

RETAIL

Amazon service poised to popularize in-car delivery

April 25, 2018



Amazon is expanding its delivery services to consumers' cars. Image credit: Amazon

By SARAH JONES

Ecommerce platform Amazon is upping the ante on shipping services with the debut of in-car delivery.

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After convincing consumers to open their homes for deliveries with Amazon Key, the retailer is now expanding its capabilities to placing packages in shoppers' cars. In recent years, Amazon has set the trends in ecommerce services, which may turn vehicle deliveries into a mainstream expectation.

"As home delivery continues to accelerate, many consumers have reported stolen packages from their doorsteps," said David Naumann, vice president of marketing at [Boston Retail Partners](#), Boston. "Amazon and other delivery services have begun taking photos of packages delivered to doorsteps to confirm delivery, but that doesn't prevent thieves.

"Offering in-car delivery is another option to provide greater security for package delivery."

Mr. Naumann is not affiliated with Amazon, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Amazon](#) was reached for comment.

Opening doors

Amazon accustomed consumers to free expedited shipping, forcing retailers to adopt similar services to meet shoppers' expectations ([see story](#)).

Last year, the retailer rolled out Amazon Key. Members of Amazon's Prime service can purchase a kit that includes an indoor security camera and a smart lock to enable the service, which places packages inside consumers' front doors ([see story](#)).

Furthering this idea, Prime members can now use Amazon Key to have items delivered to the inside of their car when they are parked in a public place.

Available at launch on Cadillac, Chevrolet, Buick and Volvo models, Amazon Key In-Car delivery uses On-Star or Volvo On Call to unlock the vehicle on demand. Consumers who have an eligible model can link their Amazon Key

mobile application to their connected car account to begin using the in-car delivery.

Prime members can then select in-car delivery as an option at checkout. The free service is available with two-day, one-day and same-day shipping.



Amazon Key In-Car delivery. Image credit: Amazon

Through the Amazon Key app, consumers can see whether they are parked close enough to the delivery location, get notifications on estimated delivery times and monitor when their car was unlocked and locked.

Amazon's service uses an encrypted authentication process to ensure that the right delivery driver is at the correct location before unlocking the trunk or car.

Consumers who were able to try the service ahead of its official launch chose to have in-car delivery for a variety of reasons. A mom preferred to have items placed in her car so deliveries would not disturb her children's naptime, while a business owner opted to have personal packages delivered to his car while at work to more easily separate them from his professional orders sent to the office.

"Since launching Amazon Key last November, we've safely delivered everything from cameras to collectable coins inside the home," said Peter Larsen, vice president of delivery technology at Amazon, in a statement. "Customers have also told us they love features like keyless guest access and being able to monitor their front door from anywhere with the Amazon Key App.

"In-car delivery gives customers that same peace of mind and allows them to take the Amazon experience with them," he said. "And, with no additional hardware or devices required, customers can start ordering in-car delivery today."

Amazon Key, Now With In-Car Delivery

Amazon recently revealed that it has 100 million Prime subscribers. While Amazon Key In-Car delivery is limited to certain marques at launch, the retailer is planning to roll it out to more automakers' vehicles in the future.

"As consumers begin to embrace in-car delivery options, we will see luxury retailers adopt similar delivery options," Mr. Naumann said. "It will also become more pervasive when a greater percentage of cars are equipped with the connected car service plans that are required for compatibility with the Amazon Key app."

Driving ecommerce

Amazon has previously partnered with other automakers to open up in-vehicle delivery.

In 2013, German automaker Audi worked to streamline the package delivery process for its owners with a pilot program that delivers parcels to the trunk of a recipient's car.

Launched in partnership with Amazon Prime and DHL Parcel, "Audi connect easy delivery" aims to eliminate the issues typically associated with deliveries, such as packages being returned to the depot or tagged for redelivery when a consumer is not home. This marked the first time that Amazon had offered a delivery service directly to consumers' vehicles ([see story](#)).

As luxury increasingly moves online, retailers are working to make the delivery of goods match the service expected from upscale brands.

Chinese ecommerce giant JD.com is giving the online luxury shopping experience a more personal touch.

For its JD Luxury Express, the retailer has trained a special team of employees, who will shuttle luxury purchases to consumers' doors in style. Designed to more closely replicate the individualized experience expected from bricks-

and-mortar stores, JD's service aims to ensure that luxury products are handled in a manner that reflects the brand ([see story](#)).

As far as in-vehicle delivery, consumer responses may be mixed.

"Consumer adoption of in-car delivery will resonate with some, but not all consumers," Boston Retail Partners' Mr. Naumann said. "Some people may not feel comfortable providing a delivery person access to their vehicle, especially if there is anything of value in their car.

"However, many consumers will likely embrace the added convenience and security of in-car delivery offers," he said. "It is all about providing consumers multiple options and consumers love choices."

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