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DESIGNERS

PUSHING BOUNDARIES IN **ECOMMERCE**

ECOMMERCE REPORT 2016

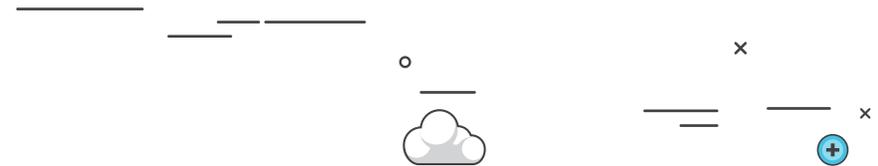
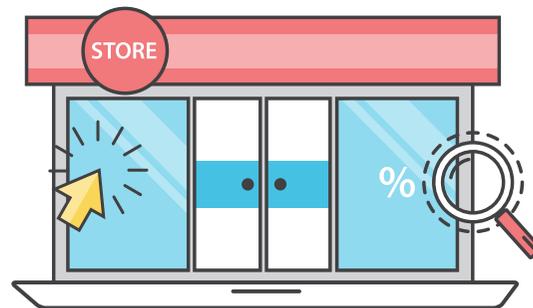
Despite the challenges of replicating the in-store experience online, online commerce is well positioned to offer most things that shoppers want. Offering an unparalleled eCommerce experience does not rest merely on transplanting offline retail into an online context, but in re-inventing the retail experience in a digital form; according to research conducted by Schieber, the stalwarts of eCommerce innovation are engaged in fine-tuning their strategies in several areas at once.

In providing a wholly digital experience, retailers are attempting to address the current eCommerce barriers with growth strategies that are aimed at offering a seamless digital experience;

The first wave of eCommerce is coming to an end. Establishing an online presence and focusing on traffic acquisition is no longer enough.

The new war is for customer lifetime value; the battleground is user experience; and the weapons of choice are technology and data.

– Richard Sharp (CTO, Yieldify)



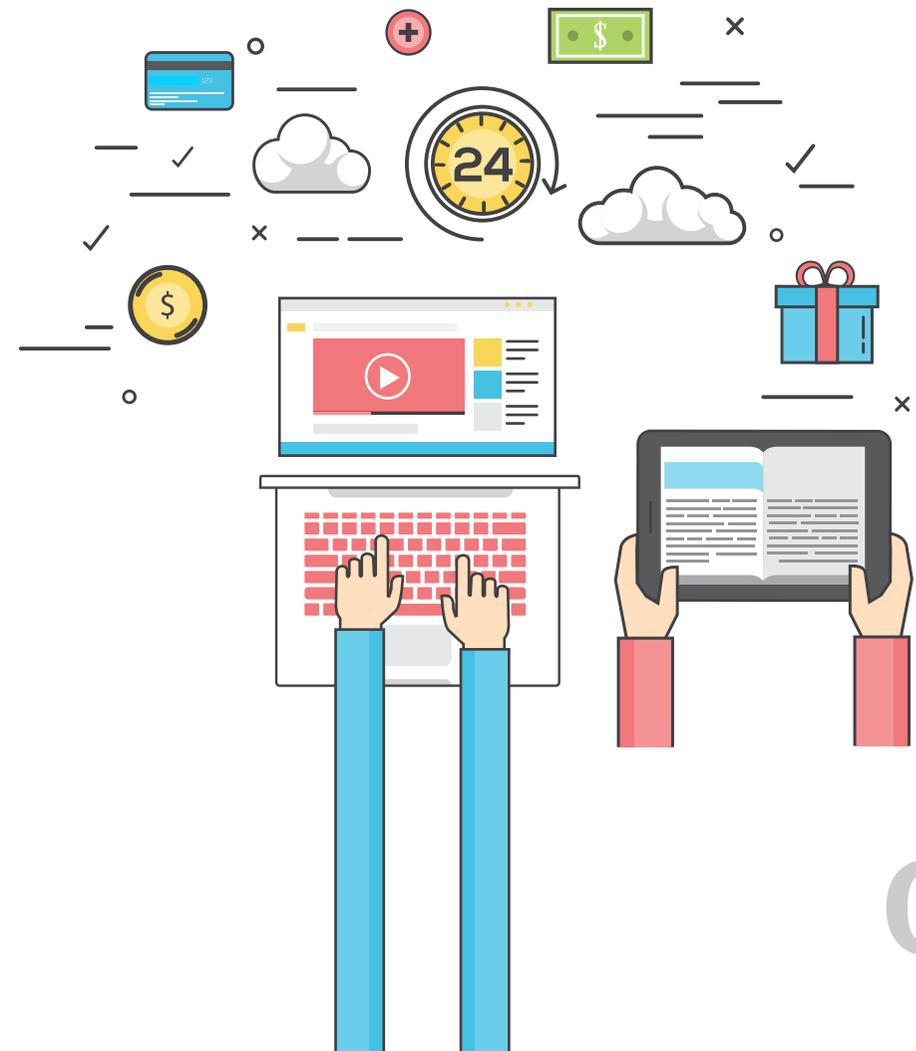
OMNICHANNEL RETAILING

Also referred to as multi-channel shopping, this is about offering customers a variety of platforms to purchase your products from. Omnichannel retailing operates on the fundamental principle that you optimize your business across multiple channels and offering a greater degree of choice for your customers. Most importantly, it also allows customers to engage with your business in the method that is most convenient to them; today's users want an omnichannel experience, with a brand that is relevant, which also offers a personalized experience. This also involves using real-time customer data to better understand its in-store and online clientele, as well as to deliver communications that are personally tailored to the brand's customers.

