

Benefits of Bopis for retail and beyond

By [Michael Gewer](#)

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If you haven't heard of it already, take note: Bopis (buy online pick up in store) is transforming the face of South African retail, and it's coming soon to a store - or a mall - near you.



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Bopis offer retailers the perfect way to enhance the customer experience, drive in-store foot traffic and connect their offline and online experiences at a time when consumers are looking for a safer way to shop.

How it works: Customers do their shopping online, and once they've completed their purchases, they get an OTP or QR code on their smartphone that they use to open an electronic locker in the store.

Stores like Mr Price, Sportscene and Totalsports have been quick to install secure electronic lockers in their stores, enabling shoppers to click-and-collect their goods. Sandton City has implemented Drop & Shop lockers that let patrons securely store their shopping and personal items while eating out, going to the movies, or socialising.

Even though Bopis is not new, it's the perfect solution for our Covid-19 times. A [Digital Commerce 360 survey](#) published in August found that almost 44% of the top 500 US retailers with physical stores are offering this click-and-collect service, up from 7% before the pandemic.

For South African retailers under pressure due to reduced shopper traffic, it represents a creative way to tempt people back into stores and malls. International evidence suggests that Bopis has resulted in more than 40% upsell activities in-store: consumers come to collect their purchases, and inevitably end up buying something else as well.

Delivery cost savings is another key benefit for beleaguered retailers, but for consumers, it's all about speed and convenience.



Michael Gewer, CEO of VaultGroup

Opportunities for other markets

The integration of Bopis with electronic lockers holds significant opportunities for other market segments as well. For instance, public and private sector pharmacies can use the system for people who need to collect their chronic medication.

Instead of spending time waiting in line, a customer can easily use an OTP or QR code to open a secure locker and get their medicine at their convenience. Considering that patients can spend up to six hours waiting at government clinics to collect chronic medication, the potential is real.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing use cases involves government. With applications for the likes of passports and smart ID cards mainly taking place online, Bopis can significantly enhance government's e-citizen services. Instead of having people wait in line at Home Affairs or licensing departments to collect their cards or documentation, secure lockers can be used.

This will result in a significantly more efficient government process while mitigating against the risk of people having to unnecessarily wait in long queues.



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African growth

The potential for secure lockers on the rest of the continent is limitless. And with much of the awareness around the benefits of integrating Bopis with lockers being done thanks to Covid-19, people (and retailers) are more open to this way of collecting their online purchases.

Secure lockers and Bopis are here to stay. The number of potential applications are as varied as the type of lockers available tailored to specific industry sectors. While Covid-19 might have been the driver for the growth in Bopis solutions over the past year, it's a trend that's here to stay.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Gewer is the CEO of VaultGroup.

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