Wholesale Industry Dominating UK Ecommerce Sales

Wednesday 8 January, 2020

The latest Ecommerce and ICT Activity Report by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) highlights the significant revenue growth wholesalers are seeing as a result of ecommerce sales.

The wholesale industry continues to dominate UK ecommerce sales according to the latest ONS report which shows website sales reached £108 billion in 2018. This amount is twice as much as the retail industry, which only recorded £54 billion, and is a 34% increase from the £77 billion recorded in 2017.

Oporteo, who publish their own ecommerce growth index for the wholesale industry, are not surprised by these results. “Despite concerns around the impact of digital disruptors such as Amazon, wholesalers recognise the power of ecommerce and we are seeing them embrace the benefits it can provide,” said Andy Pratt, Business Development Executive for Oporteo. “The majority of wholesalers are investing in some form of ecommerce or making significant upgrades to their existing online platforms, and as a result, sales are rising.”

The annual ONS Ecommerce and ICT Activity Report is a statistical bulletin that outlines the value of ecommerce activity in the UK. It includes information about website and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) sales and the latest figures show 20.5% of turnover for businesses with over 10 employees was a result of these ecommerce channels. “This demonstrates ecommerce is playing a crucial role in business growth and competitive advantage,” said Andy.

The £108 billion revenue from website sales is a significant contributor to this ecommerce success. However, £118 billion of turnover in the wholesale industry was still a result of EDI sales in 2018. “As businesses continue to implement ecommerce websites, which are easier and more cost-effective to implement, we expect the gap between website sales and EDI sales to close,” explained Andy.

As 2020 begins, Oporteo believes ecommerce will continue to facilitate significant revenue growth across the wholesale industry. “The value of ecommerce sales is increasing every year. However, as the adoption of online sales channels increase, wholesalers will need to differentiate themselves to compete for customer’s attention and loyalty,” said Andy.

According to the ONS report, social media channels, blogs and content sharing platforms are becoming essential for increasing brand awareness. Particularly in the foodservice sector where 86% of businesses have embraced social media and are using it as a tool to interact with customers and recruit new employees. “Using online channels to publish content is an easy and cost-effective way for businesses to demonstrate that they understand customers’ needs and are willing to help them fulfil them,” said Andy. “Digital marketing is a valuable tool for maximising product visibility and it’s great to see more B2B businesses taking advantage of it.”

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