

Lockdown delivers growth for OneDayOnly

Online retailer OneDayOnly.co.za has recorded 40% growth over the last four months, driven by consumers' shift to online retail channels during the Covid-19 lockdown.



Getty

The pandemic fuelled a sudden digital surge that catapulted both global and local e-commerce traffic to unprecedented levels. Matthew Leighton, spokesperson from OneDayOnly, says the closest comparable example – while on a much smaller geographical scale – would be the 2003 SARS crisis, which is today recognised as kickstarting Alibaba's e-commerce success in Asia.

Commenting on the boosted online retail uptake in South Africa during lockdown, Leighton says, "While e-commerce has been gaining gradual traction across the country over the past decade, there is no denying that Covid-19 has served as a catalyst for rapid progress in this regard."



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Lauren Hartzenberg 25 May 2020



Lockdown challenges

The company's rapid growth, however, has not been without its challenges, Leighton admits. "We're the first to put our hands up and say that we've experienced some issues in scaling operations over such a short and unexpected period of time. The net result is that a lot of customers have received service well below our standard levels, and for that, we offer our sincerest apologies."

"Although our couriers and suppliers have had issues with adjusting their business approaches too, the responsibility to our customers is ours in its entirety."

He adds that dispatch at the time of e-commerce reopening proved challenging, with a backlog created during Levels 5 and 4.

"This in turn created a significant influx in customer queries, meaning our customer service department has struggled to respond to customers within our usual time frames. We are working round the clock to ensure normal service is resumed, and can only apologise profusely to any customer who has received less-than-excellent service from us.

"But rest assured we've learnt some valuable lessons that have helped evolve our business, and this will better position us for future shopping peaks such as Black Friday later this year."



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Evolving to meet growing demand

The company has quickly expanded its staff complement to ensure sufficient manpower and better manage the new levels of demand. The business is also placing greater focus on attracting and growing local skills in this sector, efforts that it believes "are key to the evolution of a successful e-tailer".

Leighton says the rapid increase in growth during the lockdown period of time has acted as the ultimate stress test.

"Regrettably, OneDayOnly has experienced instances where we have been unable to meet customer orders or fulfil delivery, which has understandably been a major cause of customer frustration. To ensure that these types of issues are swiftly addressed and prevented in the future, the business is in the process of implementing various new customer service measures to provide a clear way forward to customers who are experiencing issues with their orders."

In addition, OneDayOnly has revised its supply chain protocol to ensure adequate future capacity in this regard.



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Safety first

The e-tailer reports to have ramped up its health and safety protocol to help protect staff and customers from the virus. Employees who are able to work from home will continue to do so, while all essential warehouse staff have been provided with masks, face shields and sanitiser at each station. They are all temperature-checked before entering the warehouse, and then checked again throughout the day.

Once parcels are packed, they are transferred over to the couriers, who are doing contactless deliveries and who have been issued with personal protective equipment.

Leighton adds that if there's one thing that has become apparent during lockdown it's that South African consumers' needs are fluid. "OneDayOnly has committed to staying one step ahead of the trend by conducting continuous research in order to meet the country's ever-changing consumer demands."

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