



# How to Sync Your Ecommerce and POS Inventory

The Secret to Syncing Success

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# Overview

Online sales are booming, and many retailers are adding digital channels to their operations. Going omnichannel can be an exciting way to expand your business but it also introduces complications for inventory management.

If you are selling both in brick-and-mortar and online, you need to manage inventory across both a point-of-sale system (POS) and an e-commerce platform. This requires syncing these two systems, which is a complex task that can create a lot of work and (and errors) unless you have a helpful technology solution to enable the process.

Learning the ins and outs of syncing using a tool like SKU IQ can help you get set up for successful inventory management with as few of those pesky error messages as possible.

# Why syncing is important?

Syncing is the key to successfully selling via multiple channels, which is essential for retailers today. Even before the coronavirus pandemic, the retail landscape was shifting, with customers increasingly interested in shopping both in-store and online. And the pandemic only turbo-charged the move toward online shopping.

Some estimates say that ten years' worth of digital advancement occurred in a mere three months as a result of pandemic lockdowns, [according to McKinsey](#). It is certainly the case in retail: Spending on eCommerce rose 30% in the six weeks between the start of March and the middle of April 2020. Now, 86% of shoppers make their purchases from a mix of sources: at brick-and-mortar retailers, directly from brands, and online, [according to Salesforce](#).

Shoppers are now increasingly digitally literate and eager to buy in a variety of ways. They are also apt to combine methods of shopping, such as checking online if a product is available in-store before making a visit to a retail location. Retailers need a reliable method of syncing their inventory without having to spend hours manually entering and adjusting information.

## How syncing works?

SKU IQ connects a POS and an eCommerce platform, allowing the data populated in one to push to the other. This means that a sale in one system will result in an automatic adjustment to the inventory numbers on the other to match.

For example, imagine that a jewelry store sells a pair of earrings in its store using Square POS. Once the sale is rung up in the system, the jewelry shop's online store on Squarespace automatically reflects that it has one fewer of that type of earring for sale. The shop owner doesn't have to change the number manually or worry about an online shopper being disappointed due to an out-of-date inventory number on the site.

The system also has the capability to automatically adjust product titles, descriptions, and prices, so that changing these things in one system automatically changes them in the other. These options are by request and depend on your platform configurations and subscription plan.

# The Challenge: Failure to Sync

Upon signing up for SKU IQ, many merchants enthusiastically try to sync their POS and eCommerce platforms, only to run into issues with accuracy. The main reason for this is that inventory is listed differently in the two systems, so they don't match up properly.

There are two major reasons for mismatches between the two systems: Differences between information in listings and differences between the structure of listings.

# Differences in Information

If you aren't pushing products from one system to another, the inputs into the two systems need to be identical in order for SKU IQ to recognize the pairings.

Specifically, to sync up properly, each product must have a matching title, brand, price. If the product title is the only matching information between the platforms, SKU IQ will not detect a match unless you also input matching brand and price information. The titles must be an exact match to be recognized as a pair. Even differences of a single character — such as “pink T shirt” vs. “pink t-shirt” — will cause an error in syncing.

Inputting matching SKUs or UPCs in both systems is not enough to guarantee a match. Many platforms don't sync UPC data to SKU IQ, so in those cases matching UPCs won't result in a match.

# Differences in Structure

Many products have different versions — say, a particular style of shirt that has a red version and a blue version.

