



## anyone, anywhere, anytime

*It wasn't that long ago people considered purchasing coffee online as a convenience-only product -perhaps not a well known place for quality.*

The impact of online shopping has featured in the news over the last few months with predominantly negative views on how it could disrupt retail channels in Australia.

The guys at Carlini Coffee Company, owners of [www.mycuppa.com.au](http://www.mycuppa.com.au) have identified some very interesting trends through interacting and collecting customer feedback. Café Culture caught up with roaster Jeff Carlin for some further insight into running an online coffee business.

Customers are demanding better value. Whether it's a fresher product, a broader selection, higher grade beans, lower cost, greater convenience or improved service outcomes. Jeff adds, "we are already seeing the internet actively transforming segments of the coffee market - online is no longer just the domain of a home shopper in a remote location looking for something different or unique. Online buyers want a great product at a great price with service delivery

to your door. Everyday, we receive approaches by cafes, businesses and suppliers somewhere around Australia wanting to discuss how they can engage in business with us online."

Carlini Coffee Company specialises in managing online customer relationships via their [www.mycuppa.com.au](http://www.mycuppa.com.au) portal - providing a fresh premium product to anyone, anywhere, anytime.

They have been running successful online coffee operations for many years and Jeff says the people buying their coffee are very particular in demanding quality - they are the ones drinking the coffee and quite simply they want "the best", particularly when they are paying for the convenience of delivery to their door. This commitment to excellence is one of the reasons Carlini Coffee Company was so successful at the recent CSR Golden Bean, picking up 5 medals and placing Overall 2nd.

Right from Day 1, the business has always been about providing the best value online experience

for customers - "it's not a bolt-on, side-interest play thing, promotional exercise or skunkworks pilot program" Jeff adds.

Despite common misconceptions that establishing web-based businesses is both simple and cost effective, the life of an online coffee roaster is similar to colleagues in the traditional roasting market - they have the same types of investment in equipment, processes, advertising, etc. Unfortunately, the myth that a web organisation can run on the smell of an oily rag is untrue. Quality has a price point and to maintain online customer loyalty you need to offer greater quality with excellent value.

In many respects, there are additional challenges for online roasters. The primary differences are speed from order to shipment and the ability to customize orders. Traditional roasters generally have an idea of their roasting schedule at least a week or two ahead. On line roasters are at the mercy of the order that was just placed in the last



hour or even last few minutes. It's a hard routine, demanding long days, nights and weekends to keep delivering value and quality to customers. At any time, [www.mycuppa.com.au](http://www.mycuppa.com.au) offer up to 30 different specialty grade coffees, fresh roasted 24x7 - a routine that requires considerable resources.

When customers purchase online, they have expectations of immediacy – you know the story, we've run out of coffee and I need it urgently! Preparing, roasting, packing and shipping can be time consuming and to process this efficiently Carlini developed technology systems to dramatically compress the order to shipment timeframes without compromising quality.

Another hidden challenge for online roasters is managing stock. Online businesses are largely at the mercy of variable customer order patterns - adding complexity in stock forecasting. The majority of coffee roasters hold a limited number and larger volumes of bean types whereas online roasters can typically stock a bigger range. Green bean purchasing requires significant attention both in terms of selection (time and effort) and forward planning. Right now this is even more

challenging in a rising green bean market and chronic shortages of some origins, particularly Central Americans.

"Instead of roasting the same beans over and over like traditional operators, we are roasting different beans almost every batch. You can only do this well if you completely understand all facets of roasting procedure, know your equipment intimately and have intelligent tools at your disposal," says Jeff.

As Carlini's roasting schedule is complex and diverse, they have implemented some leading edge technology to ensure roast quality. They have leveraged some of the more advanced theories of roast profiling and taken these to a whole new level. Fortunately, Jeff Carlin's experience of 28 years working with state of the art technology provided some key advantages that help push them to the forefront of coffee roasting. They have developed their own interpretation of how to extract the best from a certain bean, origin, varietal and right down to a farm/crop/lot/bean. "We think this is quite amazing – having so much control over these types of variables. Our customised roast technology and methods are unlike

anything else deployed in Australia we are excited by how technology is assisting and enhancing what is generally regarded as an acquired artisan skill - results in the cup are exceeding our expectations" adds Jeff.

Of course, relationships also need a human element and [www.mycuppa.com.au](http://www.mycuppa.com.au) make a point of personalising their service with phone contact, advice, support, information, access to VIP specials and limited runs of exclusive beans, etc. Their objective is to treat every online customer like an extension of their family.

[www.mycuppa.com.au](http://www.mycuppa.com.au) currently supply cafes all around Australia and the relationship is working very well, in fact they have more touch points with these customers than what they had received in the traditional account manager/delivery driver model.

One of the other key benefits of dealing with an online roaster is direct access to the person blending and roasting your coffee. This can be a mutually rewarding adventure for both the roaster and the customer.

Jeff Carlin – Carlini Coffee and [www.mycuppa.com.au](http://www.mycuppa.com.au)