Soapbox: Don’t kick SMBs to the curbside – for many, it’s their new lifeline

As many states are beginning to ease their COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, local businesses that rely on in-person or consumer touchpoints are investing in strategies to enable consumers to pick up goods curbside. While big-box retailers and grocery chains have had much success with the buy online, pick-up in store (and now curbside) model, many SMBs and franchises are just now attempting to make a go of it. This move is particularly important as many consumers will continue to remain at home and not immediately shift back to shopping and dine out, regardless of whether it’s permitted. In addition to offering curbside pick-up, many local businesses are also having to expand and evolve their market and product offerings to remain afloat.

While technologies that exist to enable curbside pick-up have been around for years, they have historically catered to the Target’s of the world and are not error-proof. As local businesses embark on curbside service to either re-emerge after being shuttered for more than a month or as an additional revenue stream, most are having to adopt or improve an e-commerce site, including a fulfillment center, that is then integrated back to a curbside app. For a small business or a local franchise now looking at these technologies to enable efficient curbside pickup, they require solutions that are geared to getting it up and running without IT support and infrastructure, as well as efficient implementation and ease of use.

What we are now seeing is an unprecedented market opportunity for small business technology and marketing providers to support the innovation and adoption of technologies that will

enable curbside pick-up as well as the marketing and operations side of a local business. Handling online orders, managing the supply chain and fulfillment and interaction management – and then efficiently running a well-timed curbside pickup – will require SMB-focused solution providers to up their game in terms of product innovation, delivery, customer service and review management.

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About The Author

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