

## Maplin Looks to Smart Home for Salvation

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Struggling British CE retailer Maplin is currently looking for a lifeline following a negative holiday shopping period-- and one potential cash source being considered is no other than smart home installation.



According to Sky News, a "2020 Vision Strategy" has Maplin fight the "hands off" likes of Amazon by taking more care of customers. Thus, it would not only sell smart home products, but also install them and offer aftercare services. Maplin believes smart home is the next big thing in the UK, with an own report stating 2017 demand for products such as the Amazon Echo and Google Home is up by 135% over 2016.

That said, Maplin's idea is hardly new-- both John Lewis and Currys offer smart home installation services. John Lewis has joined forces with local contractors to take care of installation, while Currys has own installers as part of the Knowhow team. Maplin already has an installation service, specifically a partnership with TSG taking care of Nest thermostat setup.

As for the state of Maplin, things are not looking too good-- the retailer is currently unable to obtain credit following sales dropping by -7% Y-o-Y during the crucial Christmas season. This was partly the result of stock shortages triggered by the loss of suppliers' insurance. Currently owner Rutland Partners is in "crunch talks" with potential buyers, one of which is, oddly enough, high street clothing chain Edinburgh Woolen Mill (EWM).

Maplin has over 200 stores in the UK, and employs 2500 people.

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