



Homebase develops its multichannel strategy with new mobile site

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Homebase has unveiled a new mobile optimised site as it seeks to expand its multichannel offering.

As well as being fully transactional, the mobile site has a store finder function that allows users to check if the product they need is in stock and reserve it for collection later that day.

The idea is to use mobile to help drive footfall in-store, which is a strategy we've seen recently from both L'Oreal and Guess Watches.

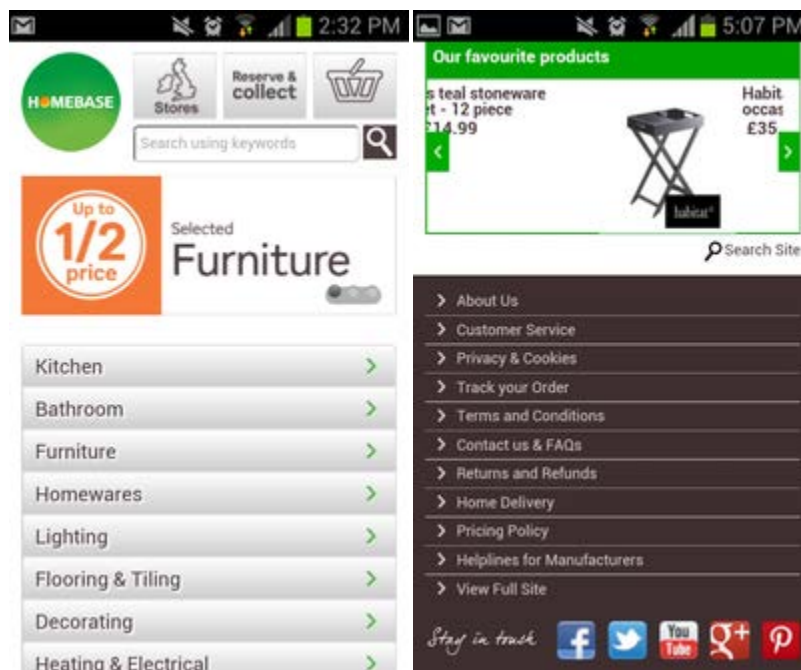
In May Homebase revealed that more than a third of its customers research online before going into a store, which highlighted the need for multichannel commerce tools such as reserve and collect.

The launch of the new mobile site shows that Homebase is continuing to develop its multichannel strategy, but is the site any good?

Homepage

The homepage offers a number of shortcuts that will be useful for mobile shoppers.

Three large icons at the top of the page links to the store locator, a reserve and collect tool and the shopping basket, while the search function is also prominently placed.





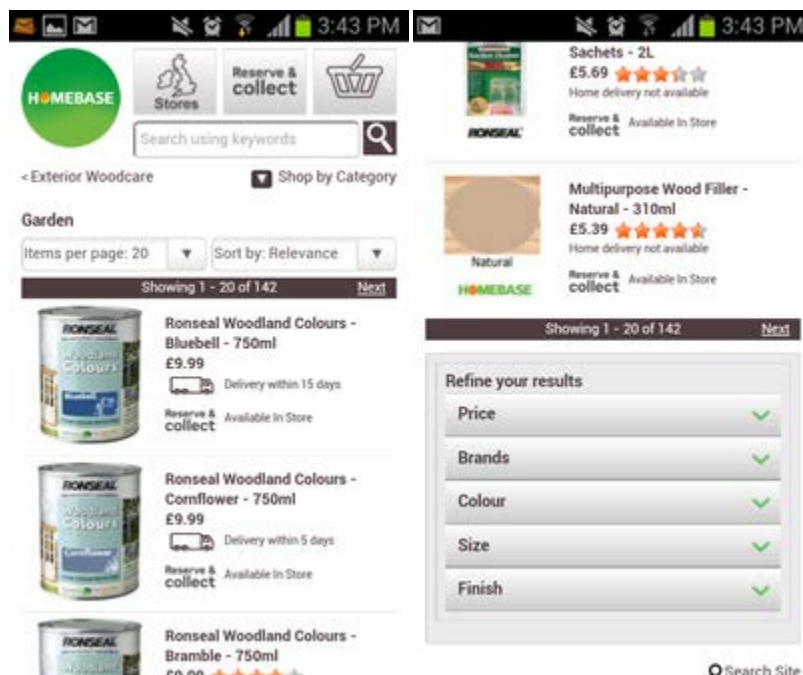
A list of product categories is also available on the homepage, which is useful for mobile shoppers as they tend to know what they are looking for so need to be able to navigate to it quickly. One strange feature on the homepage is the promotions banner that advertises deals on kitchens and furniture. When I clicked on it the homepage just reloaded.

Navigation

Homebase sells a huge number of products, so when using the product categories it generally takes three or four clicks before you actually get to a list of products.

