

IBM Sterling

IBM Sterling Inventory Visibility

See it. Sell it. Manage it more profitably.
We've got the inventory visibility for that.

High expectations

Exceptional omnichannel customer experiences are hard to deliver. In fact, they are so difficult to execute that 4 out of 5 CEOs say they are not able to do it profitably.¹ And they are impossible to carry out without accurate visibility of your global inventory situation at any given time.

More than 50% of retailers have said that 'inventory visibility across all channels' was the most important omnichannel capability.² Whether inventory is located in a warehouse, a distribution center, a physical storefront or on a truck somewhere, you cannot make fulfillment promises to your customers without an accurate inventory picture.

As consumers reset the expectations of fulfillment to being fast and free, and buying journeys, regardless of channel, become heavily influenced by digital interactions, retailers and B2B businesses are adapting their operations to support new initiatives to meet those expectations. These requirements put significant pressure on fulfillment and inventory leaders that have limited views of their inventory but are trying to exceed customer expectations profitably.

The problems

However, there are many issues getting in the way of providing your B2C and B2B customers with the experiences they expect, never mind ones that exceed their expectations.

Do you have silos of inventory or multiple inventory systems of record? Some companies have inventory segmented by sales channels for specific customers or types of customers, while others have multiple inventory systems due to acquisitions over the years. What this means is that sometimes you have inventory that meets your customer's needs and timing, but you just can't see it, so you lose the sale. What should be a global view of all available-to-promise inventory is instead just a keyhole view of a subset of it.



Another problem is inaccurate inventory records. This can be caused by batch processing or system latency due to higher-than-planned inventory actions such as web and call center searches, items being reserved for a cart and orders being placed. However, if you have inaccurate inventory information, you run the risk of:

- overpromising on inventory you don't have,
- losing sales you could have made with replenishment inventory that hasn't updated yet,
- unexpected expedited shipping charges because inventory isn't where you thought it was,
- not being able to expand your sales channels because you can't meet marketplace SLAs regarding inventory accuracy and meeting your customer promise dates.

The last issue many companies see is balancing safety stock. Without enough safety stock you can lose sales and disappoint your customers and potentially lose them forever. Too much safety stock means big markdowns and lost margins at the end of the season or when the inventory is old or outdated. Balancing safety stock is even more difficult if you have silos or segmented inventory because you cannot share safety stock across your entire organization to keep your inventory carry costs down.

So how can IBM help?

IBM Sterling Inventory Visibility works with your existing systems to provide a single, scalable, real-time view of inventory and demand so you can grow sales, protect margins and increase customer satisfaction. It is a cloud-based SaaS solution that rapidly processes extremely high inventory supply and demand update activity and presents an accurate real-time availability picture to the channels of promise.

Say “yes” more often to customers

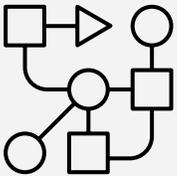
See all your inventory on hand across disparate systems and silos

Get accurate, scalable inventory views

Meet peak-period demand and avoid overpromising, losing sales or incurring unexpected charges

Maximize inventory ROI

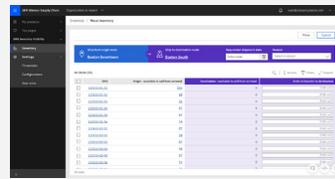
Reduce safety stock and carrying costs, and increase inventory turns



Inventory dashboard

Say “yes” more often to your customers

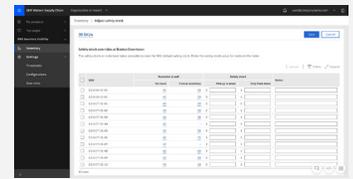
Break down those inventory silos and disparate systems so you can broaden that keyhole view and see all your available-to-promise inventory. IBM Sterling Inventory Visibility provides you an inventory hub with a single view of inventory and a dashboard you can personalize for your job requirements, so you can see and manage all your inventory. You can also expand your customer offerings with “endless aisle” by seamlessly integrating your inventory with your suppliers and enabling drop shipping.



Move inventory

Get accurate, scalable inventory views

Don't get bogged down during peak seasons – meet peak-period demand with our SaaS solution which has up-to-the-minute inventory accuracy. This highly accurate inventory view helps you avoid overpromising, losing sales or incurring unexpected, expedited shipping charges. Our system uses Akamai gateways and Cassandra databases to provide views of in-store and warehouse inventory with the speed and accuracy you need to provide improved customer fulfillment experiences. On top of that, our solution does not require IT assistance to ramp up and down as your demand changes over time, which frees up those IT resources to focus on providing better experiences for your customers.



Adjusting safety stock

Maximize inventory ROI

When you have a single, accurate view of all your inventory, you can reduce cross-company safety stock and inventory carrying costs and share safety stock across your organization, so there's no need to have multiple, disjointed reserves in every silo or channel. Track the demand for inventory so you can customize safety stock by location and SKU – and get cross-channel insights to better balance inventory after the planning and deployment process ends. And the best part? It's designed to integrate seamlessly with your existing commerce, order management or ERP systems, as well as new sales channels, so you don't need to take on a long or expensive IT initiative to start exceeding business goals and delivering more satisfying fulfillment experiences for every customer.

The screenshot displays the IBM Watson Supply Chain interface for the SKU 123410-02-01, 'Reese Motor Jacket'. The page includes a sidebar with navigation options like 'My products', 'Top pages', 'OMS Inventory Visibility', 'Inventory', and 'Settings'. The main content area shows product details such as manufacturer (AG), product ID (123410), size code (XS), and color (Navy). It also displays key metrics: Total units (2,657), Available to sell (3,000), Open POs (28), Available nodes (104), Days of supply (13), and Markdown days left (89). Fulfillment options include 'Ship from store', 'Pickup from store', and 'Delivery'. A table titled 'Available in 4 nodes' provides a detailed view of inventory across different locations.

Node	Available to sell from future inventory	Available to sell from on hand	Safety stock for pickup from store	Safety stock for ship from store	Days of supply
001 - Boston Downtown	20	40	0	0	10
002 - Boston South	20	40	0	0	10
143 - West Dylan	20	40	0	0	10
345 - Toronto Downtown	20	40	0	0	10

Inventory by SKU

Summary

Customer expectations for B2C companies are being driven higher and higher by several pure digital players and these expectations are carrying over to B2B companies as well. To succeed in this omnichannel world, companies must be able to give customers exactly what they want, where and when they want it. The only way to deliver on that promise is with a single, accurate view of all your inventory.

For fulfillment leaders, IBM Sterling Inventory Visibility provides a single, scalable, real-time view of inventory to grow sales, protect margins and increase customer satisfaction.

To learn more about IBM Sterling Inventory Visibility for your inventory and sourcing needs, contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or [explore the solution today](#).

Footnotes



1. PriceWaterhouseCoopers. “Annual Survey Of Retail And Consumer Goods CEOs.” <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ceo-survey/2018/deep-dives/pwc-ceo-survey-consumer-markets.pdf>.
2. EKN Research. “Omni-Channel Customer Profitability” <https://risnews.com/ekn-step-step-approach-improving-omni-channel-customer-profitability>.

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