

## The Human-Touch: E-Commerce Insights

### ABOUT THIS WHITE PAPER

This document examines the merits of Shop Assistant from an e-commerce perspective and from an in-store sales perspective. Outcomes from using Shop Assistant include an increase in online conversion rates, a reduction in retail infrastructure costs, less reliance on individual staff members and the ability to take advantage of the increasing trend towards online shopping. The target audience for this White Paper is the Chief Executive, Financial Controller, Marketing Manager and E-Commerce Manager.

### OPENING STATEMENTS

1. Online shopping in Australia is expected to exceed \$24 Billion by 2015.
2. Over 50% of Australia's 77,000 retail businesses have a website, but only one third accept orders online.
3. Retailers recognise the need to re-connect with their customers using online marketing strategies.
4. 98% of online shoppers leave an e-commerce website without completing their intended purchase.
5. Online shopping will either become an opportunity or a threat to your business.

### THE RETAIL CHALLENGE

#### Environment

In addition to the difficulty in recruiting, training and retaining competent in-store salespeople, recent research has revealed that Australian retailers feel that trading is getting more difficult and that retail sales are slowly declining.

This is due to numerous factors including parallel importing, online shopping, social media and an overabundance of internet shopping choices. High staff costs and product display costs exacerbate the plight of the retailer, coupled with declining foot traffic and increasing cost-per-square metre for prime locations.

#### Customer

Convenient online shopping is displacing retailer loyalty, just as online social networks are replacing personal relationships. People are able to shop online from the comfort of their home or office at a time and at a price that suits their specific needs.

Online shopping websites are entering the customer's "space" at an ever-increasing speed. Consumers want 24/7 access and instant gratification. Transportation costs, family commitments, parking unavailability, dual income working hours and personal time pressures are driving more people to the internet for products, services and connections.

#### Solution

The rapid acceptance of e-commerce and the increasing dollar return has birthed a plethora of software and hardware solutions. The challenge for the traditional retailer is to select and invest in the "right" solution. Many of the existing

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# SHOP ASSISTANT

## THE ART OF ONLINE SELLING

e-commerce offerings do not address the core values of successful retailing such as in-store shopper connection, brand loyalty and customer relationships.

## THE ONLINE CHALLENGE

### Environment

Online shopping sites are increasing and diversifying at an alarming rate. Money is being invested in website design, Facebook advertising, social referral networks, SEO strategies, product positioning and multimedia press releases. Even manufacturers and distributors are beginning to launch their own e-commerce sites in direct competition to their long established retail distribution network.

In an effort to increase web traffic and sales, money saved from traditional bricks and mortar promotions is often consumed in pay-per-click advertising, website management and social media updates.

### Customer

One of the key “success-factors” in bricks and mortar retail selling is the ability to “connect” with a person and “understand” their specific needs. A good salesperson will move the customer into the retailer’s relationship-framework in order to make them feel comfortable and more open to accept a recommendation for products or services.

Current e-commerce websites do not capitalise on this retail industry “success-factor”. Instead of building a relationship with an online user by asking questions, understanding their specific needs and recommending a product; e-commerce sites rely on enhanced search results, peer-to-peer referrals, colourful banners, product videos, one day discounts and online consumer loyalty programs.

### Solution

Shop Assistant is a software product purposely built to digitally replicate the in-store “connection” currently being enjoyed by a shopper in a traditional bricks and mortar environment. Through the use of tailored algorithms and the application of tried and tested selling methodologies, Shop Assistant is able to successfully bridge the gap between traditional retail selling and online shopping. This new technology innovation is called the “Human-Touch”.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE HUMAN-TOUCH

Aside from the advantage of location-based selling and support, the human-touch is one of the most important elements in any successful retail environment. Despite the inherent difficulties and costs involved in retaining competent salespeople, it is an accepted fact that human-touch selling is still the most successful way to sell.

It is also accepted that traditional retail human-touch selling often results in a “successful” sales outcome, but not necessarily a “profitable” sales outcome. Shop Assistant is able to consistently and cost effectively build a human-

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For more information: [OnlineShopAssistant.com](http://OnlineShopAssistant.com)

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touch relationship with an online customer because it is not reliant on a random chat session, an over paid salesperson or focused on an out of date product promotion.

### THE LACK OF HUMAN-TOUCH ON THE INTERNET

As online sales continue to climb more retailers are building an e-commerce shop window as part in their marketing and sales strategy. Research reveals that a majority of people are not comfortable with the new e-commerce sites (90%-98% of online shoppers leave without completing the purchase) due to confusion, poor user interface and the lack of human-touch.

### ATTEMPTS TO REPLICATE THE HUMAN-TOUCH ON THE INTERNET

Shopping websites are typically not human-friendly and rely on product selection by category and product recommendation based on the most popular sales to date. Online chat is being used by many organisations in an attempt to improve product selection, build confidence and to project a human-touch feeling to the end user. Unfortunately online chat is only as good as the salesperson who is chatting and suffers many of the same issues of staff retention, on-going expenses and product misrepresentation.

### SUCCESSFUL HUMAN-TOUCH ON THE INTERNET

Shop Assistant is the first product of its kind to successfully bridge the human-touch technology gap. At every phase of the design, development and implementation process, each Shop Assistant deployment is uniquely customised to the specific business requirements of the customer. The resulting online human-touch interface quickly establishes connection with the end-user and builds confidence via the intuitive product selection process. Product information is always accurate, in-store assistance is available online, brand value is highlighted and technical details are instantly accessible.

### MANAGEMENT REPORTING

Shop Assistant automatically monitors and tracks end-user interactions, providing retailers with accurate metrics for fine tuning and product promotions. Management reports are reviewed in conjunction with Shop Assistant personnel to ensure that the best possible sales methodology is being deployed and that Shop Assistant's unique human-touch technology is being delivered online to the end-user.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Shop Assistant was created to close the gap between traditional e-commerce and bricks and mortar retailer shopping. Having your best-salesperson available 24/7 on the retail floor is always desirable, but not physically possible, so it is important to use a system that replicates a successful in-store experience.

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## ABOUT SHOP ASSISTANT

Adoption of Shop Assistant has been rapid and successful, and is already being used by David Jones, Myers, Swann, Resene, Sleepyhead, and many more. Organisations running Shop Assistant report increased sales, improved dealer management, better management reporting and increased customer loyalty.

## ABOUT WIRED INTERNET GROUP

Shop Assistant is owned and managed by Wired Internet Group, a leading web developer with more than seventeen years of experience in web design, e-commerce and business analysis.

**CONTACT:** Mike Baddeley, Chief Executive Officer: [Mike@wired.co.nz](mailto:Mike@wired.co.nz)

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