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# The Shift to Speed: A Case Study on the Rise of Q Commerce Companies and Its Impact on E-Commerce Strategies

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## Introduction

The development in the retail and E Commerce universe is quick commerce, or q-commerce, which promotes fast delivery times—often within minutes to an hour. Consumer behaviour has changed dramatically as a result of this approach, particularly for necessities like convenience foods, prescription drugs, and groceries. Through the use of technology, localised warehousing, and sophisticated logistics, q-commerce is changing what consumers expect.

The Indian market is now seeing a growth in quick commerce and ECommerce. Businesses are using a variety of strategies to reach a wider audience, with a major emphasis on centring on specific customer segments.

This case study will look at the strategies a Q-commerce firm used to succeed and how they grew in a very competitive industry which influence on E Commerce strategies.

## Q Commerce

An insignificant selection of grocery items is available for customers to purchase in the quantities they require or desire via Quick Commerce, an on-demand delivery service that costs a delivery fee. It promises to deliver limited quantities of grocery products to customers upon request within a given time window of 30 minutes to 1 hour. For consumers who prefer not to have supermarket goods on hand, there is an alternative: the rapid commerce model. However, since delivery costs are one way for firms to produce revenue, they might be expensive. For time-constrained consumers who value the simplicity of ordering the items they choose whenever it is convenient for them, quick commerce provides an enticing value proposition in terms of delivery speed and convenience.

In this in-depth case study of the strategies used by Q commerce companies to capture the market, we will identify the key elements that have pushed its growth and go into great detail about the strategies and tactics that have enabled these businesses to become the leaders of the Indian quick commerce industry key variables that might contribute to this company model's long-term viability.

Quick commerce, or q-commerce, is a rapidly growing sector of the ECommerce sector. It refers to the timely, usually less than an hour, delivery of products and services to customers.

Remember the kirana mom-and-pop stores from the old era? They were as commonplace as they are now, proliferating throughout the city. In a few kirana, a young employee would deliver your orders to your home within a few minutes upon request. The value chain profited from this arrangement: the client experienced tremendous speed and convenience, the young employee at the shop gained training to build his own store in the future, and the kirana seller witnessed a boost in sales and customer base

The reason for worry may have been over the kirana trade's supposed loss of income and means of subsistence as ECommerce lowers their earnings and, as a result, their base of support. Or possibly the actual concerns were about the possible damage this could do to the lives of consumers and the mom-and-pop business.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, customers' comfort with online food buying due to their desire to follow social distancing norms by utilising contactless deliveries and payments drove the growth of quick commerce grocery delivery businesses. This is developed by dark shops, which are usually located in unclean and low-lit areas. Cloud shops, often known as small fulfilment centres, are delivery-only businesses that are usually inaccessible to customers. An exception to this rule is Reliance Smart Point, which enables clients to

