

# The Amazon Effect

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About one hour after I placed an order at walgreens.com, it was delivered by a DoorDash driver. What?

My purchase was large enough to be shipped free, meaning, I thought, the goods would arrive in several days. Nope. Sixty minutes.

Later in the week I received a call from a Walgreen's pharmacy technician I've gotten to know over the years. She asked if I was ready for a refill on one of my prescriptions. What? In recent years, an automatic notification system might contact me by text or e-mail, but a real person? And she said the pills would be mailed. No need to visit.

Changes such as these are caused by what is being called "The Amazon Effect." Walgreens and other retailers are doing what they can to survive.

Currently there are five Walgreens stores within five miles of our house. About three miles away, a giant but long-closed JCPenney distribution center is being converted to an Amazon distribution center. It's worth remembering that for the 20th Century at least, JCPenney, Montgomery Ward, Sears, and a few other giants had nearly all the shop-at-home business, but they were too locked in to successful mail-order-telephone systems to take advantage of online methods. Now two are gone and JCPenney is struggling.

I'm thinking Walgreens, in my area at least, is terrified Amazon will begin offering same-day deliveries to customers once its new distribution center opens. Now they're trying to out-Amazon Amazon hence Walgreens speedy delivery and personal touch. It might be a successful strategy.

While working on this I received an e-mail from Amazon promoting a new service called Amazon Health. It has three components: One Medical, Amazon Pharmacy, and Amazon Clinic. One Medical and Amazon Clinic primarily offer virtual care; Amazon Pharmacy delivers prescriptions to customers. Probably Amazon Health will have major impacts on how people learn about maladies and receive treatments.

Amazon understands people and is masterful at meeting their needs and wants efficiently and cost-effectively. And its success is making competitors offer better prices and service, too. *The Amazon Effect.*

Addendum: Today's (November 18, 2023) *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* has an AP story about Amazon's intention to begin selling cars on its website.

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