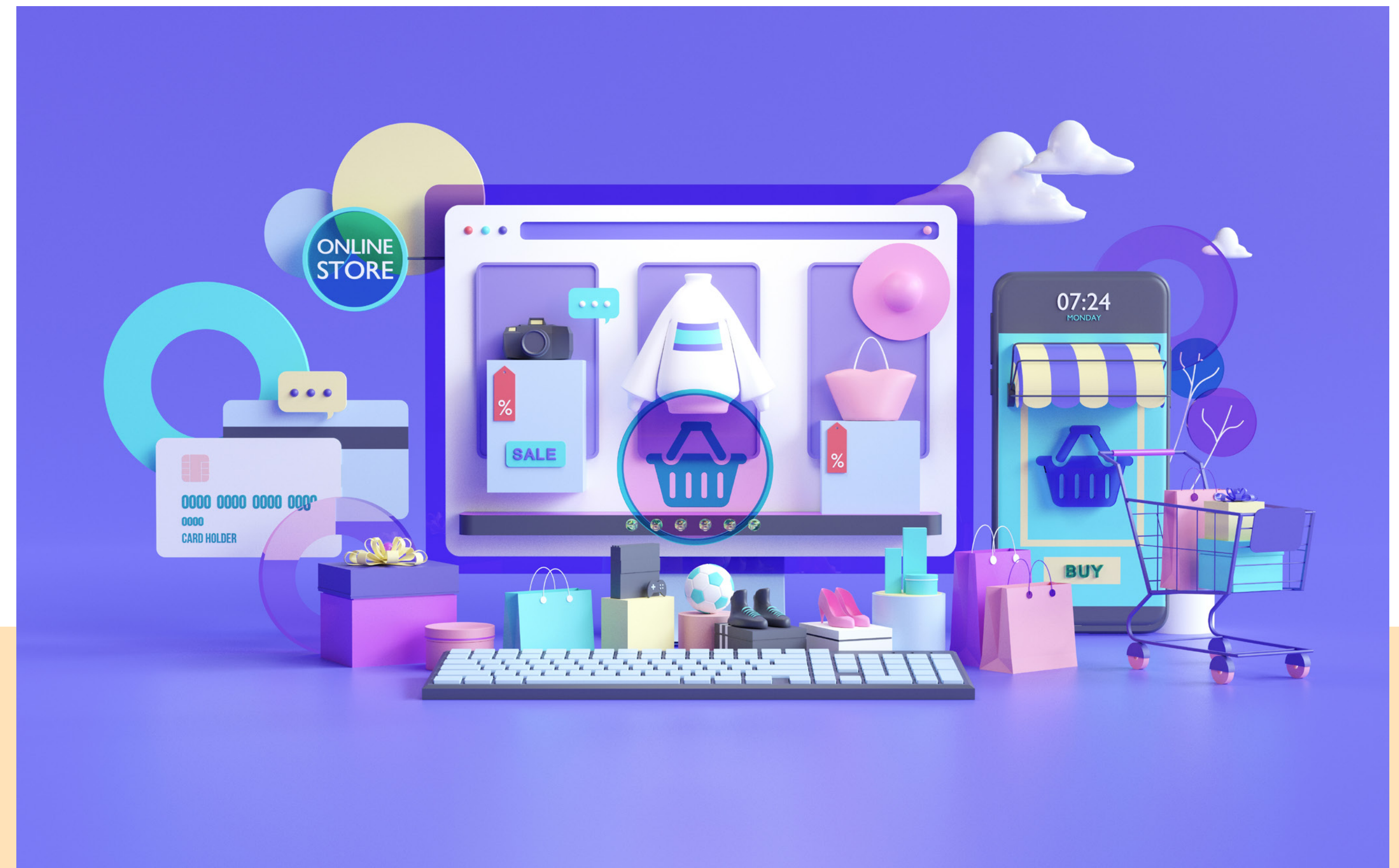
Like Hotel Chocolat, many retailers have found themselves quickly **scrambling to adapt their supply chains and reallocate resources** to where they are most needed.

To be able to **respond to surges in online demand**, retailers need to make sure they have

- Flexible supply chains.
- Staff trained in multiple roles, ready to fill in different positions when the need arises.
- Visibility into their inventory, and ability to redistribute items across the chain, or use stores as warehouses.
- Strong [business intelligence and reporting](#) capabilities to spot trends and track change.
- Powerful [forecasting tools](#) to predict what consumers will want to tomorrow, and adjust longer-term purchasing and inventory decisions.

Building an omni-channel business for the future

Although it's hard to predict what will happen tomorrow, we can expect the upward trend of eCommerce to continue. Retailers who want to shape the market and win over competitors must move quickly and fearlessly. They must redesign the shopping journey with the customer at the center. They must think omni-channel, and align messages, objectives, information and design across touchpoints, making sure that everything works together in a consistent, seamless way. And they must equip their business with unified technology that can support them today and tomorrow, through the next change in consumer behavior.



Have you lost track of what's going on in your business?

Many retailers are losing money and losing customers, but they don't know where, why, or how to fix this.

It's not you. The problem lies in your outdated retail system which doesn't give you the real-time visibility you need.

What you need is a unified platform that gives you visibility and speed of action. And you need it before the wave of change sweeps you away.

We can help.

[Contact us](#)



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Our software solutions power tens of thousands of stores and restaurants worldwide, within such diverse industries as fashion, electronics, furniture, duty free, restaurants, coffee shops, forecourt, c-stores and more.

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