

Case study: Jockey SA's e-commerce evolution

By [Bruce McMurray](#)

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In recent years, the world has witnessed a monumental shift towards e-commerce, transforming the way businesses operate and customers shop. This transition has not only expanded product accessibility but also significantly impacted customer relations.



Bruce McMurray is the general manager of Jockey South Africa. Images supplied

A study by Borderless Access has revealed changing consumer behaviors in South Africa, with data collected from 23,000 interviews across 97 communities, covering 9.3 million adults in 3.9 million households nationwide.

The research shows that the Covid-19 pandemic has spurred a surge in online shopping, particularly in areas like Ballito, where 20% of individuals have increased their online shopping habits.

In parts of the Cape, this trend is even more pronounced, with 55% of respondents shifting towards online shopping since the pandemic began.

The study highlights the growing reliance on online platforms for finding the best deals, with 70% of consumers actively using the internet for nationwide bargains. These findings underscore the evolving landscape of consumer preferences and the increasing significance of digital platforms in shaping retail experiences across South Africa.

Expanding product reach

The rise of e-commerce has empowered businesses like renowned local manufacturer Jockey South Africa to broaden their product reach, offering a diverse range to cater to online consumers. The ability to quickly adapt to market trends and preferences has given Jockey a competitive edge, particularly when compared to their traditional retail counterparts.

The diversity of offerings has resulted in a surge in online sales, outpacing the slower rate of sale of in-store retail. This can be directly attributed to the convenience and comfort that customers find in purchasing online.

This positive uptake in the e-commerce sector has also prompted Jockey to create a unique offering, the 'Build-A-Pack,' which has become a significant draw for customers who appreciate the flexibility of creating their own packs with specific colours and silhouettes.

The shift to e-commerce has not only influenced product offerings but has also revolutionised logistics and supply chain operations. Jockey has adopted real-time tracking and automated systems, enhancing the efficiency of their supply chain.

By integrating platforms like UAfrica and Shopify, Jockey has optimised inventory tracking, leading to a seamless flow of products from the warehouse to the customer.

This has eliminated the need for constant communication, as orders are automatically flagged for pickup upon fulfilment. Customers receive timely notifications and tracking numbers, ensuring transparency and a smoother shipping experience.

The success of Jockey's e-commerce endeavours also lies in their meticulous approach to order fulfilment. Internally, a dedicated team, led by McMurray, ensures that orders are accurately pulled, packed, and quality-checked before being dispatched. The in-house team follows a well-defined process, from pulling items according to the order requirements to security checks, ensuring the correct products in the right quantities reach the customers.



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In response to the growing demand for faster shipping and delivery, Jockey has adjusted its transportation methods, to meet customer expectations. The in-house packing system has been refined to ensure timely order fulfilment, with pre-pulled orders and a streamlined process.

Returns and exchanges in the e-commerce era

The rise of e-commerce has brought about changes in returns and exchange policies at Jockey. While there were initially higher rates of returns and exchanges, Jockey has implemented strategies to address customer concerns. Facilitating in-store exchanges for local customers and refining return processes has contributed to a more customer-centric approach.

Jockey's foray into e-commerce has translated into a significant enhancement in overall customer satisfaction. Their efficient customer service, has received positive feedback, with customers praising the brand for its responsiveness and effectiveness. Jockey has successfully navigated the challenges posed by e-commerce, solidifying its position as a customer-centric online retailer.

Staggering growth figures

Behind Jockey's success lie staggering growth figures, consistently achieving strong double-digit growth year on year. Total orders have surged significantly from 2019 to 2023, reflecting the increasing preference for online shopping. Total sales have also experienced remarkable growth, underscoring Jockey's strong presence in the e-commerce space.

While the e-commerce department is relatively young compared to other retailers, Jockey SA's loyal customers have played a role in its growth, constantly influencing its services and offerings. This is not to say they haven't experienced challenges during this transition period; indeed, there have been periods of growth and immense learning. However, Jockey SA are proud to have implemented all the necessary tools and internal processes that have helped us grow and improve over time.

Looking ahead, Jockey plans to expand its e-commerce team and implement strategies to further enhance efficiency and customer satisfaction. Learning from industry trends and competition, they aim to stay at the forefront of the e-commerce landscape, ensuring a seamless and enjoyable shopping experience for its customers.

The story of Jockey's success in the e-commerce space serves as a testament to the transformative power of online retail. By adapting to market trends, optimising logistics, and prioritising customer satisfaction, Jockey has not only thrived in the digital age but has set a benchmark for others to follow.

Jockey South Africa encourages entrepreneurs and SMME's to learn from its experiences and apply the learnings to grow their own businesses.

As e-commerce continues to shape the retail landscape, Jockey's e-commerce journey is a beacon of innovation and resilience.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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