



Image: Gavin Jowitt

Whether it be the virtual realm or a bricks-and-mortar retail store, Pack & Send has its franchisees and customers covered.

The booming online retail sector means big business for courier franchise Pack & Send, and the company is constantly introducing new initiatives that cash in on the trend.

"I think our industry is an exciting one because there's more freight and parcels being sent than ever before," says Michael Paul, who founded the brand in 1993 and heads up the business as CEO.

"Because of the advent of online shopping more and more people are buying things online, and a company like Pack & Send, which has been

around for over 20 years, has strong, robust systems, so we're well poised to take advantage of that."

He explains Pack & Send customers can engage with the brand via three channels – by visiting one of their more than 100 their retail service centres, phoning the company's call centre or by utilising its relatively new online channel.

"[Customers] can get quotes and pay for parcels online, as well as book them online, so a courier just comes around and picks up the parcel and delivers it anywhere in the world," he explains. "We've got three channels that really no

other logistic company offers - it makes us the first choice in the marketplace."

The online channel was launched in December 2012 and has proved particularly lucrative for the brand, Paul explains.

"In the first 12 months it brought 18,500 new customers to the brand. December is typically our peak period and in terms of shipment we sent 20 percent more parcels and freight in December 2013 than we did in December of the previous year.

"It gives you some understanding of the increased volumes being sent." »



We're the Flight Centre of the logistics industry - just as they... deal with a whole range of different suppliers at the back end, we offer a huge array of choice, which makes us the first choice option for a lot of customers

CONTINUED TECH DEVELOPMENT

While Paul is no doubt pleased by the success of the online channel, innovation in the online realm remains a key focus for Pack & Send.

"In the next month or so we'll launch a new website which will have some further improvement functionalities, one of which is for regular eBay senders," he says.

"It will enable eBay power centres, which are people that send up to 50 or more parcels a week, to have a very convenient system where it integrates with the eBay website and pulls data from there so they can arrange the consignment to be sent with just a couple of clicks.

"It's a significant innovation that will continue to enable our franchisees to leverage off this new and growing market within the online space."

Paul is aware of the need to continuously change to adapt to the marketplace, an approach that is actively passed onto to brand's franchisees.

"It's a big thing that we bring to our franchisees - making sure our model is always adapting to what the customers and the market is demanding, and we've placed a lot of emphasis on working with

our franchisees so they understand the importance of these sorts of innovations and changes," he says.

CONVENIENCE UNDERLIES CHANGE

These technology innovations no doubt make life a little easier for the modern day consumer, and Pack & Send strives to continuously provide more convenient solutions that apply to both the real and virtual worlds.

"Very much one of the problems in the sector is most people aren't home to collect their deliveries and so often the courier company can't leave the parcel at the home. The household is inconvenienced as they attempt to either go and pick it up at the depot or wait for another re-delivery," says Paul.

"In response, and this is a growing part of our business, we provide an option where customers can actually have the parcel delivered directly to their nearest Pack & Send outlet and then they just pick it up at a time that is convenient."

He explains services such as these are just one of the reasons why retail chains and logistics companies have become an important element in the supply chain.

"It's traditionally been the domain of Australia Post, who have a very comprehensive retail network, but people are increasingly looking at alternatives with respect to the retail network, such as Pack & Send."

Paul credits the brand's success to its all encompassing service offering, and likens it to a travel agency.

"Part of our real growth has been that we are just this complete one-stop shop solution so we deal with a large number of freight carriers and suppliers, which means we're able to find the best solution for customers."

"We're the Flight Centre of the logistics industry - just as they have the retail centre that enables people to book airlines, rental cars and holidays and deal with a whole range of different suppliers at the back end, we offer a huge array of choice, which makes us the first choice option for a lot of customers."

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR PACK & SEND?

Pack & Send is currently exploring what could be seen as a fourth channel – a new take on its current retail service centre model.

"We're looking at smaller centres that are more kiosk type operations – they would be positioned within existing retail businesses such as newsagents."

"They're the sort of things we're looking at to give us increased penetration in



the market place," says Paul.

Despite the rise of business to consumer deliveries, which Pack & Send no doubt sees as a lucrative market, Paul insists business to business deliveries will continue to form a key part of the business.

"The industry itself will continue to see increased volumes being sent because of the ongoing growth of people wanting to purchase things online, and as a result of that the industry is looking more at these business to consumer deliveries."

"We still do a lot of work with businesses and corporations; I think that's a common misunderstanding with people

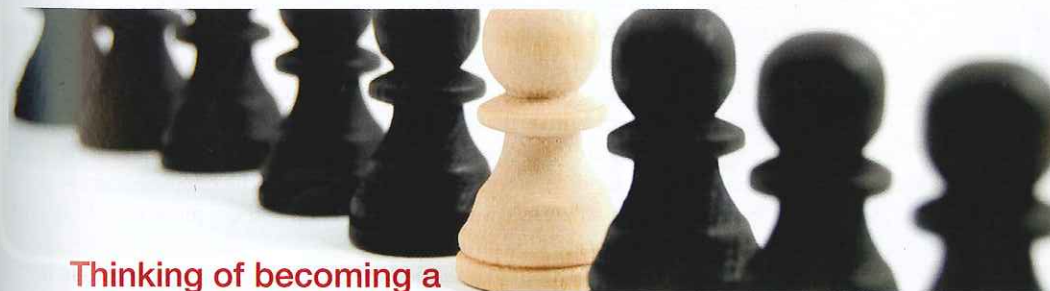
that look at Pack and Send – they think we do a lot of work with consumers and households but 75 percent of our work is with businesses – that's an area we're just continuing to grow with," he explains. **F**

Michael Paul founded the Pack & Send business as a single standalone store in the Sydney suburb of Parramatta.

Today more than 100 retail stores are in operation across Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, and the brand continues to expand on a global scale.

In 2007, Pack & Send was named Pricewaterhouse Coopers' Australian Franchisor of the Year.

Image: Jeff Hawlins - Big River Creative



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