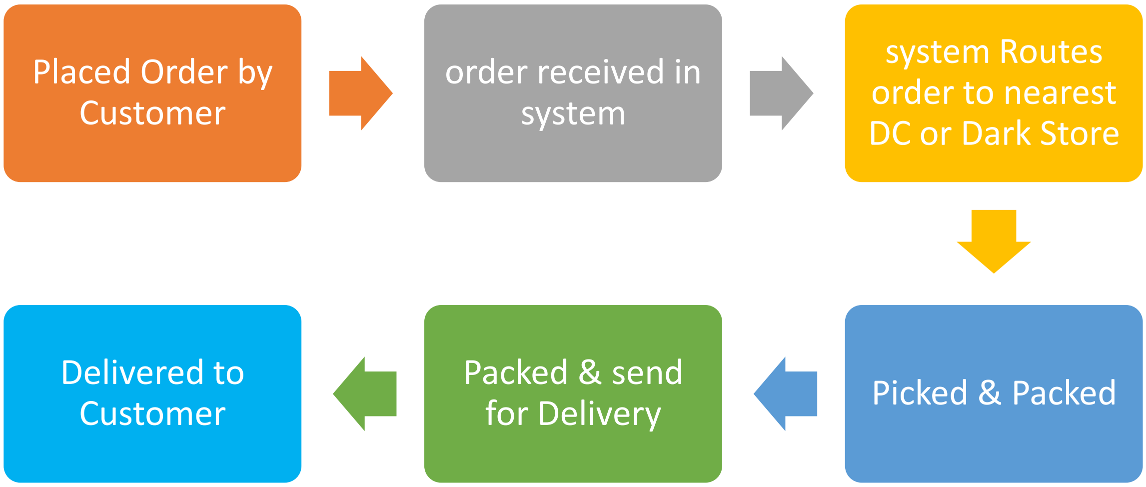


Fig. 1 Ways of Working in Q Commerce Process flow of products ordered online using the instant delivery app

***Blinkit***

Formerly referred to as Grofers, Blinkit is a well-known online grocery delivery service in India that has seen a significant increase in revenue over the previous five years. When Blinkit was first established in 2013, its primary goal was to deliver necessities and groceries within a few hours of an order being placed. The company has evolved significantly in recent years, changing its business strategy and growing its customer base.

Since Blinkit was still focussing on growing its operational presence in important Indian cities, its revenue in 2019 was very low. But in 2021, the business underwent a significant change, moving from a conventional grocery delivery strategy to a very quick delivery service. The growing need for speedy delivery, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic when consumer behaviour sharply changed towards contactless buying, was a major factor in this change (Business Insider, 2021). By the end of 2021, Blinkit had changed its name from Grofers to Blinkit and started emphasising deliveries that took 10 to 30 minutes, which helped to increase user acceptance.

Due to growing investments from key players like Zomato, who owned a sizable part in the business, Blinkit's turnover jumped to almost $1 billion by 2022 (Economic Times, 2022). This revenue rise was fuelled in part by the company's move to quicker delivery times and the rising demand for food and necessities.

Blinkit kept growing in 2023, and its projected turnover was more over $1.5 billion. By using its innovative logistics and online buying trends, the firm expanded its reach into more cities. Despite fierce competition from regional firms like BigBasket and Amazon Pantry, Blinkit has established itself as a market leader because to its emphasis on quick, on-demand delivery.

***Zepto***

After its launch in 2020, Zepto, a rapidly expanding ultra-fast grocery delivery business, has achieved impressive growth in the Indian market. Aadit Palicha and Kaivalya Vohra founded Zepto to capitalize on the growing demand for quick, on-demand grocery delivery, especially during the COVID-19 epidemic when customer preferences shifted towards online and convenient shopping. The company's primary differentiation in a cutthroat industry is its emphasis on delivering goods in as little as 10 minutes.

Zepto had difficulty expanding in its early years but soon gained traction after obtaining significant funding from well-known businesses and international venture capitalists. Zepto had grown to important cities including Delhi, Bengaluru, and Mumbai by 2021, but its turnover was still tiny but showed potential. The company's objective of growing its operations and enhancing its logistical infrastructure was accelerated in 2021 when it obtained a sizable round of investment (TechCrunch, 2021).

As it reached more towns and improved its distribution system, Zepto's income increased significantly by 2022, reaching an estimated $100 million (Ec onomic Times, 2022). The company's rapid growth was facilitated by efficient supply chain management and the need for prompt grocery deliveries.

Zepto's customer base and operational presence experienced huge growth in 2023, as seen by its turnover reaching $250 million. In order to support its further development into new locations and improve its technological infrastructure, the firm has obtained extra investment. Though Zepto faces competition from well-known companies like Blinkit and BigBasket, its ongoing commitment to lightning-fast delivery and innovative last-mile logistics strategy maintain it growing.

In conclusion, Zepto's turnover over the past five years is suggestive of its strategic shift towards lightning-fast delivery, its capacity to get capital, and its quick growth throughout India's metropolitan areas.

***Instamart***

Over the last five years, Instamart, the leading online grocery delivery business in India, has seen a significant rise in both turnover and market penetration. Instamart was first introduced by the well-known Indian ECommerce the platform Swiggy as part of Swiggy's meal delivery service before breaking off to become an individual grocery delivery service. Due to its capacity to provide quick grocery delivery, it quickly acquired popularity and satisfied Indian consumers' growing demand for convenience.

