

# ShoppingFeeder revolutionises e-commerce with the click of a button

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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There's no doubt that consumers need greater access to unbiased product information and the ability to compare apples with apples, but it's hard to know where to look. ShoppingFeeder was launched to simplify the process for online merchants...

E-commerce is definitely on the rise locally. Proof for the naysayers? Local stores can now sell internationally with the click of a button, and vice versa. It's all thanks to [ShoppingFeeder](#), South Africa's first multi-channel e-commerce platform to let stores list and sell their products in foreign markets.

Founder and CEO Kevin Tucker explains that with the click of a button, a store in South Africa can market its products anywhere in the world, with the added ease of automatic currency conversion. Tucker goes into more detail below...



## ■ *Explain the name 'ShoppingFeeder'?*

**Tucker:** ShoppingFeeder is a name I came up with a few years ago. The idea was that it would represent a platform that feeds products into the market. It's fitting as 'feeds' now also describes files used to distribute structured data online, like product catalogue data and news.

## ■ *Why the need for a new homegrown e-commerce platform?*

**Tucker:** ShoppingFeeder is homegrown due to the fact that I'm based here in South Africa and this is where I chose to launch. That being said, there has never been a platform here, or in other developing markets, which helps online retailers manage their product distribution and management around the web.

## ■ *How does ShoppingFeeder work?*

**Tucker:** ShoppingFeeder is a 'platform as a service', which allows stores to disseminate their product data to multiple channels for marketing and sales purposes - hence the term 'multi-channel'. For most stores based on popular shopping-cart platforms like [Magento](#) or [Shopify](#), using ShoppingFeeder is a one-click process requiring the installation of a plugin or a Facebook-type app for Shopify. Products are then automatically imported into ShoppingFeeder and can easily be disseminated to channels like [PriceCheck](#), Google Merchant Centre, Amazon or eBay.

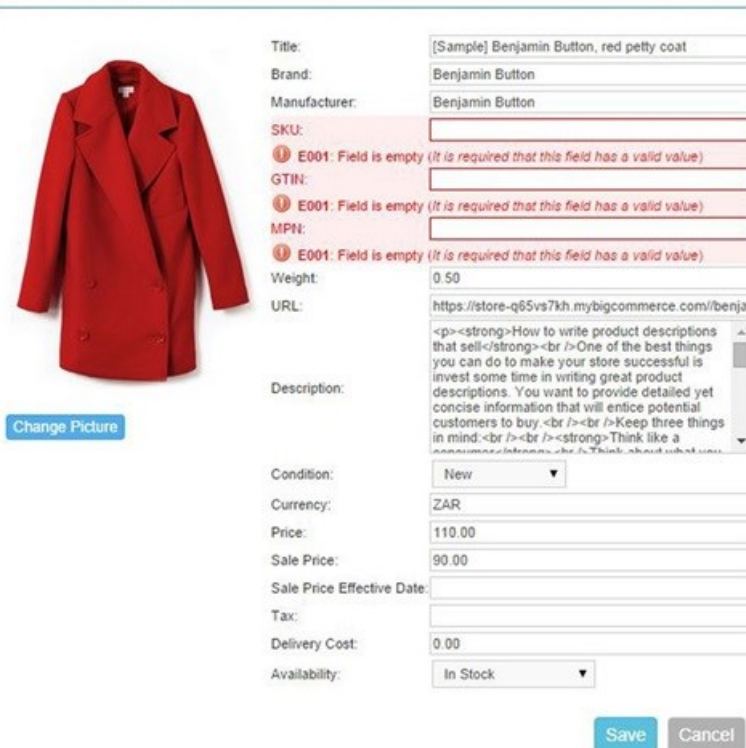
In addition to helping stores manage their product distribution, ShoppingFeeder provides atomic, product-centric analytics that merchants have never had before. This means merchants can now see exactly which channel referred traffic, and whether that traffic resulted in a conversion or sale. They can also see if referrals result in direct conversions, meaning they can track whether the product that brought the shopper to the site is the same product that they bought in the end.

Soon we'll also give them the ability to see their most popular products across all channels by referrals and those that were the most popular by sales.

