Integrating your website into retailcloud
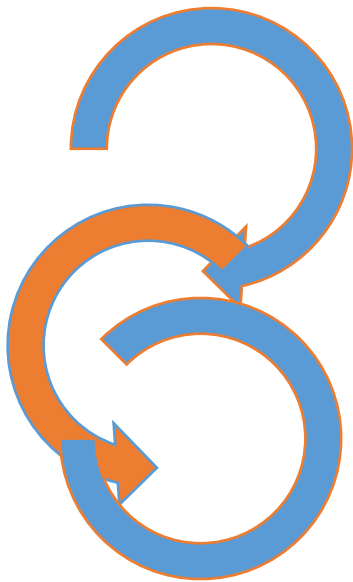
Overview

Todays consumer wants to use all channels simultaneously, and want insight into products, prices, promotions, availabilities across all channels.

A wholly integrated approach ensures that merchandise and promotions are consistent regardless of how the customer integrates with your brand. Customers are given the choice of looking through product and availabilities and making purchases through one channel and picking up merchandise in store

By consolidating customer activities and histories across all channels offers can be targeted to a consumer determined based on their activity across all channels

Universally the top 4 benefits of an integrated approach to commerce are

- Improved Customer Perception of the Brand
- Increased Sales from Increased Visibility
- Better Data Collection
- Enhanced Productivity from Store Associates

This document is meant to provide you with some basic information to bridge the gap between your ecommerce store and your brick and mortar stores.

Transaction level Integration

Transactions

This would post all transactions on a real time basis into CAS, adjusting quantity on hand in real time. If your ecommerce inventory is shared with a brick and mortar store as most are, then you will need to ensure that a pick list or email is generated so that the store can pull the product as it is sold. You can also test this against the most recent availabilities or test it against a threshold if you are unsure about how effectively the product can be removed from the store inventory.

Customers

Any customer created on the website or at a store would be integrated into a shared database, existing numbers can be linked if duplicates exist, but all new customers would have their own unique number across all channels.

Item Recommendations

It is likely that your current site has a recommendation engine already, you can elect to use the retailcloud recommendation API to suggest additional items, or you can pull a list of that customers histories across all channels and allow the ecommerce site to make recommendations based on those.

Abandoned carts

Abandoned/Saved carts can be shared into one database, so that they can be retrieved in any channel. This allows a customer to easily move from desktop to mobile to store.

Customer History

You can offer your customers the ability to retrieve their purchase history cross all channels to review items they purchase, create reviews or post them to social media.

Product Images

Integrating your images allows for your primary image to appear to associates using tablets or customers using mobile devices. When an image is changed on the web store it can automatically be updated across all channels

Reorder Status

This type of integration allows you to share information with a customer on if a product is backordered, or even to place advance orders on new product that is not in stock yet but scheduled for delivery.

Availabilities

On a periodic basis you can update the availabilities of all product, you can also elect to only update them at the time of a sale online, the drawback to that is that item activity at the store would not be reflected in that manner. We recommend that you update them daily or more often (depending on the volatility of your inventory levels). Keep in mind that depending on the level of your license you have an PAI threshold.

Customers

Depending on the number of new customers being added, you may also want to update the customer database online, or you can check the retailcloud database whenever a new customer is created to verify that there is no match. You will need to determine what the flow will be if a match exists, do you want to create a unique record and link them or do you want to just retrieve the previously created one.

Updates

The most crucial of the non transaction specific updates, this should run periodically and pick up all price promotion and product related changes and updates. This is critical as it allows you have a single point of entry when maintaining existing product or marketing plans as well as when you create new ones

Design Considerations

Retailcloud is PADSS certifid by the PCI Council, and so passwords are required to be changed periodically. Integrators should make sure that merchants have the ability to manage passwords for the website

There are API call limits that are enforced depending on the license level. The availabilities, the get updates and customer updates should be configurable so that the merchant can modify the frequency if needed.

There should be a configurable threshold level, ideally that if the item hits that level it would show "Out of Stock" or "Back Ordered" as the case may be.

In the event of any API delays or unavailability at check out, there will be a configurable (2 second by default) timeout and the transaction flow continues. Transactions that were not posted for this reason should be synced up at the time of the cron job or when the next successful connection has been made

Email alert to support@retailcloud.com in the event that an API connection fails or times out

Getting Started

Thing about how you would answer the following questions

a) Your transactions will be updated in real tie, do you want to check for quantities before the cart is processed (add 1 second for that) ?
b) In the event that there is some delay in processing the API how long should the customer wait (timeout threshold) before the ecommerce database availabilities are used and the transaction continued?
c) Will customer records from the database be updated at the time of each transaction or will they be done on a periodic bases.
d) If customer records are updated on a periodic basis how often will that be?
e) If customer records are updated while the cart is being processed, this will have to be done before the transaction is posted, think about the timeout thresholds you want to set.
f) Will you be using the items from the ecommerce application only or will you be incorporating the recommendations from retailcloud as well?
g) Weill recommendations from retailcloud be obtained on each product view, or only when the consumer is trying to close the cart?
h) Will you want to consolidate all the abandoned carts so that they can be retrieved later from any store?
i) Will you want customers to retrieve their activity across all channels from the web store, this also means that they can retrieve it from their mobile phones.
j) Do you want to use the same product images across all channels?
k) Will you want to display backordered items
l) How often will you want to update the availabilities on the web site?
m) How often if at all will you want to update the customer records on the ecommerce database?

n) How often will you want the ecommerce store to pick up all the product, promotion and pricing updates from retailcloud.

o) Consider the number of daily API calls that you expect to generate.