



E-Commerce Logistics & Fulfillment: Delivering the Goods

By Deborah L. Bayles

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Payment processing, order fulfillment, product delivery, and other back-end logistics represent the messiest parts of e-Commerce -- but they are also the most crucial challenges in building customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. In this book, one of the world's leading e-Business logistics experts covers every element of back-end logistics, delivering unprecedented insight for decision-making -- and practical techniques that work. Discover world-class solutions for "end-to-end logistics": providing order visibility and service continuity from the buy button to the final destination. Learn today's best practices for order processing and customization, payment processing, handling taxation, shipping, tracking, handling customer inquiries, accounting and inventory control, as well as the unique "reverse logistics" associated with product returns. E-Commerce Logistics and E-Fulfillment includes a complete chapter on global logistics; another on implementing back-end databases; and another on testing, implementation, and rollout. It also presents detailed, real-world case studies from the author's extensive consulting experience.

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

PrefaceIntroduction

Almost 40 percent of the cost of selling online takes place after the customer presses the Buy button. At that moment-when the visitor has just become a customer-the most crucial part of the relationship just begins. Payment processing, order fulfillment, product delivery, and product returns handling are the largest gaps in electronic commerce today. These important but unglamorous, messy, and often expensive functions are not optional in true e-business. They can make or break your customer relationships, profitability, and future business.

Identifying and managing these functions, termed e-commerce logistics and e-fulfillment, is the subject of this book.

Until now, most merchants thought electronic commerce was achieved by hooking an online catalog to one of the many electronic shopping cart packages, then waiting for orders to be emailed to them. Not one key electronic commerce vendor mentions that the real work for the merchant actually starts when the order is received. This book demystifies a process that is sure to be new for most B2B and B2C online merchants today.

Here are other features that distinguish this book.

Forrester Research says that half of all business will be online by 2002. Business-to-business e-commerce will grow to \$1.3 trillion by 2003, from \$43 billion in 1998-yet until now there hasn't been a single book that addresses the unique challenges of e-logistics and e-fulfillment in the context of electronic commerce. This is the first book to do so.

This book provides practical, proven techniques to assure your customers receive the products that they order from your Internet site in a timely, efficient, traceable way.

You also find out the ins and outs of reverse logistics (handling product returns)—or how to outsource these functions cost-effectively.

Useful tools such as planning templates, checklists, and spreadsheets are included throughout the book and on a Web site.

This book is aimed at technically savvy executives, information technology professionals, and other enterprise leaders who are faced with the challenge of delivering the goods their organizations sell online. Whether the reader is an electronic commerce or logistics practitioner or provider, this book will be an extremely useful addition to the "How To" books of his or her library. **The Organization of This Book**

The first three chapters of the book describe the issues and tasks surrounding setting up and costing an electronic commerce infrastructure to handle e-logistics and fulfillment. Important FTC rules and regulations, defining your business processes, and calculating potential return on investment are among the many topics discussed. An infrastructure planning template and an ROI calculation spreadsheet are provided to give you a running start.

Chapters 4 through 7 tackle the challenges that take place after the Buy button is clicked. The topics of order processing, taxes, online fraud, order fulfillment, shipping, and customer service are presented and a number of checklists are provided, including a useful chart to help you determine what is taxable.

Chapters 8 through 10 cover the convergence of e-commerce and logistics on a global scale, including taxation of international e-commerce transactions, emerging data exchange standards, and reverse logistics—a field unto itself.

The final two chapters of the book wrap things up by addressing whether or not to outsource the entire e-commerce logistics and e-fulfillment processes, and offers two user perspectives by pioneers in the field.

Contact Information

Although I have frequent opportunities to teach and speak throughout the world, I'm not an academician or researcher—I'm out in the trenches full-time, just as you are. I always appreciate your real-world suggestions, comments, and other feedback to continue to improve the book's usefulness. You can reach me by email at deborah@bayles, or stop by the Web site I've set up, bayles, to check out the book-specific tools I've posted there and to contribute your experiences and advice. Enjoy!

From the Back Cover

The first e-commerce book that tells you how to get product orders from the Buy button to the doorstep—quickly, cost effectively, and hassle free!

The first complete e-commerce guide to e-logistics and fulfillment!

Almost 40% of the cost of selling online takes place after the customer presses the Buy button. At that moment—when the visitor becomes a customer—the most crucial part of the relationship begins. Payment processing, order fulfillment, product delivery, and product returns handling are the largest gaps in electronic commerce today. These essential but unglamorous, messy, and often expensive functions are not optional in true e-business. They can make or break your customer relationships, profitability, and future business.

Identifying and managing these functions, termed e-commerce logistics and e-fulfillment, are the subjects of this book.

Inside, find helpful advice on how to:

- Assure your customers receive the products that they order from your Internet site in a timely, efficient, traceable way
- Set up a rock-solid e-commerce infrastructure and calculate the return on investment
- Evaluate shippers and online shipping tools
- Tackle payment processing, online fraud, and U.S. and global taxation issues
- Provide superior customer service
- Evaluate third-party logistics providers and select outsource fulfillment partners
- Handle the inevitable product returns (reverse logistics)

Useful tools such as planning templates, checklists, and spreadsheets are included throughout the book and at www.bayles.com. Whether you're an electronic commerce or logistics practitioner or provider, this book will be an extremely useful addition to the "How To" books of your library.

About the Author

DEBORAH L. BAYLES has been in the software industry since 1979 in marketing and technical management consulting roles for Fortune 500 companies. She is the Founder and CEO of BridgeCommerce.com, Inc., an online and off-line venture designed to assist companies with the essential backend/logistics of e-commerce. She also founded NETouch Communications, Inc., in 1994, a company that builds commerce-enabled extranets.

Bayles also teaches e-commerce courses at the UC-Irvine and the Singapore Institute of Management. Her first book, *Extranets: Building the Business-to-Business Web*, was published by Prentice Hall PTR in 1998.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kathleen Land:

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John Tammaro:

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