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## Retail fulfillment makeover: Speed, assurance and transparency

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*Makeover: How Mobile Flipped the Shopping Cart, by Stephan Schambach*

By [Stephan Schambach](#)

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Fulfillment is the key battleground in the transformation of retail for the mobile age. Consumers do not care where your stock is located. What they want is for their purchases to arrive quickly and conveniently.

While Amazon has raised the expectations of consumers when it comes to convenience, retailers who use mobile technology can meet and exceed those expectations. Here is part 2 of an excerpt from my new book, "[Makeover: How Mobile Flipped the Shopping Cart](#)," about how to turn bricks and mortar into your biggest asset for fulfillment.

Amazon is the biggest question mark in retail. Its influence is only growing.

From its humble roots as an online bookstore, Amazon now launches its own brands and is even expected to emerge as the largest clothing retailer in the United States. Some brands are scared. Some are confident. Some are ignoring Amazon's moves.

We believe it is important to pay attention to the company's business, but, more importantly, to the expectations it sets with consumers.

Today, consumers expect quick and seamless delivery, payment and customer service on almost any purchase. Brands big and small are now competing with these expectations.

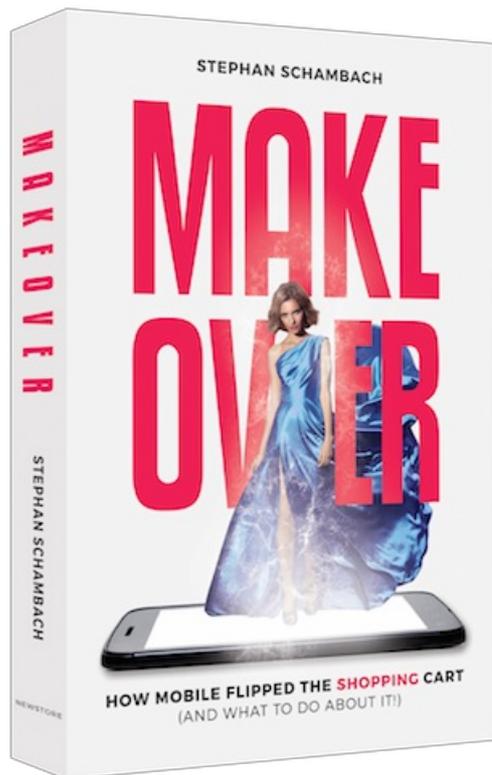
Brands are not fighting to beat Amazon. That would be futile. Instead, brands need to rise to the level of convenience that Amazon has led millions of customers to expect.

To do this, retailers need to differentiate their experience and leverage their physical footprints to speed up delivery and unlock as much inventory as possible. In other words, they need to focus on flipping fulfillment.

Amazon has vulnerabilities when it comes to moving merchandise. Jet.com perceived that many of Amazon's products are shipped in a less than economical manner.

Jet.com developed a dynamic formula that takes into account factors such as basket size, shipping options and merchandise proximity to buyers.

Using that, Jet.com was able to undercut Amazon in price. This clever move helped convince Walmart to pay \$3 billion to acquire Jet.com.



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There is room for other retailers to challenge Amazon.

As mobile has flipped the shopping cart and disrupted retail, it has opened new opportunities to challenge Amazon's monopoly on convenience.

Many of these opportunities occur after the sale. This requires rethinking the fulfillment concept, and it starts by looking at fulfillment not just as a physical process but also as part of the customer experience, one that can be enhanced and leveraged.

When retailers begin to see fulfillment as an occasion for an emotional bond rather than just a logistics process, the opportunities appear.

The chief enabler of satisfactory fulfillment is the native mobile application. There is tremendous potential for bringing shoppers, stores and delivery mechanisms together on the same point on the planet, at the right time.

Some enterprising retailers are already experimenting with crowd-sourced services such as UberRUSH and Deliv, though for most this opportunity is untapped.

Research for our [Mobile Retail Report](#) showed that last-mile delivery of digital purchases is rare, with only 2 percent of retailers offering that option to urban and suburban locations within a few hours of purchase.

Growing pains still need to be worked through, but the notion of a parcel converging with a customer on a street corner, in a coffee shop, or wherever the customer happens to be at any given moment is not so outrageous.

Shoppers' own mobile technology including geolocation, QR codes and an app connected to the dispatching store has the capacity to smooth out the intricacies of the handoff.

The payments, confirmations and any other retail fulfillment details travel through the ether. All the driver has to do is locate, identify and confirm the recipient, deliver the goods, and move on.

WITH DETAILS yet to be worked out, this highly mobile, personal and agile fulfillment of the purchase process holds great potential for any retailer who wishes to beat Amazon at its own game by delivering an even better and more

personal level of convenience simply as a dividend of being small.



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