



Advertise to your customers where they shop

What is NEAR?

NEAR was founded to reconnect shoppers to the retailers in their community. Our research showed that for most online transactions a local alternative was available, usually for a similar price. The challenge many shoppers reported was finding those products as well as their preference for the convenience of delivery. NEAR's software tools are built to show people shopping online where they can buy equivalent products locally and get them back into stores.

The new challenge for retailers

The shift towards e-commerce was well-underway before the start of the pandemic, but it accelerated rapidly as the lockdowns came into effect. Shoppers turned to the internet for nearly everything and retailers had to pivot quickly to expand their online presence. E-commerce versions of brick and mortar stores were built and deployed at an amazing pace and everyone anxiously waited for business to return to "the new normal".

Those who had moved online very quickly discovered that they had a new, even larger problem. Getting found on the internet is an expensive proposition. Unless they are fortunate enough to occupy a niche, most companies struggle to be found online unless their customers are specifically seeking them out. For retailers just starting to take on Amazon and the rest of the e-commerce marketplace, this is a harsh reality. Expensive real estate, radio ads and paper flyers are of little use online. Getting found by new customers on the internet is next to impossible.

Meet your customers where (and when) they shop

While laying the groundwork for NEAR we carried out several surveys to better understand how and why people shopped online. Most wanted to support local stores but found the convenience and simplicity of shopping online to be too tempting.¹

The key finding from this research was that more than 60% of shoppers go to Amazon when they want to buy a product online. A further 10% go straight to another website. Less than 20% bother with Google or another search engine when they need to find a product. That means that you have no chance to advertise your products to at least 70% of shoppers online, no matter how much you spend.

Amazon doesn't have programs that retailers can leverage to advertise to their shoppers. But when a shopper is running NEAR's software we are able to insert products directly into the page the shopper is viewing. This means you can advertise the products you sell only to customers who are actively searching for them instead of wasting your marketing dollars.

What does the software do?

Users running our software can continue to shop online, but when they search for a product that happens to be available from a local retailer, we insert that product into their web page. As an example, if a shopper searches Amazon for a hammer, we search our database of stores in their

¹¹ To read more about the surveys we conducted and what we learned, download our whitepaper "Winning Back Online Shoppers" from <https://near.shop/>

area for hammers and add them to the Amazon results page.

When a shopper clicks on our link for the locally available hammer, we send them to a page with all the details about the hammer as well as the store selling it – hours of operation, address, phone number, pick-up and delivery options, etc.

Completing the solution: delivery

Connecting online shoppers to products in their community is only part of the solution. Many will still expect the same level of convenience they enjoy online, and for most that means delivery.

Delivery continues to be a challenge for most retailers. If they offer the service at all they find it difficult to do competitively. Most are not set-up to pick-and-pack orders or to prepare shipments. No one has access to the pricing and performance of the Amazon Prime infrastructure. For local deliveries, we are partnering with an array of next generation delivery companies to offer same-day (or faster) delivery options that work like the restaurant delivery apps. Packaging requirements are simplified and shipments aren't priced by weight – drastically reducing shipping cost and complexity.

Price matching

One of the most common reasons shoppers give for choosing e-commerce over brick and mortar stores is the belief that prices are lower online. While that is sometimes the case, our research has not found it to be universally true. On items priced over \$100 we found major price discrepancies (greater than 5%) to be very rare, and on products under \$50 prices locally sourced items were often cheaper than their online equivalents.

There are times when e-commerce sites are cheaper though, and in those cases it may make sense for a company to price-match. This process is frustrating for many consumers, with most reporting that they do not trust stores to follow their own policies. Retailers know that getting a customer into their store is often worth giving up some margin on one item, so we have created a way to price-match in real time. That means shoppers never have to worry about going through

the process in-store; they're given a coupon for the discounted price before they visit, simplifying the transaction and giving you the opportunity to win the rest of their business. These coupons are only valid for in-store shopping and have very short redemption periods – usually 24-48 hours.

Real time price matching allows stores to avoid changing their advertised selling prices while still winning business from online competitors.

Joining the NEAR eco-system

Our goal is to make joining our program as easy as possible for retailers. We are creating integrations for all the most popular point of sale (POS) software suites and e-commerce platforms. Getting set-up is inexpensive and is often completed with only a few clicks. Even if you run your store from a spreadsheet, we can support your company.

The key to success on our platform above all else is accuracy. Shoppers who run our software demand that the products advertised to them be presented with accurate price and availability. If they choose to support a local retailer, they will not be back if they find that they cannot rely on what they found online. Inventory, promotions, pricing and store details must be kept up to date.

Once initial set-up is complete most companies' data will synchronize automatically and very little work will be needed to stay current on the platform.

Learn more

We have a large selection of white papers available on our website covering all aspects of our software and programs. See our products in action, access webinars and engage with our sales team. Learn more at <https://near.shop/>

NEAR Technologies is a Canadian technology start-up built to bring online shoppers back to brick and mortar stores. We believe that e-commerce giants are damaging regional economies by mining wealth and giving nothing back. Our tools and programs are built to help retailers directly engage with shoppers in their own communities as efficiently as possible.