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NOV 4, 2020 1:38PM EST

This Shipping Solution Is Helping Small Business Achieve Efficient and Sustainable E-Commerce

By Madeleine Streets



CREDIT: ADOBE

The growth of e-commerce has created huge revenue opportunities for merchants of all sizes, but it has also raised challenges in terms of fulfilment. To keep shoppers happy, retailers need to balance shipping efficiency with [environmental impact](#) – all while keeping costs down for both business and consumer. Shipping service Sendle is trying to make this a more accessible reality for small business.

Sendle originated in Australia as a [marketplace and delivery service](#) for free goods. This immediately established the need for a shipping option that was cost-effective and suited for small-scale shipping; there could be no minimums required, as most sellers were exchanging individual items. When exploring the available options, the company found that there were actually [many carriers that weren't being used to their full potential](#), leading it to expand into the small business market.

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"Everyone's focused on the big end of town; no one is solving for really small scale," said James Chin Moody, CEO of Sendle. "But there are all these mid-tier to enterprise carriers out there and they actually have capacity in their networks. They're delivering things into neighborhoods and then leaving with their trucks half empty."

By collecting multiple small deliveries from individual sellers, Sendle can take advantage of better shipping rates that are usually only available to larger merchants. In turn, working with Sendle allows the network carriers to add capacity to their existing

systems, while also collaborating to improve the efficiency of their routes. Bundling deliveries together in this way is not just helpful for shipping speed, but also reduces the environmental impact by maximizing each shipment's use.

[Sustainability has been a growing topic of interest](#) for the retail industry, but Sendle has always incorporated green initiatives into its framework and is Australia's first tech B Corp. Some companies that are new to environmental policies have had to [sideline these projects](#) in 2020, in order to prioritize their pandemic response. But Sendle sees sustainability, as well as broader ethical commitments, as a critical part of its company mission – even during the pandemic.



Sustainability has been a growing priority for many apparel and retail brands, from production through to fulfillment.

CREDIT: JASON HENRY

"We have the COVID-19 challenge right now but these other big challenges are just as pressing," said Chin Moody. "Helping to make sure that we see diversity in the community, diversity of business; helping small merchants thrive; helping those folks who are making ends meet; helping in the transition to a clean economy – for us, it was very much from day one about aligning our business with that positive purpose."

Building a carbon-neutral promise into the company's foundation has enabled the company to scale its sustainability; Sendle claims that every single package shipped through its platform is carbon-neutral. In addition to reducing its own emissions, the service achieves this by investing in a number of carbon-reducing projects, which are selected annually by its users. Sample projects include deforestation prevention and expanding access to clean water.

The sustainability of the shipping solution has previously been a perk for merchants that are more focused on finding the best deal; Sendle charges no subscription fees and claims its rates are lower than all major competitors. However, Chin Moody reports that increasing numbers of prospective clients are inquiring because of the sustainability angle first, with the price point coming second.

The company is also hoping that its commitment to not introduce surcharges during the high-volume holiday period will also attract new customers, while retaining existing ones. [With many networks expected to be overloaded](#), multiple carriers have added new charges to help fund these shipments and reduce the overall strain. Sendle has announced it will not do the same.

"As a B Corp, one of the things you write into your constitution is that you're making decisions on behalf of all stakeholders and those stakeholders as diverse as your team, your customers, your suppliers, the environment, the community," said Chin Moody. "We are 100% built for the needs of small businesses and it's going to be essentially be the biggest holiday season [for them]. We wanted to do it with every single tool we possibly could to help them to thrive. Period."