As Instamart was still improving its business practices and growing in important cities, its revenue in 2019 was somewhat low.But by 2020, the COVID -19 pandemic turned out to be a game changer.The demand for online grocery services increased as a result of the lockdowns and restrictions, and Instamart took advantage of this change by quickly growing its company.The platform's geographic footprint and order volumes increased significantly, reaching both urban areas and smaller villa ges (Economic Times, 2021).

Due to its strategic expenditures in technology and infrastructure, Instamart's turnover grew significantly by 2021, reaching almost $150 million. Swiggy made significant investments to expand its fulfilment facilities near clients and upgrade its logistics network, which shortened delivery times and raised customer happiness (Business Insider, 2021). By using an established customer base and familiarity with the brand, the firm also benefited from its connection with Swiggy's main food delivery platform.

As the company expanded to be present in over 30 Indian locations, Instamart's revenue exceeded $400 million in 2023.
Its commitment to quick delivery, technology, and a large selection of goods let it develop quickly and establish itself as a major rival to other grocery delivery businesses like BigBasket and Blinkit.

***Ecommerce Platforms***

Two of the largest and most popular ECommerce sites, Amazon and Flipkart, provide a wide variety of things, including electronics and electrical goods to home goods and gadgets. These platforms' market positions have been strengthened in large part by the changing habits and lifestyles of Indian customers.

This expansion has been greatly aided by the internet, which makes webpages and online portals easily accessible. ECommerce has spread throughout India, reaching even rural communities, and is no longer just found in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities. Other businesses are examining fresh approaches to gain a piece of the Indian ECommerce market, motivated by the success of the big firms. These days, this industry is separated into two primary groups: fast commerce and traditional ECommerce.

In the last five years, Amazon has expanded significantly in India, despite intense rivalry from regional firms like Flipkart and fresh difficulties brought on by legislative changes.Amazon has established itself as a major participant in the Indian market by investing heavily in growing its cloud computing services, logistics network, and ecommerce platform since entering the nation in 2013.

Amazon India's turnover increased steadily between 2019 and 2024.According to the Economic Times (2020), Amazon's income from its Indian operati ons was estimated to be over $7.5 billion in 2020, a 25% rise from the year before.A spike in internet purchases during the COVID19 epidemic, which hastened the nation's embrace of digital technology, was the primary driver of this expansion. Additionally, Amazon increased their stake at this time.

Based on reports, Amazon India's revenue exceeded $10 billion by 2023, marking a major turning point in its growth initiatives (Business Standard, 20 23).
Growing demand in industries including electronics, fashion, grocery, and digital services further accelerated the company's expansion, while Prime Vi deo and Amazon Web Services (AWS) helped to diversify its income sources.

Despite its achievements, Amazon had difficulties, especially with regard to local competition and the changing ECommerce laws in India. The business's operations in the nation were altered by the need to adjust to new regulations pertaining to foreign direct investment (FDI) and foreign-owned web platforms (Reuters, 2021).

In conclusion, a strong ECommerce strategy, technological services, and a growing client base have all contributed to Amazon's significant revenue growth in India over the past five years. Despite ongoing regulatory obstacles, the company's development trajectory shows its growing dedication to the Indian market.

In line with this objective, Amazon's Indian branch has now assigned a senior executive to lead the development of its quick commerce strategy. The choice aligns with larger leadership reorganisation efforts aimed at strengthening the business's standing in the quickly growing Indian market.

***Flipkart***

One of India's top ECommerce sites, Flipkart, has had a sharp rise in turnover over the last five years, securing its place as a significant force in the country's online retail industry. Flipkart, which was founded in 2007 and purchased by Walmart in 2018, has fuelled its expansion with strategic investments, a wide variety of products, and a strong infrastructure.

Flipkart's revenue trend from 2019 to 2024 has been remarkable, showing a steady rise each year. Due in large part to the spike in online sales during the COVID-19 epidemic, Flipkart's revenue in the fiscal year 2020 was estimated to be over $6 billion (Business Today, 2020). The epidemic hastened the transition to online shopping, as more consumers turned to sites like Flipkart for necessities, gadgets, and other items.

