

THE 2019 EFTPOS
ARA AUSTRALIAN RETAIL
AWARDS EDITION

THE RETAILER

Issue 66 - August 2019

Setting the scene for success

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—
DISRUPTION FOR A
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—
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2019 Australian Retailers Association
ISSN: 183404720

FROM THE

Executive Director

With the end of 2019 fast approaching, this special Awards edition of *The Retailer* focuses on Setting the Scene for continual success in the retail sector.

As we transition into the next era of retail, I am proud to celebrate Australia's extraordinary retailers on the national stage that is the 2019 **eftpos ARA Australian Retail Awards**.

This year's Awards reflect the history of Australian retail and the theme Retail Morphosis highlights developments in the retail sector and the industry's achievements to date.

In recent years, the industry has undergone a revolution, becoming a highly integrated network that is evolving and changing at a rapid rate.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank our corporate sponsors, esteemed judges, and the entire ARA team for organising this event.

Your ongoing support and contribution to our annual Awards has allowed us to fulfil our endeavour to provide a space where we have been able to acknowledge our outstanding Australian retailers for almost fifty years.

Finally, I'd also like to thank the retailers who submitted a nomination or were nominated by their peers for this year's Awards. The high standard of submissions received by the ARA is a true reflection of the passionate retailers who contribute to the vitality of this thriving sector.

While international marketplaces, innovative mobile technology and the evolving needs of the contemporary consumer pose as threats to the sustainability of Australian retail, it's the innovative retailers who continue to reinvent their businesses that stay ahead of the curve and triumph against the challenges.

We hope you enjoy this special edition of *The Retailer*, and we forward to seeing what the next decade will have in-store for retail.



Russell Zimmerman
Executive Director
Australian Retailers Association



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BY ZOE THOMPSON [ARA]

THE INFLUENCING POWER OF SHOPPERS HAS REACHED NEW HEIGHTS IN AUSTRALIA

Almost two thirds of online shoppers shun celebrity influencers when shopping online and more than six in ten (61%) feel that celebrity influencers are out of date according to the latest research released today by Bazaarvoice, a provider of online ratings and reviews solutions.

Fashion and lifestyle bloggers have a larger influencer on consumer purchasing behaviour than royals, models, actors or sportspeople with one in five shoppers turning to bloggers to help inform shopping decisions. But its everyday shoppers who have the greatest power to sway buyers according to Bazaarvoice.

Kate Musgrove, Bazaarvoice Managing Director APAC, states, “The message to retailers and brands is clear: improving the functionality of the online retail experience to include shopper reviews is the most powerful way of keeping customers on the path to purchase. A well-thought-out digital strategy may put a product at the top of people’s Instagram feed, but the presence of reviews and the opinions of people just like them is what will seal the deal.”

The research looked at the shopping habits, preferences and behaviours of more than 1,300 Australians and found that more than 80% of people seek out other shoppers’ reviews before making an online purchase. The proportion is growing year-on-year with an 8% increase in the number of people using shopper reviews when compared to 12 months ago. The findings are even more pronounced in female shoppers, with almost one in five women reading more reviews than 12 months ago.

According to Ms Musgrove, the research highlights the growing importance of authenticity in consumer marketing. She explained, “Dove’s ‘Real Beauty’ Campaign launched in 2006 started a marketing revolution where consumers applauded and voted with their wallets for authenticity. This has been shown to be closely linked to trust. If a consumer can see real authentic feedback or photos, they will trust the brand more than if they see a heavily filtered and airbrushed photo. If a retailer opens itself up to user generated content in the form of reviews – good and bad – this will instil greater trust from shoppers.”

The research found that nearly 40% of people say that the most important aspect of a review is knowing about other shoppers’ experiences of the product, with the same amount using reviews to validate their purchasing decision. Also, 34% agree that reviews give them information on whether a product is good value.

Ms Musgrove concluded, “The retail environment is evolving quickly, and retailers cannot afford to fall behind in their adoption of trends such as personalisation and user-generated content.