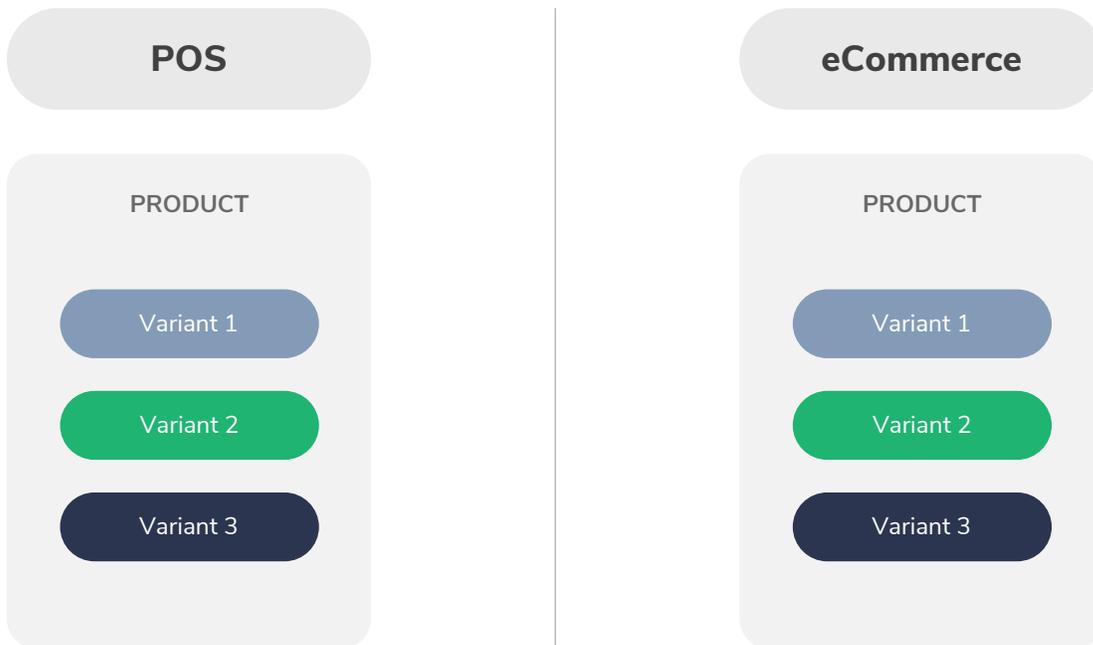
The most efficient way of listing this in inventory is to make the shirt (with no color specified) a “parent variant” of the product, and each different color of the shirt its own “child variant” underneath the parent. Another way of listing the shirts is to make each color its own product, or “parent.”

Imagine that you’ve used the prior method in your POS and the latter in your e-commerce platform, as laid out in the image below.



In this scenario, these two systems can never sync properly. The SKU IQ system is not able to link products with different numbers of variants. Neither the POS nor the eCommerce platform will recognize the variants shown here as the same items, and you'll get an error message.

To ensure that syncing goes smoothly and error messages are nowhere to be seen, it's best to set up your inventory in the same way in each system, as shown below.



# The Solution to Errors in Syncing

Your goal is to get your POS and eCommerce talking to each other with the fewest number of errors. While the details of how you accomplish this will vary depending on your POS and eCommerce system, you should ensure the data in both systems is perfectly aligned.

If your subscription plan allows, you can even enter your inventory in only one system and have it pushed into the other system. This is a foolproof way of ensuring that the information is listed in the same way in each system.

If you already have product data in both systems, here are your two options to ensure they match up.

- **Option 1:** Choose one of your systems as the “source of truth” for all products, then delete everything in the other system and push all the inventory from the source of truth over to the other.
- **Option 2:** Request a SKU IQ automated link report that will match listings based on SKU, UPC, or title, then pick and choose which system to use as the source of truth for each product.

While you can have different sources of truth for each product, it’s not the usual method of aligning your data. Most retailers pick option 1 — choosing one system from which to push data to the other, which ensures a perfect match.

# The Benefits of Proper Syncing

Proper syncing of inventory across systems has a number of benefits for retailers.

**Efficiency:** Automatic syncing saves you time and energy, making the job of running your business more efficient. The alternative is to only have a portion of things syncing correctly and to spend time doing the rest manually.

**Cost:** Syncing saves you money because you don't have to pay staff to manually update quantities and other product data, to spend your own time dealing with errors and unhappy customers.

**Organization:** Proper syncing will create an organized data set that will have longevity. You can keep building on the tidy system you've built instead of watching as your inventory system spins out of control.

**Accuracy:** Automating your inventory management means introducing fewer mistakes into your data. Once you have everything synced up well, you only have to manage the inputs into one system, as the key data gets pushed automatically to the other.

**Customer satisfaction:** Syncing allows you to show your customers accurate product information on any given channel in real-time, boosting the chances that they'll walk away happy.

## Conclusion

Managing data between your point-of-sale and e-commerce systems is an increasingly important part of running a retail business. It's crucial to get it right, and it's far too time-consuming and tricky to do manually.

Getting it right requires listing your products in the right formats on each platform. With SKU IQ, you can sync product data automatically to ensure that this happens properly and that error messages will be a thing of the past.

# Fully Integrated Retail

Your data should be connected and portable. SKU IQ connects with the world's leading retail platforms.

