

“Online retail is seen as a key engine for growth, and MetaPack has given us a complete level of visibility that allows us to consistently offer our customers a proactive response. We’re now in a position to offer more delivery options, as we believe it is an opportunity to distinguish ourselves from our competitors. The flexibility MetaPack offers us to execute change is important. MetaPack tests the concepts of delivery performance with re-writing the data.”

Mark Russell,  
Head of Operations



House of Fraser has been a familiar name on the high street for 160 years, with 62 prime locations across the UK and Ireland. With online shopping seen as a key engine for growth, House of Fraser launched its transactional website in September 2007 ([www.houseoffraser.co.uk](http://www.houseoffraser.co.uk)). Its objective was to offer consistent proposition and delivery of service.

## The Challenge

House of Fraser outsourced its stock and despatch management to an e-fulfilment company, raising a few areas for concern. Firstly, lack of visibility: House of Fraser had no way of monitoring despatches through the current system. Faced with the inability to track the goods properly, House of Fraser was unable to proactively assist its customers if a delay occurred. As a result, this led to a greater level of inbound calls. Second, to ensure House of Fraser was receiving the best possible service from its multi-carrier solution, it required the ability to monitor each carrier. The reporting function was complex and did not consistently provide House of Fraser with the information it required. Third, in the unfortunate event where goods had to be returned, House of Fraser encourages goods to be returned in store or to a Freepost address. For the remainder that need to be returned via a courier, arranging returns was a very manual and laborious process.

## The Solution

The introduction of MetaPack helped House of Fraser move its fulfilment in-house. The warehouse move took only 4 months with the MetaPack project; a 6 week sub-project going live on the scheduled date. MetaPack has allowed House of Fraser to use almost any carrier without the hassle of integration, meaning it could tender out to determine the best mix. The final decision was made just 2 weeks before implementation proving how fast new carriers can be added. Using a multi-carrier solution ensures that House of Fraser will never be in a position where they are unable to ship out goods. House of Fraser was impressed at how easy it was to change carriers within the MetaPack system when a carrier recently announced strike action. MetaPack can provide House of Fraser with full delivery visibility per sales channel, which enables them to manage costs and service. Tracking emails are now sent at chosen stages of the delivery. These can be either sent to the customer care team, to the customer or to both. This allows House of Fraser to respond proactively to the unexpected which proves invaluable in many ways. With the reporting functionality available within MetaPack, House of Fraser is provided with a complete overview of all delivery activity, carrier performance and costs.

MetaPack manages returns in the most convenient way for the retailer/ shopper. MetaPack selects the appropriate carrier and service, communicates the collections requirement to the carrier, prints labels (wherever they are needed) and communicates status updates to all parties along every step of the process as required. Initiating our process has reduced the level of time and manual intervention involved previously. House of Fraser uses a file import from its internal order management system to populate the MetaPack system, and allocation is based on weight, insurance cover and maximum dimensions. It is always looking to provide the best possible service to customers, and is looking at providing more delivery options in the future. The flexibility provided by MetaPack allows House of Fraser to always offer the best quality service and the best price at all times.