

What's hot in e-commerce in 2022? OneDayOnly's Matthew Barnes weighs in

The events of the last few years have hit the fast-forward button for the South African e-commerce industry. According [to Geopoll](#), e-commerce grew by 66% YoY in 2020, while brick and mortar retail fell by 30%.



Source: ©stokkete - [123RF](#)

The accelerated growth in the sector was accompanied by innovative (and some not so innovative) trends that have changed the rules of the retail and e-commerce game.

2022 will continue to invite new challenges, expose new trends, and give innovators the opportunities they need to flourish. However, new developments in the fight against Covid-19, amongst other factors, will create an even larger need for retailers, both online and offline, to pivot once again.

Matthew Barnes, executive creative director at OneDayOnly.co.za, shares his view of both past and future trends in the e-commerce space.



Matthew Barnes joins OneDayOnly

3 Feb 2022



Top trends from 2021

“Interestingly, e-commerce saw a similar evolution in the way they communicate to what brick and mortar stores had to do when they evolved from local stores to mega stores - and eventually to global brands. ‘We have what you need’ became ‘we have everything you need’ which became, ‘we have everything you need at the best prices’.

Ironically, big brands were the ones that had to pivot the most in 2021. There was a lot of marketing clutter and they suddenly found themselves surrounded by new and competitive players.”

A few other trends Barnes says are worth mentioning include:

“Hyper-scaling - Given the extraordinary growth of e-commerce since 2019, digital brands have to scale at an unprecedented speed to stay ahead of the market

Delivery innovation - As the name suggests, this refers to the act of refining delivery processes to offer superior service to your competitors, in the context of uniquely South African logistics challenges

Collaborations - brands working with other brands to offer ever more value to their combined customer base, and reach new untapped markets

Groceries - The grocery market saw a huge boom thanks to innovative offerings from retailers of all kinds. What’s exciting about this is that it’s still in its infancy. Watch this space!

Supply chain - Much like delivery, businesses that have found innovative ways to streamline their supply chain processes are leading the pack.”

Trends from 2021 that we’ll see more of in 2022

“All of the above and more!”

Barnes believes that the most prolific trend we’ll see is a polarisation of the two ends of the e-commerce spectrum; the brands that offer ‘everything under one roof’ and brands that offer ‘boutique, curated goods’.

Large retail is going to have to place a lot of focus on their technical and physical aspects, placing product over brand. It’ll be reminiscent of how major breweries approached growth in the 80s – where their goal of having a cold beer within arm’s reach of every South African was more important than marketing.

Boutique, on the other hand, will be heading in the other direction: small, bespoke solution businesses will have to go bigger and bolder in their marketing efforts, doing all that they can to stand out from the crowd.

“What’s exciting is that I think we’re going to see some awesome David vs Goliath battles, which are always exhilarating to watch!” he says.

Finally, customer service (particularly shipping and returns or, as they’re colloquially known, last-mile issues) will make or break this year’s heroes. The innovators in this space will be the overall winners here.



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Lauren Hartszenberg 21 Feb 2022



Trends from 2021 that might fade out

Brand authenticity and sincerity will be under fire – and brands will have to prove their worth this year – without relying on

providing consumers with over-used hashtags and lip service.

New trends to watch out for in 2022

“I think we’ll see more ‘**Brick and Digital**’ – the combination of old-school retail and e-commerce (beyond click and collect or browse and we’ll deliver),” says Barnes.

Lots of small ‘one-man’ and ‘one-woman’ e-tailers have pioneered this space and opened up interesting hybrid models that combine the best of human interaction and service with the best of digital. Barnes thinks we’ll see a few brave and innovative e-commerce players step into this space.

Again, the innovators will be the big winners!

Covid-19 in marketing – is it still an effective marketing buzzword?

“No. And also yes. People who need help to survive and recover from Covid-19 can’t do anything with an ad campaign!” exclaims Barnes.

“The one thing that stood out for me throughout the unprecedented impact of Covid-19 was the sheer scale of big, insincere campaigns and initiatives where the PR for the campaign cost far more than the actual financial support of the initiative. Organisations who are actually doing something that helps people, customers, and businesses navigate the massive emotional and financial challenges that have been brought on by Covid-19, should, by all means, tell their story.”



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Lauren Hartzenberg 14 Feb 2022



Social media. Less is more

“The days of carpet bombing every inch of consumers’ eyeballs are done. My opinion - just because Facebook, TikTok, and Google allow you to drop into people’s lives at any and every point doesn’t mean you should.”

Barnes concludes, “We’re entering an age where less is more in terms of marketing, driven by the sheer scale of advertising messaging clutter and the generally bad quality of advertising messages. The brands and marketers that work harder to understand their customers and invest the time in filtering their communications strategies through a human lens will be able to do far more with far less.”

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