



Morrisons' online deal with Ocado now has national delivery reach

Morrisons to expand online shopping base

Morrisons has signed an enhanced delivery deal with Ocado to expand its home delivery service nationwide.

Morrisons' online shopping service was formerly only available to around half of UK households. The latest deal with Ocado will enable it to double its reach as well as allowing Morrisons to sell a wider range of non-food products on its online shopping site.

David Potts, Morrisons chief executive, said: "The new investments in online growth are further examples of Morrisons building a broader business and will allow millions more customers to enjoy Morrisons' good-quality fresh food while we develop capital-light, profitable growth online."

New PayPoint pledge met with scepticism

The company says it has made big steps to improve communication

SIMON BANKS

PayPoint's pledge to improve its working relationship with retailers has been met with scepticism by some in the convenience community.

Its new pledge promises to deliver a "first class service" and to "champion the importance of convenience retailers and the challenges they face".

Saqib Ghafoor, who owns Nisa and Bargain Booze stores in Northumberland, said: "In the past, PayPoint has been one of the worst companies to work with. When I've needed help with an update or installation it's taken over 24 hours to get anywhere, and a simple banking error took 48 hours to rectify. This pledge is a long time coming, although I am not sure what will come of it."

Harry Goraya, owner of Rosherville Post Office in Kent, said: "PayPoint is making all the right noises with this pledge, but it already listens to retailers but doesn't hear them.



PayPoint has pledged to improve its communication and service, but retailers still need convincing

What retailers actually need is a pledge from PayPoint to pay its retailers more money. With costs and charges going up, retailers need more commission otherwise they continue to offer a service at a loss."

Tim Watkin-Rees, business development director at PayPoint, told *Convenience*

Store: "We have increased the frequency of our visits, broadened our operational and commercial support services and reintroduced an improved independent retailer forum.

"We are aware that last summer not all retailers were satisfied with PayPoint. We want to tell retailers that we are setting ourselves higher standards and enhancing our communication and actively innovating to provide an even better service."

TALKING TECHNOLOGY

Kevin Widdrington



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Tech boffin Kevin is the former IT director of Costcutter and runs two convenience stores

“Years ago I read a book that stated 'you should disrupt your own business, rather than wait for someone to disrupt it for you'. It sounds crazy, why would we want to disrupt our own business? Well the fact is, that if we don't do it, someone else is likely to do it for us.

Take Blockbuster for example. I remember going down to my local video store to hire a movie, which had to be back the next day to avoid

a fine. Now we sit on our sofas and are spoilt by the choice of movies that we can stream instantly through our TVs, and where is Blockbuster now?

Disruption is happening all around us, and is progressing at break-neck speed. Now I don't know what technology is going to take off in the future, but I do know that how we stay relevant for tomorrow is the biggest thing that keeps me awake at night.

I question if we are we

doing enough as an independent sector to look ahead: it's great to see digital being taken more seriously, but I believe that we must look beyond digital screens and social media. Customer experience is paramount to us succeeding in the future, and how we develop a seamless journey between our stores, social media and online presence is key.

Online is growing at double digit figures, AmazonFresh

can now be delivered in one-hour delivery slots and the multiples are investing millions in online.

We are all under pressure to grow sales, therefore it seems insane to think that the only way my store sales will grow is through my physical tills.

So is there an opportunity for symbol groups to come together and invest in one technology infrastructure? Will we disrupt convenience, or will we be disrupted?