Order Management: Three Rules for Building Smarter Order Management
Order Management: Three Rules to Implement Today

Making the sale is obviously a critical component in the success of any organization. But smart companies know that is only the beginning when it comes to taking care of today’s smarter customers. Creating satisfied customers and keeping them for life demands that you deliver high touch service and a personalized experience every time. In fact, that is the one thing customers want most. But, while 80% of CEOs believe they deliver superior customer service, a recent study shows that only 8% of their customers agree with that claim. What is the cause of this disconnect and what can you do to overcome it?

A seamlessly orchestrated order management system lets companies cross over from simply filling orders to effectively leveraging inventory, maximizing internal and external resources and keeping order promises, which keeps customers happy. Achieving this level of efficiency is possible with concerted focus on three critical goals:

1. Become truly cross-channel.
2. Remain nimble in your order management process.
3. Leverage inventory across all channels and organizations.

IBM Sterling Order Management helps you accomplish these goals by providing a single, unified view of supply and demand across all networks, leveraging intelligent sourcing to orchestrate order fulfillment, providing global visibility of all inventory and utilizing centralized order information to provide real-time order visibility that boosts customer satisfaction. Read on to learn how this flexible, scalable order management solution can help you model these three best practices to differentiate and transform your organization.

Creating satisfied customers and keeping them for life demands that you deliver high touch service and a personalized experience every time.
Rule 1: 
**Become truly cross-channel.**

Order management has become increasingly complex thanks to the rapidly increasing number of customer interaction points, suppliers and partners that make up an organization’s network. While having more options can be an advantage, managing all the moving parts of your extended network and fully leveraging all it has to offer may seem like a formidable challenge. But truly successful companies know that embracing a true cross-channel mentality can have a positive impact on the way orders are fulfilled, in how fulfillment activities are managed and in how customer service representatives respond to requests and inquiries.

Sterling Order Management delivers the visibility and event management you need to effectively execute order fulfillment across your entire supply chain network. Global visibility into your inventory, combined with rules-based order promising and scheduling, lets you leverage the best possible options for delivery and service from any internal or external source so you can meet your company’s performance objectives as well as your customers’ expectations for multiple fulfillment options. Sterling Order Management also helps you achieve customized, line-level order fulfillment by breaking down orders by specific functions, determining the fulfillment process for each and splitting or consolidating order lines accordingly. Documents and requests are sent to the appropriate partner and user-defined events are factored in, giving you a complete picture of each order line’s fulfillment activity and allowing you to track multiple activities. Sterling Order Management aggregates order information from multiple channels into a single source that can be accessed from any channel. Having this single order record gives you the simplified administration and order visibility you need to accurately service customers as they move from one channel to another; whether they are making a purchase online and then returning it to the store, or starting the order process online and completing it by phone with a CSR.
Rule 2: Remain nimble in your order management process.

You may rely on multiple partners to facilitate order fulfillment but it’s likely that your customer is relying on only one entity; yours. To keep your order promise, you need a solution that provides transparency and seamless management as you move customers through the order process, whether it is straightforward or requires complex execution of services and custom offerings. But that solution needs to be more than seamless; it also needs to deliver a business process flow that is adaptable to your partners’ disparate requirements, able to meet customers’ demands for order information and flexible enough to accommodate fluctuating market factors by allowing you to change order processes quickly and easily.

Sterling Order Management provides flexible, process-based management of orders from multiple channels and helps enable customized fulfillment dictated by user-defined business requirements. This level of flexibility allows you to quickly integrate partners and define their relationships and roles as well as switch out partners to meet specific needs, all to keep pace with changes in your business environment. From an inventory standpoint, it gives you the agility you need to source from the optimal location regardless of the channel through which the order was placed. Sterling Order Management also utilizes milestone alerts to monitor and manage orders and fulfillment across your extended enterprise, provide critical, real time information about an order at any point along the continuum, and ensure delivery execution that accounts for the type of order and the availability of resources.
Rule 3: Leverage inventory across channels and organizations.

In today’s fast-paced environment and with customer expectations higher than ever, staying on top of supply and demand is no small feat. It’s not enough to simply know what inventory is on hand; you need an intelligent system that tells you what orders are in process, tracks inventory in transit and monitors current demand within your organization and across all partner locations. You also need to support the various ways customers choose to interact with you; store, Web, call center and more. By utilizing inventory from all locations, you prevent backorders in one location while you are discounting excess inventory in another. Visibility is the key to success and with real time access to mission-critical inventory information you can deliver accurate order promise dates while effectively maintaining order over your inventory.

Sterling Global Inventory Visibility aggregates inventory from all locations and delivers it in a single, comprehensive view. By considering factors such as availability, inventory in transit, lead times, notification times and the various points an order will pass through, you can confidently quote an accurate delivery date when an order is placed. Sterling Global Inventory Visibility ensures consistent inventory information is accessible to all channel participants from any point; call center to store, web site to mobile device. This solution also allows you to manage inventory in multiple locations with advanced search capabilities so you can identify and manage shortages or overstocks, minimizing the possibilities of stock-outs or inventory discounting. With IBM Sterling Reverse Logistics you can utilize return inventory data to monitor the return-and-repair process, allowing you to factor refurbished inventory back into your supply source. And, Sterling Store allows you to keep your promise of “order from anywhere, fulfill from anywhere” while driving more sales through multi-store inventory visibility and by offering alternative merchandise pick-up locations.
Transforming the order management process is critical for companies that want to maximize their resources and separate themselves from the competition by providing customers with the highest level of service and support. IBM Sterling Order Management’s comprehensive solutions help you achieve a true cross-channel mentality across your entire global enterprise, provide the agility that is critical to success in today’s rapidly-changing environment and ensure supply and demand is optimized. With the unparalleled visibility and scalability offered through Sterling Order Management, you will transcend yesterday’s “fill the order” mentality and deliver a superior experience that sets you apart and creates delighted customers.

Try the Order Management Calculator to quickly determine the cost savings and fill rate increases your business can achieve with a better order management system. You’ll get a customized report to help you build a solid business case.