Due to its fast development into tier2 and tier3 cities and the growing demand for products like food, electronics, and fashion, Flipkart's turnover increa sed to $10 billion by 2022 (Economic Times, 2022).
Partnerships, improved supply chains and logistics, and an increase in private label products all contributed to the company's impressive performance. Driven by the holiday season sales and growing customer confidence in online shopping, Flipkart continued to thrive in 2023, with turnover forecasts to pping $12 billion (Mint, 2023).Additionally, the company's market share increased, solidifying its position as a major player in the Indian ecommerce b usiness and putting it in direct competition with Amazon.

Flipkart has maintained a strong presence in India in spite of obstacles including regulatory changes and increased competition.
Its ongoing achievement is largely dependent on its capacity to quickly grow, innovate, and respond to the demands of the local market.

***Traditional ECommerce: Prior to Q-Commerce***

• Model: Batch order processing, huge fulfilment centres, and delivery windows of one to three days or longer are the foundations of traditional eComm erce

• Benefits include cost-effective distribution methods, a large product assortment, and economies of scale.
• Difficulties: Potential gaps in meeting immediate consumption demands, slower supply times for urgent needs, and less emphasis on localised operati ons.

## Business Strategy of Quick Commerce Platform in India

**1. Hyperlocal Model for Rapid Delivery**

At the core of Qcommerce business strategy is its hyperlocal model, which focuses on fulfilling customer orders from dark stores located close to urban centers. These dark stores, or micro-warehouses, are strategically placed in high-density areas to enable quick deliveries within a 10–15-minute window (Chaudhary, 2023). This model allows Qcommerce to bypass the challenges associated with large, centralized warehouses that are common in traditional Ecommerce platforms, ensuring that inventory is always available for fast delivery. By leveraging these strategically located stores, Q commerce can maintain low operational costs while improving delivery times, which is a key competitive advantage in the fast-paced Q-commerce industry.

**2. Technology and Data Analytics**

Qcommerce heavily invests in technology to optimize its logistics and inventory management. The platform uses artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics to predict demand, track inventory in real-time, and optimize delivery routes. This helps them to anticipate consumer needs, maintain stock levels, and reduce delivery times, thereby ensuring a seamless and efficient service (Kumar, 2022). The use of AI also allows Qcommerce to personalize recommendations for customers, enhancing their shopping experience and increasing customer retention. Moreover, the real-time tracking system enables customers to monitor their orders, further improving transparency and customer satisfaction.

**3. Customer-Centric Approach**

Q commerce business strategy places a strong emphasis on customer experience, focusing on convenience, speed, and product quality. The company has designed its platform to cater to the busy, urban consumer who seeks instant gratification. By offering delivery times as short as 10 minutes, Zepto meets the growing demand for convenience in the Indian market (Singh, 2022). These companies also ensures high product quality by maintaining strict inventory management and quality control protocols at its dark stores or warehouses. Additionally, these are also provides customer support through multiple channels, such as in-app chat and phone support, which further strengthens customer loyalty.

**4. Wide Product Range and Affordability**

Although Q commerce operates primarily in the grocery sector, it offers a wide range of products beyond groceries, including snacks, beverages, personal care products, and household items. This broad product assortment enables Zepto to capture a larger market share in the Q-commerce segment, as consumers increasingly prefer to use a single platform for all their quick delivery needs (Chaudhary, 2023). Zepto also focuses on affordability, offering competitive pricing for its products, which helps attract cost-conscious consumers. The company regularly runs promotions and discounts to incentivize new users and retain existing customers.

**5. Funding and Expansion Strategy**

These online platform has rapid growth is also attributed to its ability to raise substantial capital. The company has raised funding from prominent investors, which has enabled it to scale operations quickly, expand its fleet of delivery partners, and open new dark stores across major urban centers (Kumar, 2022). The capital infusion supports the company’s aggressive expansion strategy, which focuses on increasing its geographical footprint in metro cities and eventually expanding to Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities in India. By increasing its market presence, Zepto aims to capture a larger customer base and establish itself as a dominant player in India’s competitive Q-commerce space.

