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**THE HP MULTICHANNEL
RETAILER OF THE YEAR**


Winner – Argos

From big book origins, Argos sets pace as a multichannel leader

The efforts Argos has made in recent years to reinvent itself for the digital age are bearing fruit.

Traditionally well known for its catalogue, Argos has increasingly been moving away from its big-book reliance towards a digital future.

One judge said: “Argos has transformed its business model, there are so many initiatives taking place. It was in a poor competitive position and is making very good progress.

“It’s really investing in creating a multichannel proposition. It’s lifted itself up and is competing with the likes of Amazon and making good progress.”

The retailer returned to like-for-like sales growth in 2013 after four years of declines. That growth continued in 2014, when like-for-like sales increased 3.3%.

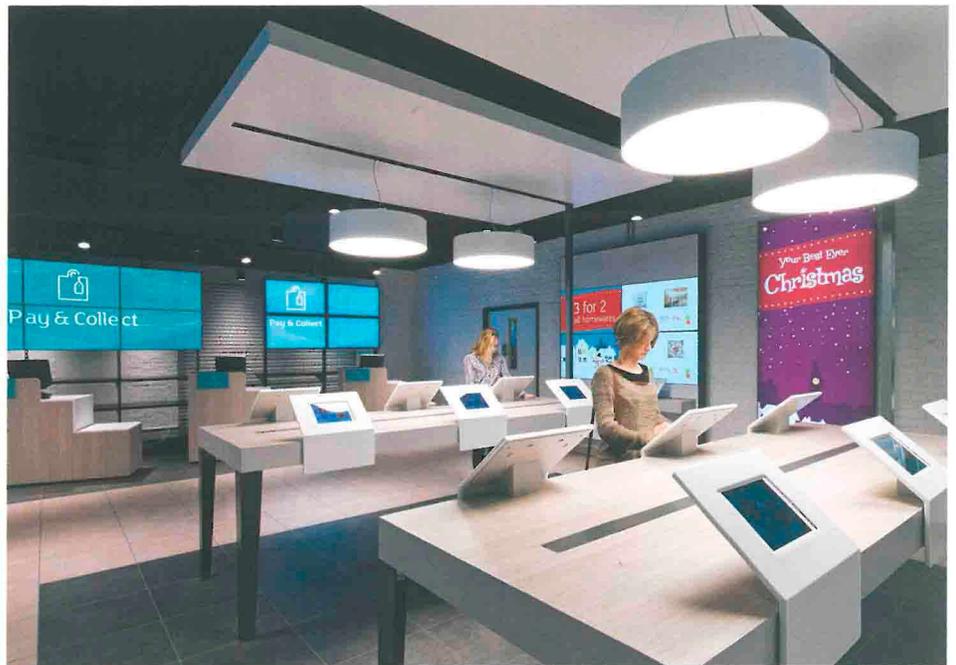
Argos generated 738 million website and app visits in the year to February 2014, up 103 million on the prior year. But stores remain central to the business’s proposition and 90% of customer journeys involve branches.

Two years into a five-year digital integration plan, online sales represented 44% of the total, while mobile commerce surged 89% year on year to account for 18% of sales at the end of the 2014 financial year.

The retailer has often led the way digitally – its check and reserve service was pioneering – and more recently it has established apps across the android and iOS platforms that have been downloaded more than 8 million times.

As part of efforts to become a truly multichannel retailer, Argos is working to integrate all channels and create a seamless experience for the consumer, however they choose to shop.

The retailer opened its first digital stores in November 2013, and it now has more than



“How Argos is shifting to digital is a real step up”

Oracle Retail Week Awards judge

30. The shops provide iPad-based browsers, allowing customers to shop digital channels in-store. To help manage the shift online Argos has created digital editions of its catalogue.

Customers seem to be responding well to these stores, which are different from the retailer’s traditional branches.

The shift to becoming a fully-integrated multichannel retailer continues. Argos redesigned its online checkout to accommodate flexible payment and credit options, improve search functions and show real-time stock availability by location.

Argos plans to further personalise the shopping experience of its digital channels, which will improve its ability to offer relevant products and promotions to customers.

One judge said: “It has a massive store estate with broad appeal. It is wrestling with the various other broad-appeal retailers.

“If you identify all of the things Argos has done to build its multichannel credentials, I don’t think it could have tried harder.

“It’s somewhat ahead of the curve even. How Argos is shifting to digital is a real step up.” **PETAH MARIAN**

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