This list then may need to be refined again using the product filters.

There's not a lot that Homebase can do to reduce the number of clicks without delivering customers irrelevant product options, but it is still a long process for the average mobile customer.



The search function is quite good though and delivers relevant results, although it doesn't offer predictive search or automatic spelling corrections, which are useful tools for impatient mobile shoppers.

Product Pages

The product pages have a simple design which means they are quick to load, however the ones I viewed also only had one product image.

Ideally, they should show several different images to give consumers as much information as possible to encourage a purchase.

Another issue is that although there is a tab for 'Delivery Information' on all product pages, it doesn't actually load. And neither does the 'Email this to a friend' tab.



Also, the 'Help & Advice' tab features a number of potentially useful links that don't actually display any content when you click on them.

On the plus side, the product information is very detailed and customer reviews are very valuable for persuading shoppers to make a purchase.

Stock Checker and Reserve & Collect

One of the best features on the site is the stock check tool, which gives stock information on the three Homebase stores closest to you.

This is a really useful option for customers as it means they won't waste time traipsing round stores that don't have what they are looking for.

The screenshot displays the Homebase mobile app interface. On the left, the product 'Hammerite Exterior Smooth Aerosol Paint - Blue - 400ml' is shown with a price of £9.49 and a quantity of 1. Below this, three nearby stores are listed: London Battersea (3.25 miles), London Wandsworth (3.41 miles), and a Delivery option. Each store entry indicates '3 in stock' and has a green 'Reserve' button. At the bottom, there is a green 'Add items to delivery trolley' button. On the right, the 'Reservation Contact Details' form is visible, requiring fields for Title, Surname, Email address, and Contact telephone number. It also includes a Nectar card number field and a disclaimer about the use of personal information.

It's also simple to use and only needs your name, email and phone number in order to make a reservation. Homebase will even text you when the product is ready for collection.

It's great to see Homebase offering customers this functionality as it shows that retailers are aware of the opportunities for using mobile to join up online and offline sales.

Checkout

The checkout process is quite quick, but there are several issues that add up to a poor overall user experience.


Firstly there are one or two pages that could be stripped out altogether as they simply reiterate information that the customer already knows.

It's important to minimise the number of barriers to purchase to reduce basket abandonment and at the moment there are a few too many clicks between selecting the product and completing the transaction.

To make amendments to the products in your order or to change your postcode, please return to the [trolley page](#)

Shopping trolley **Arrange delivery** Payment

Delivery part 1 of 1

 **Hammerite Exterior Smooth Aerosol Paint - Blue - 400ml**
[Product details](#)
 Quantity 1
 £9.49
 Delivery within 15 days

Subtotal	£9.49
Delivery	£3.95
Total	£13.44

Delivery within 15 days Changed delivery date? [Recalculate total](#)

Continue >

Symbols
 If a symbol is displayed next to your chosen items, please see below for details.

- Excluded from our 30 day money back guarantee
- * price footnote

Contact preferences
 By submitting your details, you agree to the use of your personal information as set out in the [privacy policy](#). This includes for the purposes of administering our website services, placing orders, competition/prize draws and fraud prevention.

You will also be indicating your consent for your details to be used in our marketing programme and receiving marketing information by email, telephone, SMS text message and other electronic messages such as picture messaging, post and fax as explained in the Privacy Policy, unless you indicate otherwise by ticking the boxes below.

☐ NO - I do not want to receive the email newsletter containing all the latest offers, products and competitions, nor to be kept informed about products and services from the Home Retail Group.

☐ NO - I do not want to share my details with carefully selected companies outside of the Home Retail Group for their marketing programmes.

Please check your order summary is correct. To proceed to the payment page, check the box below to confirm you have read and agree to the terms and conditions before clicking 'continue'.

☐ I have read and agree to the [Terms & Conditions](#) of this purchase

Place order >

Secondly, although the delivery cost is shown upfront, it is a rather steep £3.95 and shipping takes up to 15 days. This could deter potential customers. Thirdly, the text fields are quite small and fiddly, so navigating between them is quite frustrating.

And finally, just before you confirm the purchase there is an unnecessary amount of text laying out the various ways that Homebase wants to spam you.

These are all issues that Homebase should be able to fix relatively easily which would greatly improve the UX.

On the plus side it does have a progress bar and customers aren't forced to register an account, which is a proven way of losing conversions.

However it should consider giving customers the option of saving their details so they can use a one-click payment system for future purchases.

Conclusion

Overall Homebase has built a good mobile site that is easy to navigate but it does suffer from a few UX issues, notably in the checkout process.

However, where it stands out against its competitors is the stock checker and reserve and collect tools.

Link: <http://econsultancy.com/us/blog/10902-homebase-develops-its-multichannel-strategy-with-new-mobile-site>