



Retailer Virtualizes Physical Stores Instantly by Pulling Real-Time Point of Sale Data

Founded in 1949, EbLens is a lifestyle retailer of urban-inspired footwear, apparel and accessories with 48 stores across the Northeast.

In 2019, EbLens switched to Celerant Technology as their retail solution provider to operate their entire business more efficiently. Through Celerant's retail software, EbLens' can manage their products, inventory and sales across all store locations, their distribution center and eCommerce platform in a centralized place in real-time.

THE CHALLENGE

With new restrictions stemming from COVID-19, some of EbLens' stores are still closed; and those that are open are not all operating at full capacity. As a result, local customers are shopping on EbLens' eCommerce site. Since EbLens' website consists of merchandise from all their store locations, and many more products from their distribution center, placing an order with same day pickup becomes challenging. If the item is not in stock at a local store, the items would have to be transferred from another location before the order can be fulfilled; multi-item orders are even more complex and can be further delayed.

Preparing their eCommerce site to properly display on-hand inventory and sales tax codes for each location is feasible, but would be very time consuming and challenging. To meet the current needs of local customers, EbLens needed a solution quickly.

THE SOLUTION

EbLens implemented Celerant's Virtual Store to provide same day local pickup in every community they serve. By leveraging product data from their store locations and eCommerce site, EbLens created a virtual store for each of their physical locations with little effort on their part. The virtual store pulls product data, including on-hand

CHALLENGES

- Provide customers access to products in their local store, even if the store is not fully opened for business
- Offer a broader product mix, but based on available inventory at each specific store location
- Offer same day pickup to local customers
- Manage curbside delivery for multiple orders across all locations

SOLUTION

- Stratus Enterprise - Point of Sale
- Celerant's Virtual Store
- Celerant's Curbside Pickup App

OUTCOME

EbLens' is able to serve local customers with same-day pickup, with little to no effort.

quantities, price and SKU, from their Celerant point of sale database at each physical store in real-time; and instantly displays only the available merchandise at each location. The virtual store also pulls images/descriptions from associated products directly from their Celerant eCommerce platform; EbLens' sales associates can also take and upload additional images directly from their smartphones. Since product data is pulled from their POS database, EbLens was able to 'virtualize' their physical stores quickly, and with very little effort.

By making their physical store's current on-hand quantities available on the virtual store, EbLens can offer local customers same-day 'curbside' and 'in-store' pickup. To help manage all their curbside deliveries, EbLens integrated their virtual store with Celerant's Curbside Pickup Application. The application allows each store to easily manage their orders marked as 'curbside pickup', and communicate the status of each order with their customers through mobile text messaging.

THE VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

Customers can choose to shop on EbLens' main eCommerce website; or shop any of EbLens' virtual stores with same-day pickup. Using the 'Virtual Store Locator', the customer can select their preferred location, and browse products currently available at the location they selected. EbLens is planning to incorporate the virtual store directly on their eCommerce site, allowing customers to shop the store closest to them (based on zip code).

Similar to eCommerce, customers can add items to their shopping cart and complete their order online. At checkout, the customer can select either same-day 'curbside' or 'in store' pickup; and then receive an automated text message from their local EbLens store when their order is ready for pickup. After each purchase, inventory levels are automatically updated and reflected in EbLens' point of sale, eCommerce site and virtual store; allowing new customers to continue purchasing items currently in stock at their local store.

OUTCOME

Even though EbLens' physical stores are still not able to reopen at full capacity, they are still able to successfully serve local customers with same-day pickup- with little additional effort on their part. Within the first week of implementing Celerant's virtual store, EbLens has seen a tremendous uptick in curbside orders from local customers that requested same day pickup at their local store.

For more information about Celerant's Virtual Store™, please visit www.celerant.com/virtual-store.

