

Delivering a seamless customer experience



*Your self assessment to guide your next steps towards
optimized, automated, microservice-driven order management*

Striving for Best Practice in the Omnichannel Era

Introducing Blue Yonder's Order Management Self Assessment

Are real-time, available item quantities visible through your website, to your customer?

As stock reduces, do you offer accurate urgency messaging to your customer?

Do you offer real-time reservations, so stock doesn't disappear between 'basket' and 'checkout'?

Are you equipped to offer same day click and collect?

Does your inventory management allow for flexible pick-up times?

Are you able to provide flexible fulfillment options if some items are in stock now, but others aren't?

Is your pick-up slot function updated and visible in real-time?

The right product, at the right time, in the right way

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So much has been made of retail's transition in recent years, beginning with a concerted shift to online channels at the peak of the pandemic, and out the other side with consumers leaning towards both in-store and online shopping as part of a more balanced dynamic.

Of course, the biggest challenge of all, is navigating the omnichannel relationship between the two...



Inventory accuracy to ensure requisite level of stock to be held across stores and distribution centers



Further accuracy pertaining to **inventory location**, based on where demand is strongest for certain items



Fulfillment flexibility relating to both choice (click and collect, home delivery, fulfillment centers, traditional purchases in store); and timing (same day or specific preferences)



Visibility of an item's availability in real-time for both retailer and customer, as well as that item's journey from the point of purchase

Given the speed of change, it's understandable that many retailers have found it difficult to get a firm grip on all of these aspects, let alone forecast these necessary movements ahead of time.

Blue Yonder has subsequently played a key role throughout this period in helping businesses with their digital transformations, by guiding retailers toward a microservices strategy which can see new capabilities phased in with pragmatic, planned increments over time.

These microservices fall within the company's commerce portfolio which comprises:

- Tangible AI and machine learning products that help to inform optimum supply chain decisions
- A microservice approach that champions augmentation as well as overhaul, so that clients' digital infrastructures evolve in a targeted, incremental, quick and cost-effective way

In each bespoke case, Blue Yonder liaises with, consults and guides businesses towards best practice in this new world.

And indeed, helps to identify how far away your business really is from that smooth, connected, holistic, predictive and customer-friendly vision of order management... right now.

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Based on conversations with thousands of retailers, Blue Yonder has highlighted seven key capabilities that often arise as areas for improvement.

We encourage your business to take this introspective step, to see how close to best practice you are, and how pivotal an AI and microservice-led approach to augmentation could prove to be...

1. Are real-time, available item quantities visible through your website, to your customer?
2. As stock reduces, do you offer accurate urgency messaging to your customer?
3. Do you offer real-time reservations, so stock doesn't disappear between 'basket' and 'checkout'?
4. Are you equipped to offer same day click and collect?
5. Does your inventory management allow for flexible pick-up times?
6. Are you able to provide flexible fulfillment options if some items are in stock now, but others aren't?
7. Is your pick-up slot function updated and visible in real-time?

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Are real-time, available item quantities visible through your website, to the customer?

Best practice

When a customer arrives to your site, the key is clarity. They need to be able to see what's available, to what extent, and through which fulfillment options; all with the knowledge that the situation won't change during the time they're exploring your brand.

Not only do you as the retailer need to know what's available to promise – including all elements that result in ultimate execution – but the same upshot of available stock needs to be clear and visible to the customer from minute one.

How Blue Yonder can help

Luminate Commerce enables real-time inventory availability across all channels of your network. Personalised live visibility based on a shopper's location and needs can then be displayed as your customer shops, to help understand where an item can be bought today, or at a time that suits. This visual representation to the customer, is the final link in a connected chain which begins by ensuring availability, and optimum inventory positioning, in the first place.



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As stock reduces, do you then offer accurate urgency messaging to the customer?

Best practice

As an extension of showing customers how much stock is available, there needs to be more blatancy when it comes to items that are running low. Even if stock visibility is enabled, the customer can't be expected to strictly monitor or analyse that figure.

Urgency messaging must also be incorporated to guarantee that a person's casual browse isn't abruptly ruined by the 'shock' of unavailable stock. Creating a sense of urgency with reliable, real-time information drives conversion.



How Blue Yonder can help

Through Luminate Commerce, Blue Yonder also offers intelligent messaging to promote urgency around items that are running low on stock, based on real-time feeds of inventory information. Not only does this instil a level of trust within the customer to receive such useful updates, but the display of 'urgency' also serves as encouragement for them to actually make a purchase.

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Do you offer real-time reservations, so stock doesn't disappear between 'basket' and 'checkout'?

Best practice

As a final strand of this visible availability requirement, it's imperative that the 'stock situation' doesn't change for a customer between the time they add something to their basket, and the time they reach the checkout.

Real-time online reservations must be enabled so that the initial stock information provided wasn't just a general update, but a personalised promise to the customer for the duration of their visit.

