



today's news

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Panasonic.com to roll out in-store pick-up in time for the holidays

For a major consumer brand manufacturer with only the web as a direct sales channel, Panasonic Corp. of North America is giving online shoppers an unusual Christmas present: buy online/pick up in store.

The buy-online/pick-up-in-store option is part of a new relationship Panasonic, No. 160 in the Internet Retailer Top 500 Guide, has with Shopatron Inc., a third-party service that funnels orders from manufacturers' web sites to retailers and dealers.

Since April, Panasonic has been conducting a pilot program that allows Panasonic retailers to receive automated e-mails about potential orders. Actual orders are then accessed by the Panasonic retailer from the manufacturer through a web-based portal. Retailers can also automatically receive and process orders via XML.

The next step is adding a buy-online/pick-up-in-store option at Panasonic.com. "We are planning on launching before the holiday season," says Panasonic vice president of e-business Jeremy Dalnes. "Once we launch in-store pick-up in the fall we will be sending additional foot traffic to the stores that do business with us."

When the program is rolled out, a shopper on Panasonic.com will be able to select a product and see if a particular piece of merchandise has a buy-online/pick-up-in-store option from a participating retailer. If the option is available, the shopper fills in the appropriate information during the checkout process and arranges for the pick-up as the Shopatron system finds and sends out the order to the nearest retailer with the most available inventory.

"The buy-online/pick-up-in-store option is a holiday win for the customer, our retailers and us," says Dalnes. "The shopper on Panasonic.com has more convenient delivery options during the busiest time of the year and the retailer gets more foot traffic, a chance to sell more products to the customer making a pick-up and the chance to build a long-term shopper relationship."