



# Allan Lyall

The former Amazon man has been tasked with giving Tesco's customer fulfilment a boost as he steps into his new role at the grocery giant. By Tiffany Holland



**Tesco's new** customer fulfilment director Allan Lyall is charged with taking the grocer to the cutting edge of online customer service using tactics polished during his time at global online giant Amazon.

When unveiling the appointment last week, Tesco called Lyall "one of the leading figures in the world of retailing" because of his experience working at two of retail's biggest global players: Amazon and Apple.

Lyall started his new role this week and bolsters the multichannel team at a crucial time for Tesco, which in June reported its worst quarterly performance in 40 years. And in October the grocer will be under the new leadership of Dave Lewis, who succeeds Philip Clarke as group chief executive.

Tesco's big challenge is to improve the customer experience across all channels and Lyall will be key to delivering that through its online offering.

Lyall may be familiar with propelling an already successful retailer that strives to put the customer experience at its heart, but he has had little experience of working at a business that is facing huge structural challenges.

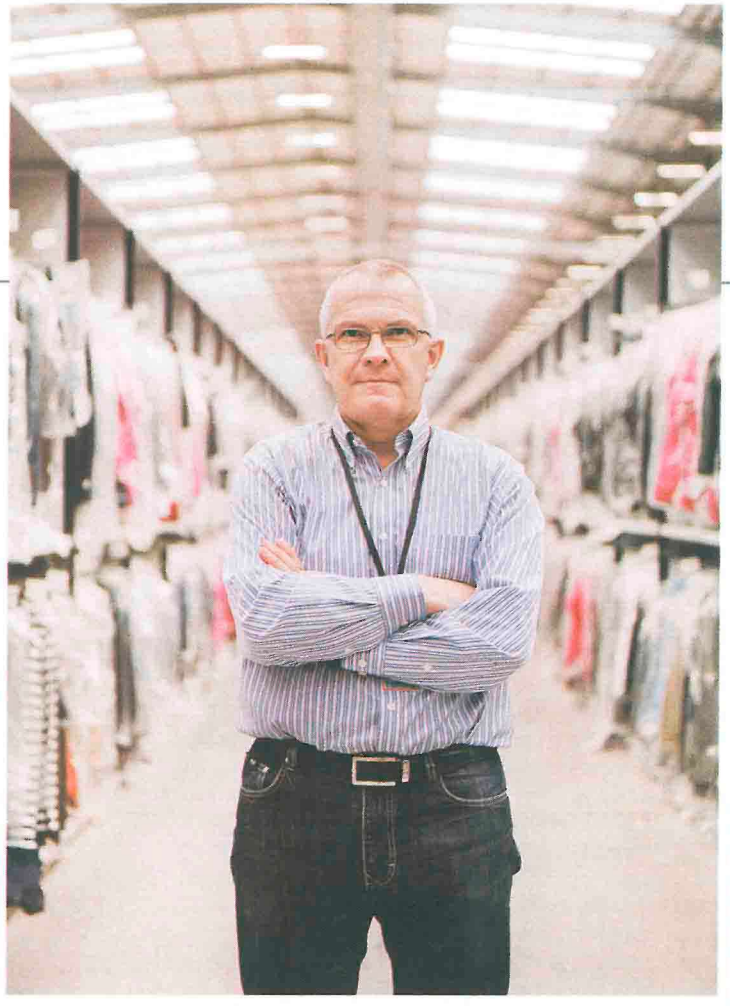
He will no doubt seek guidance from his former colleague and new boss, multichannel director Robin Terrell, with whom he worked for four years while at Amazon.

Terrell said last week: "We have exciting, industry-leading plans in this area and there is no one better qualified than Allan to execute them. He has an outstanding track record. I'm delighted he's joining us."

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Robin Terrell, Tesco

Scotsman Lyall worked at Amazon for 12 years until 2013 and was vice-president of European operations, overseeing Amazon's much-admired delivery service and managing 21 cus-



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tomers fulfilment centres, equating to 13 million sq ft across five countries.

He held arguably one of the toughest logistical jobs in retail and at the Christmas peak period was in charge of a team that packed and dispatched up to three million presents across the world per night.

Lyall told *The Telegraph* in an interview in 2012 the level of accuracy "has to be tight". "We know what time the product needs to leave the building to make, say, the Edinburgh evening delivery, which is slightly earlier than the London evening delivery," he said.

And Lyall was loyal to his Scottish roots while he was at Amazon. The retailer opened a customer service centre in Edinburgh and a customer fulfilment centre in Dunfermline in 2011, bringing thousands of jobs to the country.

But it wasn't all plain sailing at Amazon. Lyall was forced to respond to accusations that the retailer was forcing staff to work seven-day weeks in the run-up to Christmas in 2008.

That may have irked Lyall, who speaks at events to raise the profile of careers in the industry and is a passionate advocate of young people starting

## CAREER HISTORY

**2014** Tesco, customer fulfilment director

**2013 to 2014** Indigo Lighthouse Group, managing director

**2001 to 2013** Amazon, vice-president of European operations

**1995 to 2001** Apple, director of European fulfilment

**1989 to 1995** Digital Equipment Corporation, manufacturing manager

their careers in ecommerce.

Lyall's own career took him to Massachusetts, where he took his first major role at US computer software distributor Digital Equipment Corporation.

After six years he moved to Apple, where he became director of fulfilment. Based in Paris, he rationalised the distribution network and established a supply chain that was suitable for such a rapidly growing company. He also spent two years in the Netherlands, consolidating distribution operations and managing the European launches of the iMac and iBook products.

With a fearsome pedigree in fulfilment at two of the biggest companies in the world, Lyall seems like a good fit for Tesco and he is well-equipped to take on challenges that may arise at a grocer that is mid-turnaround.

He may describe his time at Amazon as his "coolest role so far" on his LinkedIn profile, but Tesco will hope that working at the third-largest retailer in the world might top that.



For more on Tesco visit Retail Week Knowledge Bank's profile at [retail-week.com/tesco](http://retail-week.com/tesco)