Omnichannel retailing is about providing a seamless service across all platforms, and ensuring that the brand identity remains consistent across these multiple channels. Some of the current omnichannel trends being deployed by brands are Beacon technology, which bridges the gap between online and physical stores with deals being sent directly to a store visitor's mobile while they happen to be physically present at the store.

Omnichannel retailing of the future will also focus on a holistic customer experience. And as the mobile experience goes mainstream, mobile becomes the center of a brand's omnichannel strategy.

Social media is also mobile, given that mobile apps being present at every micro moment of a customer's new digital journey.



As Gartner says, customer experience is the battleground companies are fighting over, so sustainable growth depends on using customer data for either real-time website or mobile app personalization.

USER EXPERIENCE INNOVATION

ECommerce innovations are not limited to structural changes; this means that whichever digital interface is serving consumers also needs to evolve as different functionalities become prioritized. Spending money online is risky, so people are understandably reluctant to do so; a good eCommerce site would therefore make the online shopping experience all about convenience and comfort. Good information architecture and a seamless and compelling experience is the key to thriving in an oversaturated eCommerce environment, and to ensuring that your customers become brand advocates.

Warby Parker has a unique angle on eliminating online shopping jitters; they send users 5 glasses to try at home before purchasing, which allows them to find the perfect fit. This is a solution geared towards facilitating the eCommerce experience for a niche market, which works because it identifies and focuses on a 'must-have' experience to engage customers in unorthodox ways. The convergence of physical and online stores advances further with the integration of beacon technology, which works when your mobile device searches for a beacon when you are present at a physical store location, and allows the store to offer promotions.



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social engagement with beauty products and brands is a driving force behind sales in the cosmetics industry, and millennial women are at the forefront of this trend. Millennials and gen Z in general have higher rates of involvement in the beauty market, and the availability of search tools and social networks ensures that product-based advantages are no longer the sole point of reference in winning the eCommerce battle.

VIDEO MARKETING

While shoppable video has been around for a while, retailers are beginning to get more creative across the board. For instance, Ted Baker has created a shoppable film that allows users to add items directly from the film into their carts. This three-minute shoppable film, titled 'Mission Impeccable' (in a nod to James Bond), uses the Google App's voice search to offer a comprehensive omnichannel experience by having users

social media performs the role of converting prospects into customers, and retailers are capitalizing on the 'direct purchase' options on various social media platforms. Rich pins on Pinterest allow retailers to fully integrate their site and synchronizing the details on each product page with its corresponding pin; social selling is an ever-expanding area of eCommerce optimization for retailers, with sites like Polyvore providing added incentive.

speaking code words into the app sourced from the store windows and solve clues to win prizes.

Video marketing allows retailers to re-energize product pages with optimized video content. These videos capitalize on an engaging narrative to make a brand's content more shareable while ensuring that customers retain more information for less.

MCOMMERCE

With increased smartphone penetration, mobile Commerce (M-Commerce) is seeking to replace eCommerce, and the mobile domination of retail will only continue to grow. The growth of mobile transactions continues across all retail categories, and this growth focuses on smartphones. Given the necessity of optimizing the shopping experience for mobile, retailers are focusing on the customer experience; mobile wallets are gaining traction among eCommerce consumers, especially as people become more comfortable engaging in transactions with their mobile phones. It seems likely that optimized mobile checkouts with mobile apps that integrate content, payments, as well as delivery are essential for a seamless consumer experience.

These mobile apps will also be used to drive customer loyalty and generate a higher customer lifetime value; gearing each mobile app to provide customers with relevant content and information adds value to the app, while wearables will also play a significant role. Data from wearables, especially smart watches, can be used to deliver a highly personalized experience for users, as retailers increasingly make use of real time biometrics. For instance, an entire shopping journey completed through a wearable is slowly becoming a reality, with the integration of Apple Pay.



CONCLUSION

In an age of micro moments, which factor in a fractured consumer journey into 'hundreds of real-time, intent-driven' moments, each of which offers a critical opportunity for brands to shape our preferences (Google), customer service and experience is key. While eCommerce retailers have a myriad of ways to interact with customers and capitalize on growing digital trends, focusing on innovation helps early adoption. Most of these trends help create seamless path-to-purchase experience for customers, in addition to building up substantial post-purchase relationships with the increasingly digitally savvy consumer.

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Let's talk

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