“The rise of organic influencers is also another key trend based on authenticity where an influencer becomes an advocate that promotes a product based on their genuine love of a brand. Micro influencers - those with around 3,000 followers in a niche area - are also becoming increasingly important for brands and retailers to engage with.

“Shoppers are becoming increasingly savvy and can now see past paid promotions and flattering filters and are seeking out candid and relatable content to inform purchasing decisions.”

ICONIC TOYS“R”US AND BABIES“R”US BRANDS RETURN TO AUSTRALIA

Tru Kids Inc, the US-based parent company of Toys“R”Us and Babies“R”Us, and Hobby Warehouse Pty Ltd in Australia announced an exclusive licensing agreement which will see the Toys“R”Us and Babies“R”Us brands return to Australia and make their debut in New Zealand.

The new license agreement includes rights for Hobby Warehouse to sell through the www.toysrus.com.au and www.babiesrus.com.au websites for Australia and New Zealand.

Hobby Warehouse aims to launch physical ‘experience centres’ for Toys“R”Us and Babies“R”Us beginning in 2020. Hobby Warehouse Chief Executive, Louis Mittoni, said:

“We are delighted to bring the much-loved brands of Toys“R”Us and Babies“R”Us back to Australia and to introduce them to New Zealand. We believe play is extremely important in the development and wellbeing of children and their interaction with family and friends. Play enables children to develop their imagination, collaborate, problem solve, explore, create, or express themselves spontaneously.

“Our mission is to encourage children to engage with as many forms of play as we possibly can. Hobby Warehouse is a digital native with a keen understanding of how to accelerate and match the requirements of the modern shopper.”

Hobby Warehouse’s management team together with commercial advisor, Kevin Moore negotiated with Tru Kids’ executives and advisors for the Australian and New Zealand licensing rights.

Moore said: “Previously, the Toys“R”Us and Babies“R”Us business model in Australia was focused primarily on large, physical retail stores which had high fixed costs and extended periods of relatively low sales due to seasonal factors. Going forward, the business model for Australia and New Zealand will be online focused, with smaller and fewer physical ‘experience centres’ that allow children and their families and friends to see and touch our products.”

Tru Kids Executive Vice President of Global Licensing & General Counsel, James Young, said: “We are thrilled to partner with Hobby Warehouse to bring Toys“R”Us and Babies“R”Us back to Australia and to launch in New Zealand. Louis Mittoni and his team have a strong digital vision and understand both the heritage of our iconic brands and how to evolve the shopping experience for the modern consumer. This is an exciting milestone for our company as we continue to grow Toys“R”Us and Babies“R”Us around the world.”



MELBOURNE CENTRAL TO UNDERGO MAJOR TRANSFORMATION

Melbourne Central is set to undergo its biggest transformation in almost 20 years as part of a quest to become a ‘temple of meaning’ for Melburnians and evolve into a globally recognised place of cultural and social exchange that nurtures and inspires its users.

As of 2021, the centre will reinvent itself with the addition of an expansive open-air space offering a 2,000 square metre public oasis atop the city, a series of unexpected experiential spaces, a surprising new large-scale art installation, exciting hawker stalls and much more.

An experiential space, it will be a haven for emerging retail and cultural concepts, a place for events, education and learning. Coupled with the centre’s recently announced new 10-storey commercial office tower Frame, as well as its newly opened 1,800 square metre boutique food and drink retail hub ELLA, it marks the largest transformation of the site since its 2001 redevelopment following the departure of Japanese department store Daimaru.

And in a nod to the past, Melbourne Central’s owner The GPT Group has brought back the original architects, ARM Architecture, responsible for the dramatic makeover that reimagined it as the distinct collection of precincts and laneways it is now known for.

“Melbourne Central has long been a groundbreaker in the design and experience of urban retail centres, with a progressive approach that has kept pace with the city’s urban fabric,” said GPT Group Development Manager, Romina Edwards.

“It will be the first retail centre to shift away from being a place of solely consumerism, to a temple of meaning. The new Melbourne Central will deliver genuine cultural experiences with new and unexpected partners and challenge the way people perceive and experience retail.”

