



Sofology is a specialist sofa retailer based in the north of England and employing around 1,000 staff in 44 stores and 6 distribution centres across the UK. It was acquired by DFS in November 2017 and since then the organisation has grown significantly.

Sofology prides itself on delivering exceptional customer service through every step of the customer journey, from browsing in store or shopping online all the way through to ensuring a successful first-time delivery. Its innovative omni-channel experience offers customers the freedom to browse and shop anywhere at any time, whether that's online, in store or by telephone.

The business is growing fast and Sofology has opened 5 new stores in 2020 and plans an additional 10 openings in 2021.

## Omnichannel sofa retailing

Sofology prides itself on being the only fully omni-channel sofa retailer currently operating in the UK. Customers can place orders via the Sofology website, through the direct telephone sales channel and within the retail stores.

Staff within the retail stores are issued with iPads which they use to register customers' details as they are speaking to them. They are then able to build a basket for customers as they move around the store, enabling customers to look at different options and store the details of anything that interests them. Customers can then access this basket from home enabling them to consider the options, add or remove items and make whatever changes they want until they're ready to place an order.

Once the customer has left the store, the direct sales team can follow up with them by phone if they don't immediately place an order. The direct sales team member can see the customers' basket and answer any questions they may have about it. Once the customer is ready to place an order they can make payment on the website, over the telephone either with the direct sales team or with the store that they visited, or in store using an application on the staffs' iPads.

## The relationship between Sofology and CardEasy

The Sofology contact centre supports the direct telephone sale channel with 200+ agents handling a significant volume of inbound and outbound customer calls as well as webchat.

Sofology has worked with Syntec since July 2017 when CardEasy was originally deployed to enable agents in Sofology's contact centre to take secure payments from customers over the telephone. Since then, Sofology has increased the use of CardEasy in two ways: firstly, by enabling staff in the retail stores to take telephone payments, and secondly by ensuring that contact centre staff working from home are able to take secure payments.





## Enabling stores to take telephone payment

During summer 2020 the decision was taken to enable stores to take payment over the telephone in addition to the direct sales team.

“The business took off during lockdown. We had so many calls coming in to the direct sales team that we decided to share the load between the stores. This also means that if a customer already has a working relationship with a store, they can speak to someone in that store and make a payment with them directly over the telephone without having to go back into the store or phone our call centre.”

“The retail team wanted a quick turnaround in rolling out secure telephone payments to stores. This obviously required very close engagement with Syntec and our telephone system provider. Usually in this situation we find we’re ‘piggy in the middle’ going between one provider and another but what we found with Syntec is that the support team that helped us to roll this out were completely willing to speak to our telephone system provider, to go through any potential issues with them directly and guide us through the process as well.”

**Ashley Hill**  
IT Service Delivery Manager

## Benefits to the business of taking telephone payment in stores

“We started the process in July 2020 and the project was completed mid-way through August 2020. Rolling out secure telephone payments to our stores has really helped the business. It’s taken a lot of pressure off our direct sales team, but it’s also helped each of the retail stores to boost their sales figures and revenue.”

“We have also integrated CardEasy into our point-of-sale application on the iPads that store staff use. This was also a simple process and the retail staff have adapted to using CardEasy really well. Sometimes staff can see new systems like these as distractions but with CardEasy it’s really straightforward to take payments this way. We’ve had no complaints at all.”

“Before, we found that the direct sales team were so busy that we were almost certainly losing customers who weren’t prepared to wait in a call queue. Now that the customer can pay over the phone directly with the store we have been able spread the load, so we’re getting fewer calls into the contact centre which means improved call handling times. Customers are also able to talk to the local store that they’ve been dealing with which we think is a significant improvement to the customer journey.”

**Ashley Hill**  
IT Service Delivery Manager

## Enabling contact centre staff to take secure payments from home

As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic the entire Sofology team, including contact centre agents, began working from home in March 2020. In August 2020, it was decided that this arrangement would continue permanently as not only were staff more productive when working from home, but they also reported that they had a better home-life balance.

In the future it is envisaged that 80-90% of the business will be working from home, including contact centre agents. Syntec's CardEasy solution enables call centre operators to take secure payments from wherever they are located.

"We've really expanded our use of CardEasy as our business has expanded. Obviously, it's something we've rolled out to our retail stores, but it's also been very helpful to ensure that all telephone payments are taken securely when contact centre staff are working from home as well."

**Ashley Hill**  
IT Service Delivery Manager

## Working with CardEasy

"The support from CardEasy is absolutely exceptional. Usually when you raise a ticket with a supplier on an online portal or via email you will then have to wait for hours to get a response and then the person who responds isn't familiar with your situation. However, with Syntec we generally dealt with the same person each time who was incredibly quick to respond and really understood our business requirements. The support team know how our set up works and any issues are resolved really quickly, which is great."

"The CardEasy team has really taken the time to understand our business, to the point where if we've suggested something that we want to do they're able to advise us on better options. They have advised us really well and stopped us making mistakes that we potentially could have made without that advice. They don't just blindly follow what we want them to do. They really engage with our business and understand it."

"Another big benefit is how responsive the CardEasy team is. Often when dealing with other suppliers most communication has been via email which can lengthen the time it takes to get resolution. With CardEasy, we've found that we'll log a ticket and then someone will give us a ring straight away to talk things through. In terms of service, it's the speediness of the response, the level of engagement and the understanding of our business that are really key."

**Ashley Hill**  
IT Service Delivery Manager

## Would you recommend CardEasy?

“Absolutely, yes I definitely would. To be honest, if I moved on to pastures new and we needed a similar solution CardEasy is the first option I'd look at. I've had no issues with it at all. For me, the service that CardEasy offers is what sells it. I'd actually be willing to pay more for that level of service. We're really heavily invested in the omnichannel journey which relies heavily on being able to take payments over the phone. CardEasy is an integral part of that solution so it has to work.”

For further information, or to read other case studies, please visit:

 [www.cardeasy.com](http://www.cardeasy.com)