



WILL CLICK AND COLLECT SERVICES STILL BE WIDELY USED AFTER THE PANDEMIC?

In use before the pandemic, click and collect services have been a valid lifeline while stores are stricter, possibly closed, and certainly safer for consumers. However, a question will arise for retailers, *“would shoppers still use the service at the rate they currently do when they’re allowed to freely go to the store?”*

As a larger number of retailers started to use this strategy because of COVID, we have to wonder if these services will continue at the rate they’re offered. There may be no universal answer to the question. The definition of what click and collect is will probably depend on the product purchased and this also seems to be different in lots of locations around the world.

WHAT IS CLICK TO COLLECT?

Click to Collect is defined as a service where customers can order items remotely, online, or over the phone and pick them up from an agreed location, typically at the retailer's store. How these services function is very different based on your location in the world and the type of items you’re purchasing. This service was seen as a way to drive traffic to retail outlets, but also for customers to get their items without a delivery fee.





HOW DOES CLICK AND COLLECT WORK?

In the case of Amazon, these are lockers or designated convenience stores where the customer shows their phone and the locker either opens, or the attendant will collect your package.

For IKEA and many supermarkets, you can place your whole order online and select a day to pick up. You park in a designated location and a team member will bring your goods to your car. At this point, you can discuss any missing items, exchange goods, and have them pack for you.

With most phone retailers, you order online and it's sent to your local store. The device isn't ready to pick up until it's delivered from the warehouse to the store. You just show your ID and the associate will hand over your phone.

As you can see, most services are not the same day and, depending on the brand, can take a few days to reach the 'pick-up' location.

[Speak with KNOWTHM to help you to offer pick up within an hour here.](#)

WHY ARE CLICK AND COLLECT SERVICES OFFERED?

Before COVID, click and collect has been little more than a gimmick designed to save delivery and inventory expense. After all, what is the real advantage for a shopper when using this type of service? Is it convenient?

In consumer electronics and phone retail sectors (and even in the big box sector), for example, the product would have been purchased online and the customer will then pick it up in a store of their choice, typically the one closest to them. The product would be shipped by a third party to the store where it would be picked up by the customer a couple of days later.





It's hard to see any convenience in such practice for a client. Here's why:

- No time gain, as the product would take just as much time to get to the store as to get home.
- No shopping experience benefit, [as the product would be picked up with very little human interaction](#)

If there's so little gain for the shopper, retailers must've hoped they were the ones who were benefiting from offering click and collect services. What were they hoping for? Surely, retailers want a reduction in shipping costs and increased traffic to their store? It has long been a retail principle that increased footfall into your stores directly leads to additional sales. Therefore, shoppers who walk into a store to pick up their purchase, and who would not have gone to the store otherwise, are supposed to buy something else while they're waiting. Based on this, retailers implemented click to collect services into their purchase journeys in the hope consumers would increase revenue.

ARE THERE ANY PROBLEMS WITH CLICKS AND COLLECT SERVICES?

According to [Statisa.com](#) in their research in 2020:

- 50% of expensive items, like phones, are returned after being purchased online.
- 20% of all online purchases are also returned.
- Return rate of purchases made in Retail are between 8-10%.

The problem being customers aren't being supported through their purchase journey. Not being able to experience their device before making an online purchase means they are more likely to be unsatisfied and return their phone. When compared to the retail rates, this shows having a sales associate support the shopper through the journey results in higher satisfaction, good for your NPS Score, and reduced returns.





Reduced returns means more people on your phone network, using your services and less refurbished devices.

WHY DID CLICK TO COLLECT SERVICES BECOME 'THE NORM' DURING COVID?

To state the obvious, during the pandemic, click and collect services were widely deployed to allow customers to buy products with minimal interactions. Be that with store teams as well as other consumers. Restaurants are one example, where meals have to be delivered or picked up. However, the same rules have been applied to many sectors of nonessential retail. To limit interaction, human experience is certainly not part of the mix during this time.

WHAT WILL POST-PANDEMIC CLICK AND COLLECT SERVICES LOOK LIKE?

Of course, we're never 100% certain, but it is probably safe to say that click and collect services will evolve differently within different sectors of retail. For example, some areas naturally involve more store experience than others, like phone, banking, and automobile. Within these specific environments, customers are expecting the store and its team to play an essential role in their purchase journey.





Almost everybody has once been in a phone store purchasing a device at some point, therefore, we know what it feels like to be a shopper in this environment. Customers are not merely walking into a store and picking up their chosen phone from the shelf, like in a grocery store. Most mobile phones are expensive and complex. It's not only trying to decipher the features of the phone, but it's about the look, the weight, and how it feels in your hand. On top of this, there's a two-year contract to consider which is just as personal as the shopper. Most people who walk into a phone store have not necessarily made up their mind, and are still considering their purchase, and the experience they'll receive in-store will help them finalize their decision.

WHAT DO KNOWTHM'S STUDIES SUGGEST ABOUT THE FUTURE OF CLICK AND COLLECT?

