

Orange County Based Tech Startup Helps to Revamp the Digitization of the Fashion Industry Post-COVID

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Orange County, California, March 22, 2021 /EIN Presswire/ -- AVEM Inc., a tech startup based in Irvine, has developed a new platform that helps to extend the possibility of affordable same-day delivery to any local or chain boutique, department store and retail store. AVEM's solution is built around



AVEM Same-Day Delivery

in-store and curbside pickup services that have been the main focus of major retail stores in the past three to four years. These retail stores were able to take advantage of such services during the pandemic in 2020, and some are even seeking to permanently install them

Last year was a monumental year for many retail stores, such as those in home improvements like Home Depot and general merchandise like Target and Walmart. On the other hand, the demand for the fashion industry dropped by 25 to 40%, mainly due to the lockdown and social distancing practices. However, with the relaxed protocols in many states, the declined number of cases and the increasing rate of vaccination, consumers are looking forward to enjoying the traditional atmospheres of boutiques and department stores.

"The e-commerce giants, however, were able to use the limitations brought by state-mandated protocols to the best of their advantage," says Maz Rostamian – COO and Co-founder at AVEM Inc. "This was mainly due to their in-place online platforms and logistics well-suited for at-home shopping, which has resulted in a harder hit on small and large players in the fashion industry."

Conventional retailers should adapt to the new trend of online shopping that has been accelerated by COVID-19 pandemic. Having a modern-looking website that is intuitive to use and

visually appealing is necessary but it is definitely not enough. The other important half of the puzzle is to deliver ordered products in time and at a reasonable cost. "This is what most of the conventional retailers find difficult." Maz adds. "These retail and apparel stores rely on either USPS, UPS and FedEx or the newer last-mile delivery companies. The former is costly and not optimum. The latter usually imposes high commission rates on retailers and sometimes considerable shipping fees on buyers besides availability issues".

As a result, some retail stores have started to follow the early days of Amazon by offering next-day delivery with a minimum order requirement to cover part of the cost. However, they still come short because of the limited number of fulfillment centers they own compared to Amazon. Some retailers expanded their mega fulfillment centers which not only add large amounts of capital expenditures but also impose on the retailers' financials in the long run.

One of the major retailers in the fashion industry, Nordstrom, is taking the required steps to accelerate revenue aiming mainly for the post-COVID era. They have taken an unexpected operative decision to merge the Nordstrom website with that of Nordstrom Rack. This decision sets the foundation for an effort to knit its online and offline operations together in a given area by supporting pickups and returns regardless of where and how a purchase was made.

Some retailers, such as Target, have innovatively used store-centric fulfillment centers based heavily upon improvement of inventory management systems and training of the employee. This effort, which started a few years before the pandemic, helped Target grow revenue considerably through the new shopping trends adopted due to the pandemic, i.e., the consumers' need and interest to shop online and pick up in-store.

Despite the projected growth of the fashion industry, there still exist certain areas of operation that the fashion retailers must pay attention to: logistics and distribution. Additionally, omnichannel, a system in which a retailer combines various methods of shipping, continues to be an attractive feature as it reduces the handling time and shipping costs for digitally and physically purchased merchandise. "To compete with giant e-commerce websites such as Amazon, eBay, etc., small local boutiques and larger retail stores need to solidify same-day delivery processes through partnership with tech start-ups that specialize in last-mile delivery through innovative solutions," Maz said. "AVEM provides such service through a browser extension and a simple solution: (1) shop online, (2) select in-store pickup, (3) activate AVEM".

The <u>AVEM technology</u> now supports 7 major retail stores such as Nordstrom and Macy's and a local boutique in Orange County. More is yet to come.

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