



Web Delivery Choices Mean Sainsbury's Argos Tie-up Can Create an Amazon Rival; but Beleaguered BHS Falls Short

Global delivery experts Fastlane International says High Street stores with attractive web sites and delivery options will succeed; but fragmented approaches will fail.

The battle for British retail has moved from the High Street to the web; with delivery options fast becoming as important to consumers as price. The global delivery expert [Fastlane International](#) says that the merger of Sainsbury's and Argos will create a powerful retail force; combining multi-channel sales with class leading delivery options. However it warns the fragmented approach to online sales by beleaguered department store BHS - which hands a significant part of its web sales to a white label site - spreads confusion for shoppers.

Says David Jinks MILT, Head of Consumer Research at Fastlane International: 'The take-over by Sainsbury's of Argos has its critics; but Sainsbury's knows the groceries market is not a major growth area; whereas the combined Sainsbury's Argos operation would forge a group offering over 100,000 products.'

Customers expect to be able to buy offline and online and Sainsbury's argues the takeover of Home Retail - which owns Argos and Habitat - gives them a unique business in the UK, with over 2,000 shops: something which Amazon doesn't have. Sainsbury's could also benefit from Argos delivery fulfilment expertise. It's pioneering same day Fast Track service, 7 days a week, offers exactly the customer experience people now expect.

David argues this is all in rather stark contrast with BHS. 'It's welcome news that BHS' creditors voted to support its rent cut plans today. However it still faces some problems. Not the least of which is that its delivery options are not inspiring. BHS' standard deliveries for Easter (which it defines as Thursday 24 March) closed at 4pm on Saturday 19 March for example. And its web site can confuse consumers. For example buying larger items such as fridges take you away from [bhs.co.uk](#) to a white label site called BHS Direct: which is actually run and fulfilled by a different company entirely, Buy It Direct.'

Customers are warned they are heading over to a 'sister site' and that 'Any events or promotions on [BHS.co.uk](#) or [BHS.furniture.co.uk](#) do not apply to the BHS Direct site;' followed with the not entirely integrated message: 'Not to worry, any item currently in your basket will be saved for you to purchase when you return'.

Says David: 'Critics may be focussing currently on the lack-lustre feel of BHS' brick and mortar stores and its high rents; but its e-commerce proposition is not exactly integrated and seamless either'.

For more information about the changes in e-commerce over Fastlane's 30 year history and the latest developments see <https://www.wedelivertheworld.co.uk/blog/general-news/fastlane-looks-back-to-the-future/>

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