In our recent study, we confirmed this. Customers who walked into the phone store are looking for an experience, perhaps even more than a product. When shopping for a phone online, 82% of shoppers said they would prefer to purchase their phone in a store rather than to order it online, especially if they could get their product within an hour. Why might you ask?!

Looking into the results of the survey, people gave us four main reasons, in almost identical proportions, as to why they prefer going to a store:

- Customers want to get the product quickly. [Instant gratification](#) is one of the most important aspects of post-pandemic retail.
- Shoppers want to see the product before purchasing it.
- They need advice from the sales representative. Although shoppers want the product quickly, they've not finalized their choice when they walk into the store.
- For customers who need support with technology, they want to leave the store with a fully functional phone.





With these results, we can see that shoppers have not finalized their choices and are looking for extensive store experience to help them complete their transactions. Bearing this in mind, it is hard to foresee how pre-pandemic, counter pickup type of click collect service, will thrive in the post-pandemic world.

The other important perspective is that of the store team. Do sales associates prefer to speak to a customer walking in the store to pick up a phone as part of click and collect, or do they prefer to serve a customer who is considering options?

The odds of upselling are far greater when the customer is still considering options than collecting their purchase from a store. Having a sales representative involved is still crucial to the overall performance of a phone store.

From both perspectives, click and collect services do not offer a bright future for retail experience, if they only allow a customer to pick up an already purchased device.

WHAT SHOULD CLICK AND COLLECT SERVICES LOOK LIKE?

Click and Collect services should be designed to support the needs of the customer and the in-store team. If a customer walks into the store not set on their purchase, isn't a well-designed service in-store going to allow them to make their final decisions?

A well-designed service should ease the journey of shoppers as well as reinforcing an enjoyable and valuable experience. Our studies show that customers dislike waiting. The NPS score received by a customer drops from 10 to zero when a customer waits between 13 and 20 minutes of wait time! However, we found out the average wait time in a typical phone store, during peak hours, is around 35 minutes. This means we're not only letting down customers but also the perception of the store drops too, potentially harming how you're recommended to others.





However, if we were to consider that online shoppers prefer the in-store experience, especially when it allows them to get their product within one hour, this is the perfect alternative service!

This service allows a phone shopper to meet a sales representative in a store, without waiting to complete a phone purchase all in less than an hour. This new service would not only keep shoppers a lot more satisfied but would also drive additional traffic to the store. This traffic is customers who are already 'warm' in the purchase journey and need some further, real-life support. These 'warm' customers are entering the store, wherein most circumstances have a higher footfall to conversation rate.

Is this a click and collect service? Sort of. The only difference is customers are completing their purchase with a sales associate rather than 'adding to basket'. This isn't what we'd normally consider as click and collect service, but isn't this what both shoppers and sales representatives are looking for?

[This is exactly what KNOWthm is offering with SmartQueue.](#)

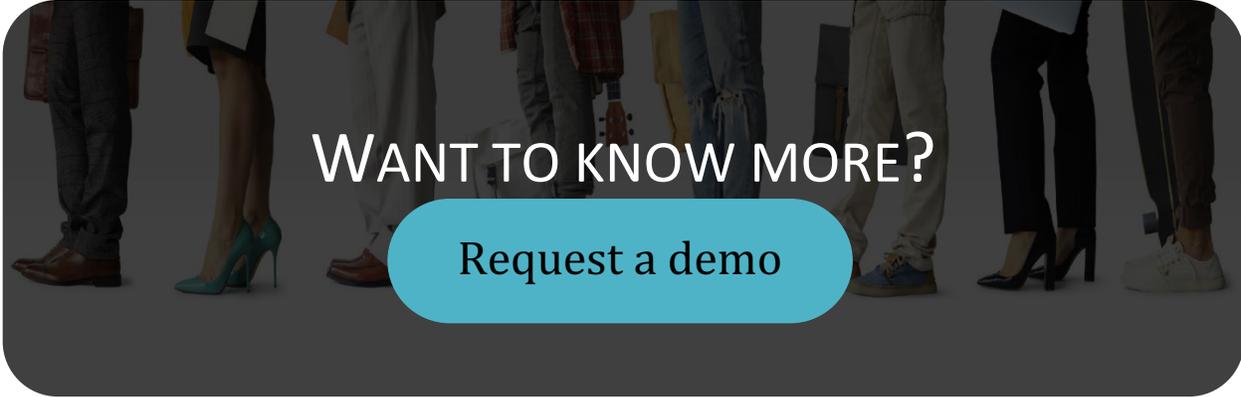
SmartQueue allows customers to purchase a phone within one hour at a phone store nearby. It can be accessed by any touchpoint, your app service, your website, advertisements, or in-store too. The system brings the customer to the store just in time to meet the associate, removing the dreaded wait time.

The customer gets all they want from this service. They can experience the product, confirm their choice with a sales representative, purchase the product, have it set up and ready to use all before leaving the store.

The best part for the customer is that they get to leave with their new phone just one hour after they've decided to go to the store.

This is not click and collect, this is SmartQueue.





WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Request a demo