Its full designs will be unveiled in the coming months, but the new look will involve the addition of two new retail levels that transition to the new timber office tower’s skylobby and surrounding rooftop. Existing Brewery Place will be reactivated, becoming an additional entry for the commercial tower and featuring a small cafe; while the rooftop will face to the north, commanding plenty of light and views of the iconic Melbourne Central cone.

ARM Architecture Principal Ian McDougall said Melbourne Central was the first CBD site to explore such dramatically transformative changes to its offer to maximise its relevance.

“Melbourne Central is reconceiving the notion of what retail is and exploring what else it can be and seeing its rooftop as a valuable site for more than just financial exchange,” he said.

Melbourne City is currently considering Melbourne Central’s redevelopment plans Council for approval, with construction, projected to commence in early 2020 with minimal impacts to trading.

In February, Melbourne Central was named as Australia’s most productive retail centre by the prestigious Shopping Centre News Big Guns list for turnover per square metre.

SMALL BUSINESS RECOVERY GRANTS NOW AVAILABLE IN QUEENSLAND

North Queensland small businesses affected by the North and Far North flooding can now apply for new recovery grants of up to \$10,000. Federal Minister Natural Disaster and Emergency Management David Littleproud said the grants were being jointly funded under the Commonwealth-Queensland Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

“Small businesses drive local economise and these floods have really hurt so many Queensland small businesses,” Minister Littleproud said.”

These grants will be available in 14 local government areas to provide further support to small business owners.

“We need to help flood-affected small businesses survive and prosper.”

The grants are available to eligible businesses in Cloncurry Shire, Flinders Shire, McKinlay Shire, Richmond Shire, Townsville City, Burdekin Shire, Burke Shire, Carpentaria Shire, Charters Towers Shire, Croydon Shire, Douglas Shire, Etheridge Shire, Hinchinbrook Shire and Winton Shire Council areas.

Queensland Minister for Employment and Small Business Shannon Fentiman said the impact of the monsoon disaster had severely affected the region.

“Local businesses are the lifeblood of our communities and getting them back up and running is key to guaranteeing our long-term economic recovery,” Minister Fentiman said.

“These grants ensure that affected business owners are financially supported through their recovery and can undertake repairs to buildings, plant and equipment.

“The grants will also support small business owners to take steps, so they are better prepared and more resilient to future disasters.”

Resilience funding is open to businesses across the 14 local government areas, including those who have already received Special Disaster Recovery Grants or Loans and those that were not originally eligible for these funds.

Repairs funding is available across all local government areas subject to specific eligibility criteria. Visit www.business.qld.gov.au/recovery to read the guidelines and submit an application for resilience or repair funding under the Small Business Disaster Recovery Grants. 🇦🇺

5G AND THE RETAIL REVOLUTION

5G is set to revolutionise the retail sector by providing innovative technologies and solutions. As the network rolls out, forward-thinking retailers should look to embrace 5G sooner than later.

BY MICHAEL TRAN [OPPO AUSTRALIA]

5G is coming. With it comes a suite of new technologies and opportunities that will impact the way consumers engage with brands and businesses. Like any new technology, it's about evolution, not revolution. But, for forward-thinking retailers that embrace 5G sooner rather than later, the opportunities are huge.

SO, WHAT IS 5G?

While 3G allowed mobile devices to browse the internet and 4G powered mobile video and gaming, among other things, 5G will bring further advancements to the network, opening up new opportunities to engage with customers via their smartphones.

5G smartphones will start launching in the coming months and, for most people, will act as a direct gateway to 5G capabilities. As the technology and network mature, we can expect to see much faster download speeds, 4K, and 8K video streaming, lower latency, and the emergence of augmented and virtual reality applications.

5G will afford new opportunities for almost every sector, and retail is no different. It's conceivable that the brick-and-mortar experience over the next few years will be fundamentally different from how it is today.

The new communications technology will also drastically improve e-commerce, meaning retailers will need to utilise this new technology on both their online and offline platforms.

A PERSONAL SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

While 5G will allow for faster internet speeds, a key improvement is latency reduction. Latency is the time it takes for data to be sent from one device to another. 4G latency is around 60 milliseconds; 5G has the potential to be under one millisecond.