**6. Efficient Supply Chain and Vendor Relationships**

They have more pleases a strong emphasis on building efficient supply chains by forging strategic partnerships with local vendors and suppliers. The company ensures that its dark stores are stocked with fresh, high-quality products through close coordination with suppliers. By sourcing products locally and maintaining high inventory turnover rates, as an part of quick commerce, Zepto minimizes supply chain disruptions and ensures that customers receive the products they need quickly (Chaudhary, 2023). This efficient supply chain management also helps to Q commerce to keep costs low while maintaining product availability, which is essential for sustaining rapid delivery times.

**7. Competitive Pricing and Discounts**

A pricing strategy of Quick commerce is another key aspect of its business model. The company focuses on offering competitive prices, particularly in comparison to traditional brick-and-mortar stores and other Q-commerce platforms. To build customer loyalty, thisw platform frequently offers discounts, free delivery, and promotional offers, which attract price-sensitive customers. The use of discounts also helps the company build brand recognition and increase customer acquisition (Kumar, 2022). In this way, Quick Commerce positions itself not only as a fast and efficient service but also as an affordable alternative to traditional grocery shopping.

**How Quick Commerce is Overtaking and Becoming Superior to Ecommerce in India**

Quick Commerce refers to the business model where consumers can receive their orders within an hour of placing them, typically involving essentials like groceries, beverages, and personal care items. In India, platforms like Swiggy Instamart, Blinkit (formerly Grofers), and Zepto have revolutionized the way consumers access products, providing faster, more convenient delivery services (Chaudhary, 2023). While Ecommerce platforms like Amazon and Flipkart have long been dominant in offering a wide variety of products, Q-commerce is rapidly gaining ground due to its ability to meet the increasing demand for immediacy in consumer shopping behaviors.

**Speed and Convenience: The Dominating Factors**

One of the key reasons Quick Commerce is overtaking Ecommerce is its ability to deliver products at an unprecedented speed. Traditional Ecommerce platforms typically take anywhere from 2 to 7 days for delivery, depending on the location (Singh, 2022). However, Quick Commerce platforms cater to the demand for immediate delivery, promising to deliver products within 30 to 60 minutes. This is particularly crucial for urban consumers who require urgent access to everyday items like groceries, medicines, and snacks (Chaudhary, 2023). The speed and convenience of Q-commerce fulfill the evolving expectations of consumers who seek not only variety but also immediacy in their purchases. As a result, Q-commerce has become the preferred choice for many, especially in metropolitan areas where time constraints are a significant factor in purchasing decisions (Kumar, 2021).

**Changing Consumer Preferences**

Consumer behavior has drastically shifted in recent years, with more people seeking quick, hassle-free shopping experiences. The rapid growth of digital payments, smartphones, and internet access has enabled Q-commerce platforms to thrive in India, offering consumers a seamless way to shop for essentials with a promise of speed (Kumar, 2021). In comparison, Ecommerce platforms often require customers to plan their purchases in advance, waiting for days before receiving their orders. This gap between expectations and delivery times has led many consumers to migrate towards platforms that can deliver their needs in a fraction of the time.

Q-commerce caters to the urgent and impulsive shopping needs of consumers, a behavior that traditional Ecommerce platforms are less equipped to satisfy. Consumers now prefer the flexibility of placing orders on the go, without having to wait for extended periods. This change in consumer behavior has placed Quick Commerce in a superior position to meet the growing demand for speed and convenience (Chaudhary, 2023).

**Technology and Logistics: Quick Commerce's Edge**

Quick Commerce is also benefiting from advances in technology and a well-developed logistics infrastructure. Q-commerce platforms use hyperlocal delivery models, leveraging small, strategically located dark stores and real-time tracking to fulfill orders rapidly. These platforms have optimized their logistics by using AI and data analytics to predict demand, streamline delivery routes, and manage inventory more efficiently. This ensures that consumers receive their orders within the promised time frame (Singh, 2022).