### ■ **Why are other countries desperate to sell overseas in South Africa to increase their reach?**

**Tucker:** In developed markets, retailers often reach the ceiling of their target markets and thus move into less-developed markets to grow their customer base. Many US retailers, for example, are now selling to foreign customers and shipping globally with a seamless logistics model.

#### Offer detail view



A screenshot of ShoppingFeeder in action

In addition, South African retailers are growing their markets by shipping abroad. A great example of this is [Yuppiechef](#), with its expansion into Sub-Saharan Africa and the UAE.

### ■ **What's the South African e-commerce industry like?**

**Tucker:** The South African e-commerce industry is an interesting animal. In some respects it's extremely developed - for example we have expedited local delivery with [takealot](#) and Mr Delivery, as well as mobile-enabled commerce - and in others it's extremely undeveloped due to factors such as market size and product range. However, what's clear is that growth is good, but the market still needs to grow considerably to make it profitable at scale. What we really need to get to grips with is that people online is not the same as people *buying* online. We need to see more retailers selling products that interest the lower LSMs and technology that works for them, too. I would also love to see retailers grow the long tail by offering more unique, rare products that fill a sorely-needed gap. In addition, the growth of online marketplaces, as [Kalahari.com](#) and [Takealot](#) and [Bidorbuy](#) are beginning to foster, will see rapid growth in the long tail due to an increase in third party sellers.

### ■ **What's the ShoppingFeeder experience like, for merchants and customers alike?**

**Tucker:** As a B2B platform, the merchant is our customer. From an end-user consumer's perspective, they need not even know ShoppingFeeder exists. However, due to our ability to increase a merchant's reach, consumers should see great growth in the availability of products on channels that they use and trust. For example, we're already increasing the number of merchants listing on platforms like [Kompare](#), [PriceCheck](#) and [Shopmania](#), so there is much more variety for the consumer.

For a merchant, using ShoppingFeeder is a seamless, non-technical experience that really lets them focus on retailing and staying on top of their spend and increasing their conversion rate.

### ■ **How was PriceCheck integrated into the platform?**

**Tucker:** PriceCheck has a proprietary feed in XML format that they require from merchants to supply their product data. We have built a one-click system for the merchant to provide this feed to PriceCheck without requiring any technical skills. This saves the merchant money, and because we understand the nuances of the feed requirements, we can help them list much faster.

### ■ **Tell us more about your other 'shopper-related' initiatives you started, such as PriceCheck and Dealify - why so much interest in the shopper landscape?**

**Tucker:** I have e-commerce in my blood. I've been selling things online since I started an auction platform in the UK in 2003. That became an iPod accessories online store, and then PriceCheck was born.

My core belief was that consumers need greater access to unbiased product information and the ability to compare apples with apples. With PriceCheck, we were able to offer our developing market a first-world service where they could educate themselves about the products they wanted to buy.

When I left PriceCheck I moved into the popular daily deals space, where Groupon was already market leader. We built Dealify to compete with Groupon head-on and rapidly build a successful business. Once again, our focus was on the consumer, and we made sure we provided stellar customer service and great deals. Dealify lasted seven months before it was shuttered in some corporate restructuring.

On a different tangent, [GoGifting](#) was my attempt at building South Africa's first social-gifting platform - allowing users to send vouchers to friends using Facebook. It's still going, but my focus is fully on ShoppingFeeder now, which has been a work in progress for many years.

### ■ ***Having launched on 1 September, what's the response been like these first two months?***

**Tucker:** The response has been pretty overwhelming. We now have customers all over the world, from Brazil to The Netherlands to India, and of course in South Africa. There is a great appetite for a simple, powerful platform that adds value to merchants and allows them to focus on what they do best - retailing.

### ■ ***Lastly, the brand logo is very cute, is there a deeper meaning?***



**Tucker:** If you look closely, the monster is eating XML, so he's literally being fed data. The monster represents the market and the XML represents product data. We're feeding the market and the market will grow as a result!

Sounds like retail and mobile and definitely blurring the lines and becoming a new animal altogether that will bite a chunk out of the market. [Click here](#) for more on mobile and the retail revolution from Jarrod Payne of Millward Brown.

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

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