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Short Communication

There Are Many Ways to Win Orders. Just Find Your Way

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Introduction

For firms to be successful they need to find out what are the order winners for products and services that you offer and what your firm does can be different from the competing ones. Let's look at some firms and what differentiates them from another in their industry.

Burger King and McDonalds have been in business for a long time. Burger King was founded in 1951 in Miami, Florida and has about 170,000 employees. McDonalds was founded in 1955 in Des Plains, Illinois and has over 2,000,000 employees. Burger King is known for their customization and McDonalds for being the faster provider. In inventory terms, Burger King is what we call assembled to order and McDonald's is made to stock. That means that when you go to a Burger King you can decide whether you want some condiments taken off from your order while that does not apply at McDonalds. The different approaches work.

FreshDirect is an American online grocery founded in 2002 that sells and delivers foods to consumers without maintaining a retail operation. Headquartered in the Bronx, New York and serving the greater tri-state area, FreshDirect has about 3,200 employees and a culture of delivering quality and the freshest food. It buys blueberries by sourcing them directly from farms and getting them as soon as they are picked the same day. As a matter of fact, they prefer buying the blueberries when they are harvested in the early afternoon because blueberries might be sweeter. They then transport them to their own facilities for storage before delivering them to customers.

FreshDirect buys salmon by sourcing directly from fishermen streamlining the process to get the product from its origin to the customer's door in just hours or a few days. This minimizes the number of middlemen compared to traditional grocery stores and aims to ensure a high level of freshness, with some fish potentially moving through their facility in under 90 minutes. FreshDirect's revenue is around $750 million annually as of September 2025.

Ocado is a British firm founded in 2000. It is a two-part business: a major online grocer for consumers (Ocado Retail) that operates in the UK and a technology provider for other supermarkets. In that regard, Ocado signed deals with Bon Preu in Catalonia, Groupe Casino in France, ICA in Sweden, Kroger in the US, Sobeys in Canada, and Aeon in Japan.

Ocado Group reported total group revenue of £3.16 billion for the financial year 2024. The company's revenue is generated through three main segments: Ocado Retail, Technology Solutions, and Logistics.

Ocado uses significantly more robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) in its fulfillment process than FreshDirect. Ocado's technology is so central to its business that it now licenses its e-commerce and logistics platform, the Ocado Smart Platform (OSP), to major retailers like Kroger. In contrast, FreshDirect's operations rely primarily on extensive conveyor belts and human pickers, managed by a warehouse management system. Fresh produce and other groceries are their source of competitive advantage.

Zara is a Spanish fast-fashion clothing and accessories retailer, a subsidiary of Inditex. The brand is known for its ability to quickly respond to trends by rapidly designing, manufacturing, and distributing new styles to its stores. Zara's business model relies on speed and a close connection to customer feedback to keep up with fast fashion. It is headquarters in Arteixo, Spain and operates over 2,200 stores in 96 countries. Its revenue for 2024 was about US$ 8.2 billion. Zara waits until the season has started to produce their fashion forward merchandise mostly in Spain and sends it to the stores twice a week during the selling season. Zara owns most of their stores and the assortment is decided by headquarters.

Mango is another clothing retailer whose headquarters are in Barcelona, Spain. It produces all garments in Asia. Its revenue for 2024 was €3.33 billion. Mango does not own any of their stores and the franchises can choose their assortments. As of late 2025, Mango has around 2,850 stores in over 120 markets worldwide.

Best Buy is an American consumer electronics retailer that sells a wide range of products including computers, mobile phones, TVs, and appliances, through its stores and online. It also offers services like installation, tech support, and repair through its Geek Squad division. Founded in 1966, the company is headquartered in Richfield, Minnesota and has over 1,000 stores and revenue for fiscal year 2025 was $41.53 billion.

Amazon is an American company which focuses on e-commerce, cloud computing and digital streaming. It was founded in 1995, and it is headquartered in Seattle, Washington. Revenue for fiscal year 2024 was $638 billion. They do not have much tech support, installation or service of any type.

All these companies are doing well in their respective industries, and they compete in different ways. And each way is different from their competitors. And they all thrive. You can act in a different manner and be able to be successful. They are many ways to compete – you just must find the way to do it in a manner that is aligned with what you do. Now how do you do it in different cultures? Do you have to do it in different ways? That's the discussion for another day.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.