In contrast, Ecommerce platforms typically rely on larger warehouses and a network of sellers, which can result in slower delivery times, especially for products that are not immediately available in local stock (Kumar, 2021). The logistical complexity of managing large inventories and the sheer scale of operations in Ecommerce often leads to longer wait times and less flexibility, particularly for time-sensitive purchases.

**Cost-Effectiveness and Operational Efficiency**

While Ecommerce platforms have massive scale advantages, Quick Commerce platforms operate with smaller, more localized inventory hubs, reducing their reliance on large warehouses and centralized distribution systems. This results in cost savings, which can be passed on to the consumer in the form of lower delivery fees or faster service. Additionally, Q-commerce models are more operationally agile, adapting quickly to shifting consumer demands and market conditions (Chaudhary, 2023).

Ecommerce platforms, on the other hand, face higher operational costs due to the need for large-scale logistics and long-distance shipping. These platforms are also constrained by their reliance on larger warehouses, which may not be able to meet the demands for rapid delivery in urban centers. Although Ecommerce giants are beginning to experiment with faster delivery options, they still lag behind Q-commerce in terms of speed and efficiency.

**Market Trends and Future Outlook**

The Q-commerce sector in India is poised for continued growth, particularly with the increasing number of smartphone users and the rapid expansion of internet connectivity in urban areas. As more consumers prioritize convenience and speed, Q-commerce platforms are expected to dominate the urban retail market, attracting both first-time buyers and regular users who value quick access to essentials. Ecommerce platforms will likely continue to serve as the go-to option for non-urgent and bulk purchases, but the growing trend of instant gratification indicates that Q-commerce will continue to thrive and possibly surpass Ecommerce in market share in the near future (Singh, 2022).

**Ecommerce toward transition**

Getir, a prominent q-commerce company, started in Turkey and grew internationally by emphasising 10-minute delivery for necessities. Traditional supermarkets in Europe started collaborating with delivery services like Uber Eats and Deliveroo to improve their last-mile skills in order to compete. To address changing consumer needs, for example, Tesco (UK) teamed up with Deliver too to provide one-hour supermarket delivery, while Carrefour (France) started similar collaborations.

This partnership highlights the possibilities for cohabitation while illustrating how q-commerce encourages established enterprises to embrace agile strategies.

Flipkart and Amazon's Fast Commerce Plans

While the established companies continue to bolster their positions with Swiggy going public tomorrow (November 13) and Zepto aiming to raise an additional $310 million in the near future, ECommerce behemoths like Amazon and Flipkart are venturing into the thriving quick commerce industry in an attempt to gain a piece of the action.

According to ET sources, Flipkart has already launched its quick delivery service named "Minutes" and intends to open about 100 dark stores to expand its quick commerce products, while Amazon is expected to start its offerings on the quick commerce platform in the first quarter of next year. Additionally, according to the article, Amazon is allegedly looking into the potential of purchasing stock in Swiggy Instamart.

## Conclusion & Solution

By introducing new standards for speed, ease of use, and consumer happiness, quick commerce has transformed traditional ECommerce. It creates opportunities for innovation and hybrid solutions, but it also presents difficulties for established firms. More integration of hyper-local, on-demand services with conventional ECommerce platforms is anticipated in the retail environment as q-commerce grows.

In addition to satisfying changing consumer demands, this convergence will change the way that business is conducted in the future by striking a balance between sustainability, profitability, and immediacy.

By investing in technology, growing their delivery networks, and collaborating with major brands, ECommerce businesses can enhance their delivery times to meet rapid commerce (Q-commerce)

Technology: For real-time inventory management, demand forecasting, and route optimisation, use artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics. Additionally, real-time traffic data can increase the precision and effectiveness of deliveries.

Delivery networks: Increase the reach of delivery networks to include more non-metropolitan and urban areas.

Associations: To expand business and reach a wider audience, team up with major shops and brands.

**Alternatives for Traditional E Commerce**

1. Hybrid Models: Blending localised, quick-delivery choices with the extensive range of traditional eCommerce.

2. Subscription Services: Premium loyalty programs that provide quicker delivery choices.

3. Partnerships: Working together to combine their services with q-commerce players

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