In other words, phones and other internet-connected devices will be able to analyse their environments millisecond-by-millisecond. This provides many opportunities for retailers.

For instance, offline shopping will become much more about the experience. By powering facial

recognition, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and more, 5G will digitise bricks-and-mortar stores, creating the ultimate hybrid experience. Retailers will more easily be able to gather data to create customer profiles and create personalised experiences.

The 5G experience will start before customers enter the store. For example, screens placed behind store-front windows could react in real-time to potential customers walking by, with facial recognition technology allowing for tailored greetings for repeat or VIP customers. This is important, **as half of the Australian shoppers surveyed by Mood Media** for a recent study say they've been attracted into clothing stores due to window or inside-screen content.

5G will also power smarter artificial intelligence, so machines will be better at making decisions like humans. This means mirrors in clothing store change rooms (or your phone camera) can be turned into sophisticated virtual shopping assistants. After trying on a shirt, you could tell the virtual assistant that it's a little too tight on the shoulders or short by the arms. Based on your

customer profile, the brand and size of the current shirt, it could recommend a different size or a similar shirt from another brand that would be a better fit.

Finally, 5G-powered augmented reality (AR) promises fantastic new benefits. AR refers to applications which layer information on top of a camera's field of vision. 5G will greatly improve a smartphone's ability to recognise objects. Customers could browse through a grocery store with an AR app on their 5G phone that differentiates which products adhere to dietary needs, like gluten or sugar-free, for instance.

MORE CONVENIENT E-COMMERCE

Well-utilised 5G technology will make bricks-and-mortar shopping more of an experience. This is essential, as the new generation will focus on improving online shopping.

While it's true that 5G's most significant benefits will come from reduced latency, the increased internet speeds it promises are also important.

According to Google, 53% of mobile users leave a site if one of its pages takes more than three seconds to load. The reduced wait times 5G will bring,

could lead to significant growth in the online retail sector. Research from **Adobe Digital Insights**, suggests that mobile-based retail through 5G could add as much as \$12 billion in the US alone.

Further, the same technology that will allow in-store AR to flourish applies to mobile and online shopping. As adoption of AR apps and virtual reality headsets expands, customers will be able to yield many traditional benefits of bricks-and-mortar shopping virtually, like trying on clothing or experiencing how a piece of furniture fits in a room.

For instance, many of us know what it feels like to buy a great piece of furniture only to find it looks out of place in our home. AR will allow you to virtually 'try out' that couch, table or house plant by intelligently placing it in a room and allowing you to view it on your smartphone.

Right now we're on the cusp of 5G, which is expected to launch this year and undergo further enhancements in 2021. Retailers need to understand both the online and offline implications of 5G.

To ignore 5G is to ignore huge opportunity. 📱



The new communications technology will also drastically improve e-commerce, **meaning retailers will need to utilise this new technology on both their online and offline platforms.**

For the last decade, OPPO has focused on manufacturing camera phones, while innovating mobile technology breakthroughs. With a presence in over 40 countries and regions, 6 research institutes and 4 R&D centres, the company focuses on providing high-end features at a desirable price point. Its most recent smartphone, Reno 5G, marks the first 5G handset for OPPO, and is currently the most affordable 5G smartphone on the Australian market. For more information, visit: [oppo.com/au](https://www.oppo.com/au)

Keeping up with e-commerce

Key changes retailers need to adopt in-store to improve the customer experience.

BY **CLAUDIO BRATOVIC** [HONEYWELL]

The demise of bricks-and-mortar stores has been a topic of contention over recent years. While several traditional retailers have closed their doors due to a downturn in business, many consumers are still shopping in-store.

Any time a customer walks into a store, it presents an opportunity for stores and associates to make a connection and develop loyalty; but to keep customers coming back and continue to drive sales, retailers need to make some changes.

UNIFYING MULTIPLE SHOPPING CHANNELS

Consumers expect more flexibility with their shopping these days. They like to browse in-store while also reading product reviews online. If they buy something online, they want to be able to return it in-store. The successful retailers of today, understand how important it is to make goods and services available to consumers via multiple shopping channels.

