

# SURVEY FINDS 'SAVING THE SALE' IS KEY

Sterling Commerce has announced the results of its annual research into consumer shopping behaviour across retail channels.

The online study, conducted by Ipsos MORI and carried out across the UK, France and Germany, indicates that the ability to process orders on the spot in a store, regardless of whether the product is available at the time, is the foremost requirement for retailers in improving a consumers' shopping experience when they are in a store.

In all three countries, the most important features in improving peoples' overall shopping experience when they are shopping in store is to have more staff to assist with product knowledge and the staff always being able to locate a product at another store and reserve for home delivery.

If shopping online, consumers indicate 'accurate product stock availability' and 'easier ways of ordering and receiving items' are two of the most important features in improving their shopping experience. The

survey highlights that retailers are missing a trick if they are not able to close sales when and where the customer turns up to buy, and 'save the sale,' wherever that may be.

"Many retailers believe they are multi-channel but fail to invest in their most important channel – the store," said David Hogg, retail industry executive at Sterling Commerce. "Lack of internal inventory visibility means they cannot easily save the sale of customers who still experience a stubborn percentage of out of stocks. There is broad industry consensus that cross-channel consumers spend more and are more profitable. However, they are used to choosing from expansive online product assortments, even if drop-ship suppliers hold the inventory. This poses a stock visibility challenge that almost no European retailer has successfully addressed to date."

Hogg added: "The survey results show the importance of the experience retailers can provide instore and follow-up in the call centre, often after shoppers also have interacted online."