How to Keep Order Fulfillment from Turning Your Store into a Shop of Horrors

Your associates are trying to juggle picking online orders and serving customers. But they don't have the tools or information they need to do both well. That leaves you with stressed (and frustrated) associates and dissatisfied in-store shoppers.

What's happening when associates are busy picking and fulfilling online orders? In-store shoppers are wandering the aisles looking for help. With no associate available in sight, great service opportunities are lost, and customers leave with a bad taste in their mouths.

Shoppers are hungry for quick and easy fulfillment. The key to satiating their appetites is providing fast and seamless in-store fulfillment. But be careful, because around every corner, the fulfillment monster is looming — and always looking to feed on inefficient processes, poorly trained associates and out-of-stock aisles.

Take a look inside our Shop of Horrors. Does it look like one, or several, of your stores?

1. Unarmed and Unhelpful: Associates Under Pressure

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How many times have online shoppers tried to have an order shipped from a store, only to receive an alert that the item they want is out of stock? This deep deception will stay with them forever, ultimately driving them away from you and into the arms of your competitors.

2. Store Inventory Accuracy

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Store inventory accuracy typically ranges between just 50 and 80%.

3. Gathering Your Weapons to Do Battle with the Fulfillment Monster

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1. Identify your store's current fulfillment challenges and develop a strategy to address them.
2. Leverage modern order management technology to identify the optimal location from which to fulfill orders and source out-of-stock products.
3. Manage the flow of orders into the store at the time of purchase via careful order flow management processes.
4. Update labor management processes to better reflect all associate obligations, so they can better manage order fulfillment and customer service tasks.
5. Train all associates on pick/pack/ship best practices that align with the unique features of their stores.
6. Give associates access to order information so they can up-sell customers who pick up orders in-store.
7. Ace assortment and allocation planning to ensure that products are placed as close to the fulfillment location as possible.