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## Five ways Fastway Couriers over deliver

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bv: By Business View

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Richard Thame stepped into the CEO Seat at Fastway Couriers in 2008, taking over from founder Bill McGowan, the man who invented franchised parcel delivery. It was a tricky time. The GFC had hit, freight volumes were declining, and technology was disrupting the business models of both the courier industry and its major customers. Handed lemons, Thame, an accountant with a background working for franchising operations such as McDonald's and Thrifty, delivered lemonade.

### 1. Why has Fastway Couriers flourished on your watch?

I'd seen how online bookings had transformed car rental. I believed there was a potential synergy between those small business owners embracing e-commerce and Fastway Courier franchisees motivated to grow their business by providing them with excellent customer service. Freight volumes were declining, but it was the products moved on pallets that were declining while parcel delivery was taking off. Fastway Couriers, being a new and nimble player, was in many respects better suited to parcel delivery. Once I became CEO, I determined that was what Fastway should focus on.

### 2. How did you improve the e-commerce-friendliness of Fastway's offering?

Because they weren't aware there were other options, a lot of small businesses were hijacking a shopping trolley and racing down to Australia Post with their parcels. Our franchisees, who are incentivised to grow their business, targeted those businesses. We provided the technical and other support the franchisees needed. We did that by, for example, developing technology that allowed retailers' websites to plug into Fastway's system. This meant when the customer made a purchase and entered their delivery details, the delivery process largely happened automatically. More recently, we've moved into white label products, most notably for Officeworks' Mailman parcel delivery service. We've also entered into a partnership with eBay Australia, where we offer our last mile delivery service to online sellers utilising the eBay site. We've been able to leverage affordable, cloud-based technology to provide innovative solutions to meet our customers' needs.

### 3. You've also shaken up your supply chain with Parcel Connect?

We were increasingly going from business-to-business to business-to-consumer deliveries and running into the problem of consumers not being home. We signed up businesses open long hours, such as convenience stores and service stations, and launched Parcel Connect. It allows franchisees to drop off packages at a nearby retail outlet for customers to pick up at a convenient time. It saves time and effort for our franchisees, increases convenience for the customer and offers an extra income stream for the participating retail businesses.

### 4. How competitive is the courier industry?

Very. There are the large established players, there are new entrants, and everyone is competing on price to some extent. That's the way it is, and that won't change. What I'm focused on is how Fastway can gain a

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competitive advantage by making it easier for senders and receivers to transact, through initiatives such as the ones I've mentioned.

### 5. What else would you like to deliver during the remainder of your time behind the wheel?

I believe it's about being the best at what we do not the biggest in the industry. We want to sign up some of the top 10 domestic retailers as well as handle the Australian territory for some of the big international retailers. We've committed to growing the number of our Australian franchisees from around 800 to 1000 within three years. We want to delight our customers and have lots of happy, profitable franchisees. We want to be the courier company people think of when it comes to e-commerce and parcel delivery.

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- April 2015
- March 2015
- February 2015
- January 2015
- December 2014
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- October 2014
- September 2014
- August 2014
- July 2014
- June 2014
- May 2014
- April 2014
- March 2014
- February 2014
- January 2014
- December 2013
- November 2013
- October 2013
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- April 2012
- March 2012
- February 2012
- January 2012
- December 2011
- November 2011
- October 2011
- September 2011
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- May 2011
- April 2011
- March 2011
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