



CASE STUDY

COOLBLUE

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The Coolblue slogan "anything for a smile" is not a hollow marketing phrase. The successful e-commerce company - known especially for its web shop of the same name as well as for being the driving force behind specialist webshops such as gamingheadsetshop.nl, stofzuigerstore.nl, laptopshop.nl and blenderstore.nl - is doing everything to give its customers the ultimate experience. Online. And as an offline retailer, Coolblue is also quite visible offline with seven physical stores in the Netherlands and Belgium.

"Qmatic was the only party that understood what we were looking for!"

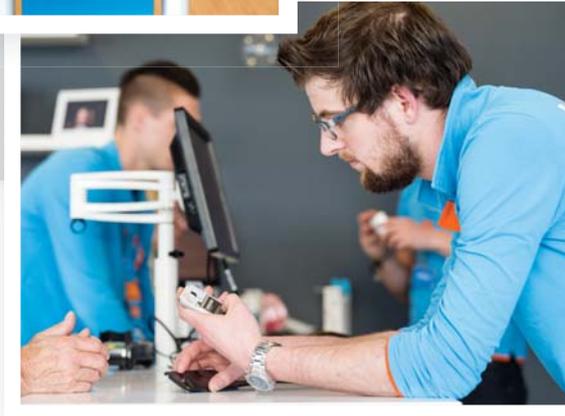
**Marc van Elderen,
Coolblue Retail Manager**



Retail Manager Marc van Elderen is leading the offline shopping experience in the right direction. "The experience often begins online because our physical locations basically act as a support for the webshops. Although I oversee a cross-channel experience – since the online and offline platforms must reinforce each other – I have final operational responsibility over the running of the physical stores. This goes from the establishment of branches to the training and coaching of the store teams. That last aspect is very important because we position ourselves as specialists and we always want customers to be helped by real specialists. Even if they visit a physical store!"

A HIGH LEVEL OF SERVICE

Because of the large degree of synergy between the virtual and physical stores, it is essential for Coolblue that the two experiences blend together seamlessly. According to Marc van Elderen, "We are seeing that more and more online customers are visiting our physical stores, because they like asking our specialists questions one-to-one, for instance. These customers want us to meet them with the same degree of expertise and level of service as they are accustomed to getting online. Apparently we are succeeding in this, because some of our customers come back regularly and buy directly from the physical stores - for example, because they have had a pleasant experience being helped by an employee. The bricks-and-mortar stores



therefore have an added value. Both for our customers and for us. If we open a store in a certain area, we see the online purchases in that area increase immediately. It builds customer confidence if they can go into a physical store.”

STRAIGHT FOR QMATIC

But how do you ensure that the offline customer experience will live up to the high Coolblue standards? How to match the right specialist with the right customer in a physical store? And how do you limit waiting time during peak hours? To answer these questions, Coolblue sought out a modern platform to optimise the customer journey. “We soon went with Qmatic,” says Van Elderen. “They were, in fact, the only party who understood what we wanted - namely, more than a tracking number system that you might associate with waiting at the butcher. To be sure, we were looking for a solution that handled large customer flows, but we wanted one that was customer-friendly as well. Although we do our best to welcome each customer personally, at peak hours it's not always feasible to receive customers immediately when they come in. In those situations, we are extremely glad the Qmatic kiosk is there. The Orchestra software offers an enormous range of possibilities for guiding people in a customer-friendly manner. There are even more possibilities than we currently use - you could safely say that the platform is ‘future-proof’.”

EFFICIENT AND CUSTOMER-FRIENDLY

“Thanks to Qmatic, we've now realised one great ambition - introducing Click & Collect. Suppose that when a customer places an order, he chooses to pick up the item at a physical store. That customer will then receive an order confirmation on his computer, or on a mobile device such as a smartphone. Then, the confirmation's QR code can be scanned at the kiosk, either directly from the smartphone or from a printout. The customer is then personally welcomed by our hosts or hostesses with a fresh cup of coffee. Since the customer information is directly viewable by the hostess and our other employees, we can limit waiting times and ensure that the most suitable specialist is matched with the customer. As for the order, it will have already been prepared, which means that the specialist can focus on advising. It's a remarkably efficient and customer-friendly solution, because people feel welcome right away. In the future, we hope to add extra incentives. For example, giving customers the option to choose when to pick up their order. Or the online option to choose a specific in-store specialist, such as someone they've had a good experience with in the past.”



1999

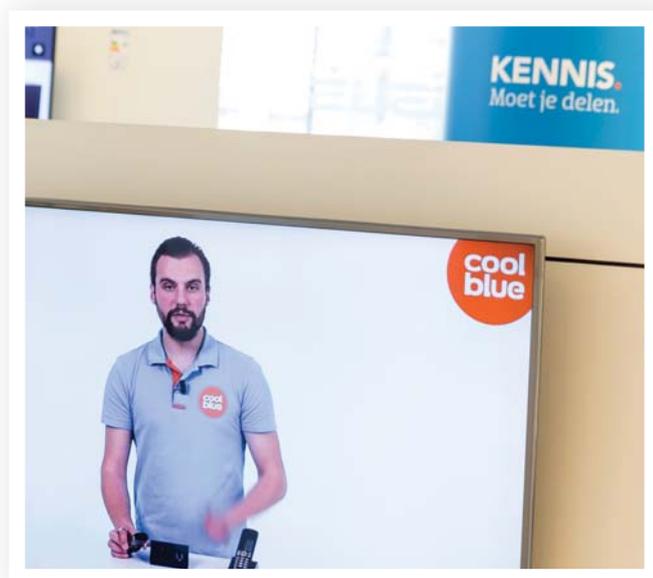


BENELUX

323
WEB SHOPS7
STORES

A WEALTH OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

In addition to the positive contribution it makes to the customer experience, Marc van Elderen finds the Qmatic solution good from a management perspective as well. "Among other things, you can see who is in the store and how long the waiting time is, all in real time. You can then react dynamically, for example by assigning another specialist to a customer if the first one is occupied longer than expected. This often shortens the waiting times. In addition, the platform reveals a wealth of management information.



Coolblue believes in knowledge. Focus. Specialisation. These three qualities have only improved over time. Since their founding in 1999, these have served Coolblue well in the creation of web shops that they can be proud of. They now provide the Benelux with consumer goods via 323 specialised web shops and 7 physical stores. It's an approach that has helped them grow very quickly in the Netherlands and Belgium.

This includes 'basic' data about peak hours on a monthly basis, but also insights about periods when people pick up specific products and how much time is involved. For example, if you know that computers are often picked up on weekends and that customers ask a relatively large number of questions about them, you can focus on having the right number of staff at that time. We can therefore employ the Qmatic solution as a scheduling tool. The historical data makes it clear at which times which specialists should be on duty in order to achieve both the highest quality and the shortest waiting times. If the system is used wisely, you can sell an extraordinary amount of merchandise and still offer each customer a unique shopping experience. That's why we're doing all of this."