

## **Can You Fit a Garden Shed in Your Letterbox?**

*Delivering Real Customer Value is Not Magic.*

Yes you can.

While this might seem like a crazy rhetorical question, it was the basis for the establishment of what on the surface looks to be an impossible business. In the process of establishing Sheds4Less, the foundation team discovered there were numerous ways to deliver real customer value, while at the same time optimizing the logistics chain to deliver a truly low retail price.

No compromise is the key.

Multichannel retailing is the buzzword of the day. Industry commentators are presenting multichannel retail, or even omni-channel retailing, whatever that is, as the panacea of the floundering bricks and mortar retail industry. This is just not the case. History, as always, will be the judge, and I predict that multichannel retail will be consigned to the buzzword dust bin of time.

Any combination of bricks and mortar and online retailing will result in compromise. Multichannel retailers serve many masters, and guess what, none of these are the customer. Pure online or pure bricks and mortar retailers have an opportunity to optimize their offers to delivery true customer value. The key decision that today's retailers need to make is what channel will deliver the best value to their customer and the best long term return to their stakeholders. There is no doubt that there will be casualties for those that make the wrong strategic decision.

Garden sheds must rate as one of the most challenging products to present to the consumer from a retail point of view. They are a low interest, logistically difficult product that requires a degree of specialist knowledge in the sales process and are possibly only purchased once in a customer's lifetime. Arguably the perfect product for a pure online or pure bricks and mortar play, but the worst for a multichannel approach. Designing a garden shed range so that it fits within the constraints of both the online and bricks and mortar sales channels involves compromises that result in the destruction of customer value. You cannot optimize product design, package design, range width and depth, logistics support, and customer service to serve two masters. One product, two systems just does not work.

Tomorrows successful retailers will be those companies who critically evaluate what constitutes customer value in their industry and then choose the channel to market that delivers real customer value.

To read more about the Sheds4Less project visit the following link:

[Delivering customer value at the best price as a garden shed retailer.](#)

Alex Cochran

Alex Cochran is a veteran of the Australian retail industry and the founder of Sheds4Less. Sheds4Less is a project business designed to demonstrate that you can deliver real customer value in the competitive Australian retail landscape by challenging the industry norms and focussing on and optimizing a pure play channel to market.

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