4 essential factors to consider before choosing Last-Mile Technologies

The eCommerce boom and the pandemic have upped the antes for Retailers and Carriers. What are the main elements to look for when searching for a consolidated solution for the last-mile?

With the eCommerce world changing and growing too fast, volumes surge, promises are harder to keep and required delivery options are more than a single carrier can afford to operate.

In this scenario, Retailers need to rely on multiple third-party logistics providers at the same time, trying to develop a perfect network for express delivery, same-day and time-definite deliveries and ultra-fast requests.

Having different providers comes with several issues:

- Brand values and consistency are dispersed in the post-checkout phase of the order, with the customer often barely knowing who's delivering what, a foggy user experience and upselling / loyalty boosting chances lost in translation.
- Depot operations are complicated by the different needs of different Carriers, necessitating costly segmentation, increasing stock-control difficulties and bringing up costs.
- IT integration becomes too layered, needing different teams and base knowledge to manage all players involved.
- Customer service may be overrun (especially during peaks) and needs to be trained to handle a confusing variety of communication lines and problem-solving protocols.
- Experience on the road gets lost or remains siloed, with the loss of precious insights, invaluable for studying customers' behaviour and operational assets.

Up to the last millimetre, the need to consolidate operations and branding has brought under the spotlight a new generation of Last-Mile Delivery Transportation Management Systems.

Retailers looking for a one-fits-all solution or Carriers contemplating the expansion of their services should consider different factors when looking for the perfect fit:

- **Good communication is no more an option, it's an imperative**. Third parties should offer continuity with the Brand's experience up to the customer's doorstep and provide real-time tracking of orders through an interactive interface. Interactive means that customers mustn't feel helpless if a problem occurs or their needs change: they have to know what to do or be able to reach someone in charge of delivery right away. Chatbots and vague customer-service answers are a thing of the past.
- **One platform, many options**. Their provider must be able to offer the highest degree of control from warehouse management to driver's and customer's experience. The more systems' domains you cross, the more open you will be to error and miscommunication.

- **Data has to feed itself and automatically smarten operations**. Things move too fast for data to be collected and manually processed into operative instructions. Street-level experience is too often lost because there's no unified interface where operators can upload their perspective. A reliable platform auto-collects data and also makes it easy to feed it from the outside. Algorithms then use predictive analysis to optimize operations not only for the present but for the future too.
- **Gives the power to shape customer demand**. By analyzing last-mile costs, available capacity and existing/projected demand and pairing them with a dynamic slots capability, the platform should offer an optimal trade-off between customer experience and delivery cost. The Carrier saves on miles and fleet/mobile resource saturation and customers are not bound to fixed time slots that may prevent them to choose cheaper wider slots or costlier narrow ones.

Some Transportation Management Systems for the last mile focus on optimization, some on the kind of speed tailored for on-demand deliveries, others are routing engines in disguise. Retailers and Carriers should then be wary and diligently evaluate their needs before making such an important choice. Their success may depend on it.

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[Milkman Home Delivery Platform](#) was built considering all the above points and has proven its capabilities working with brands such as Public MediaMarkt, Poste Italiane, Eataly, Easycoop, etc...
Using this innovative platform, especially during the pandemic, helped these organizations to optimize capacity and high volume of deliveries, while preserving their brands positioning and respecting the promises made to customers

If you want to learn more, please contact us:
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