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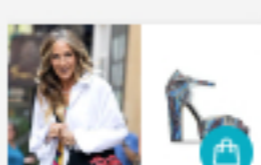
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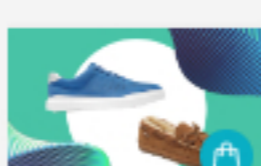
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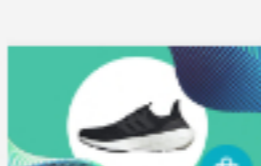
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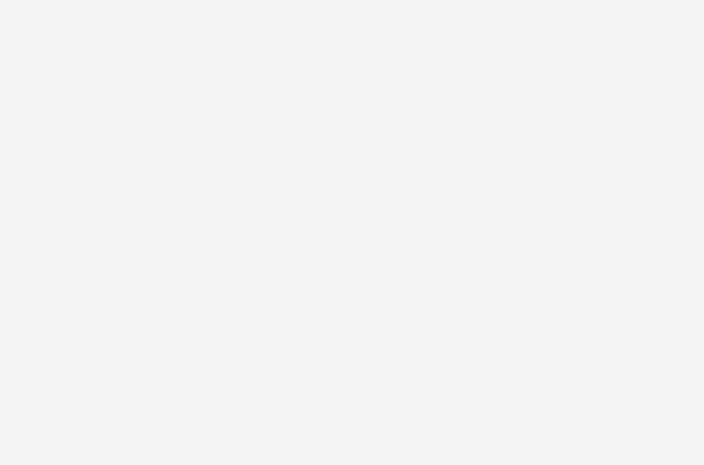
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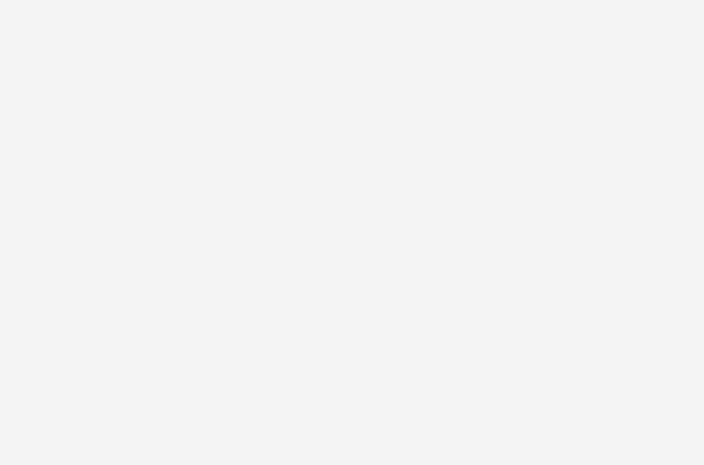
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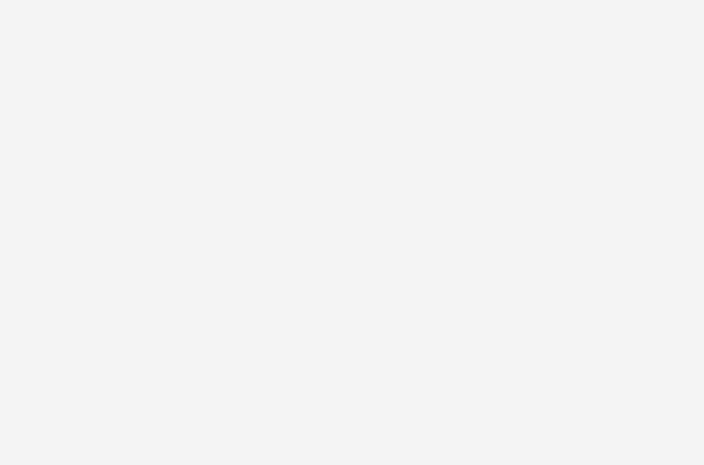
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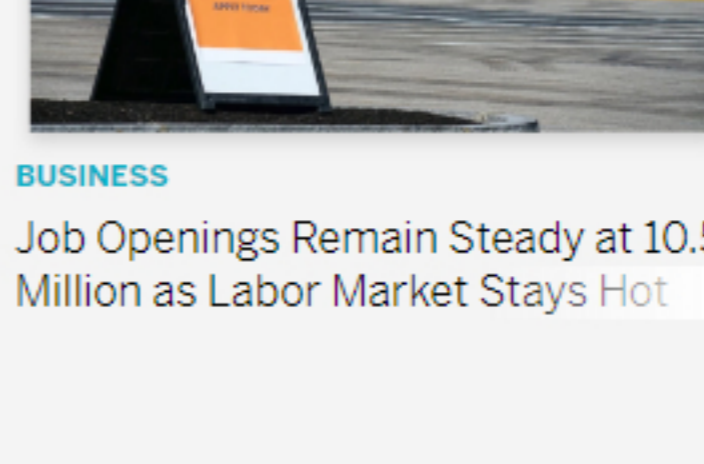
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