How Blue Yonder can help

Through intelligent online reservations, which includes prioritising for your most loyal customers, you can make sure that you never inflict that disappointment of breaking a promise or building the shopper up, only to knock them down again. This real-time reservation capability, alongside expanded real-time delivery options, will provide the versatility and experience that shoppers demand.



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Are you equipped to offer same day click and collect?

Best practice

If next-day delivery is possible, then a retailer has already got a firm handle on their forecasting capabilities to inform optimum volume and positioning of stock. From that perspective, then why is same day click and collect not also possible?

Pre-empting demand is the name of the game, and by accurately predicting demand on any given day, both in-store and for delivery, there should be the same option to open up same day collection for online clicks... or even same day deliveries if distribution capacity is also managed effectively.



How Blue Yonder can help

It's not simply about offering the customer unrivalled efficiency and speed of access in this case... although that is of course a major factor. The ability to offer a complete middle ground between shopping in store and online, via same day collection of bought items, can have dramatic impacts on delivery and logistics costs. The customer wants to come to you, but they'll only do so if you can assure availability ahead of time; and that's where Blue Yonder's AI capabilities are a forecasting game changer.

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Best practice

What if a customer doesn't want to collect a bought item on that same day? What if they're at work, on holiday, away from home; but have still earmarked in-store collection as their preferred method of fulfillment?

In this case, future collections need to be informed not only by future forecasting, but by real-time response to demand that ensures stock is where it needs to be at that time of collection.



How Blue Yonder can help

This strand of order management requires similar attributes to at-home grocery deliveries. Essentially, has stock been assembled in such a way that already-chosen-and-bought items are ready for collection (or delivery) at a specific time? You, as the retailer, are afforded more time and another opportunity to become more efficient in these instances. By understanding what stock can be picked in a store, or perhaps a nearby store, retailers can reduce costs and offer faster, or even timed, pick-ups to their customers at a lower operational cost. Luminate Commerce can evaluate the optimum fulfillment mechanism and support efficient in-store picking.

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Best practice

Even with a completely connected, predictive and holistic approach to order management, you can't always guarantee availability. It's a common challenge often seen through at-home grocery deliveries and substitutions, but during any example of multiple purchases there is the possibility that one or more items won't be available immediately.

At that point, not only do the fulfillment options presented to customers need to be flexible as a rule of thumb, but they need to be agile to when the customer wants and needs each individual item (both, the in-stock and the out-of-stock).

How Blue Yonder can help

Fluidity is once again key, not only to levels of customer satisfaction, but to your own profits. As a rule, the aim is to reduce the need for split shipments, and if this isn't possible purely by offering complete availability, then it needs to be mitigated by offering the customer as many fulfillment options as possible. Encouraging them to different stores or fulfillment centers for later pickup at a chosen time once stock is available, will reduce the likelihood of conducting multiple home deliveries. Again, the key is channelling prior knowledge of demand, into optimum inventory positioning for the customer.



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Best practice

A final fulfillment concern falling under the umbrella of 'flexible choice' alludes to pick-up slot times. Again, much in the same way that consumers might pinpoint a grocery delivery slot, only to find it's been taken later, pickup slots for online purchases also need to be consistent, reserved early, and abundant in choice.

The benefit of offering that omnichannel experience and the ability to blend online shopping with in-store collection, will soon be lost if time slots are limited, or – even worse – if peak hours lead to that item no longer being available during a chosen slot.

How Blue Yonder can help

Juggling stock that resides in-store is certainly one of the biggest challenges facing retailers at this time, given the high street's new dual role as a collection point as well. While same day collection needs to be catered for ahead of time, Luminate Commerce can also respond to allocated future pickups, through your pick-up time technology, to ensure requisite levels of stock are available for these collections. All the while, without jeopardising in-store availability for those purchasing in more traditional ways.



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In each case, AI and microservices ensure a connected channel of insight to inform best decisions ahead of time, so that, firstly, you're responding to anticipated demand based on the fluidity between in-store and online shopping. But secondly, to also react to purchases that have already been made with a view to later, allocated deliveries and pickups.

Failing to meet this demand, either in real-time or with prior warning provided, is an immediate sign that a retailer doesn't have that end-to-end visibility that can only be assured through artificial intelligence, and a microservice-driven approach to your digitised supply chain.

However, it is precisely where Blue Yonder seeks to provide value thanks to an augmentative approach, and the company's highly scalable order management microservices.



Even the finest retail operations can be improved with Blue Yonder. Get in contact so we can identify the right roadmap to optimized, automated, microservice-driven order management.

We can ensure that, in a complex omnichannel world, you deliver the right product, at the right time, via the right fulfillment method... every time!



 **BlueYonder**

Find out more about Blue Yonder's market-leading
microservices-based approach to order management
[*blueyonder.com/order-management*](https://blueyonder.com/order-management)