Retailers need to integrate these channels to ensure the consumer has a consistent and seamless experience no matter the interaction – be it in-store, online, or by phone.

LEVERAGING MOBILITY IN-STORE

The use of mobile devices as part of the in-store experience is becoming an expectation of consumers, with more stores investing in technology that enables associates to work more efficiently and assist with in-store communications.

A recent survey conducted by Honeywell business critical mobility and IoT partner, SOTI, revealed that 45.53% of Australian consumers consider handheld mobile devices provided by store associates, that can display stock balance, pricing, stock levels online and at other stores, to provide them with a better shopping experience in-store.

Moving forward, retailers will seek to extend mobile device capabilities to more associates than ever before. Using these devices to connect every department of the operation will create employee efficiency and help deliver better customer experience.

Customers expect associates to provide critical information in a timely fashion in order to fastrack their decision making process. Adopting mobile devices in-store will assist in making this much easier.

Mobility in-store offers numerous benefits to retailers, with many already recognising that they can automate several associate tasks, improve store productivity and lower costs through the adoption of mobile devices.

IMPROVING THE SHOPPER EXPERIENCE

SOTI's research revealed that what customers want out of their in-store shopping experience is personalised customer service (61.03%), followed by a fun and entertaining experience (45.20%).

So, anything retailers can do to make shopping easy, fun, and enjoyable will assist in increasing customer satisfaction.

Retailers should be taking advantage of the data they have available, which provides insight into how their customers are shopping. Through tracking previous customer purchases, store associates can be more intune with what their customers are looking for, and this allows them to offer a more personalised service to customers based on their previous purchases and shopping habits.

There has been a rise in interactive technology and events in stores, with more retailers offering customers an entertaining experience that can only be enjoyed in-store. For example, Ikea are looking to introduce display suites in-store that allow customers to privately experience Ikea products in a way that is more reflective of how the products will fit in their own home, rather than just on a shop floor. These types of experiences are inviting customers to engage more with in-store products in new and interesting ways.

COMPETING WITH E-COMMERCE

There's no denying that online shopping has disrupted the retail sector. Online stores will continue to up the ante with their services, and it is crucial that bricks-and-mortar stores find a way to keep up. Retail stores need to focus on providing customers with something unique, something that customers cannot experience through shopping online.

According to the SOTI research, being able to see and touch the product (71.97%) and try on/test out a product (69.78%) remain high drivers for customers visiting physical retail stores. This provides retailers with a good opportunity to ensure that when customers come in store, they are engaged, both by the products and store associates.

Through embracing these new changes in-store, retailers can create efficiencies for associates and improve the customer experience to foster a successful sales environment. 📺

Retailers need to integrate these channels to ensure the consumer has a consistent and seamless experience no matter the interaction – **be it in-store, online, or by phone.**

Honeywell Safety and Productivity Solutions (SPS) provides products, software, and connected solutions that improve productivity, workplace safety, and asset performance for our customers across the globe. For more information on how mobile technologies can enhance a customer's retail experience, please visit honeywellaidc.com/en-AU



The future of shopping is conversational

With online shopping sitting at 10 per cent of total retail sales, it could be argued that the web is not working for most businesses. So, what's the answer?

BY ANDREW CANNINGTON [LIVEPERSON]

Australians are starting to embrace ecommerce, yet perhaps not as fast as retailers would like. With **online shopping sitting at 10 per cent** of total retail sales, it could be argued that the web is not working for most businesses. Only a few retailers, including Amazon and eBay, have truly been successful at building online businesses at the scale envisioned when the website was created in the 1990s.

Why is this? Because consumer expectations are rising and the increasingly complex and competitive landscape requires online retailers to provide a frictionless shopping experience. However, many retailers have gone in the opposite direction, building digital fortresses around their brands and forcing consumers to navigate unintuitive websites and apps on the brand's terms.

By 2020, there is no doubt that customer experience will overtake price and product as the key brand differentiator. The key to success for retailers will be providing and delivering an outstanding customer experience.

Good customer experience comes down to how it feels for a consumer to interact with the brand. Navigating websites, hamburger menus, and search bars (that often don't turn up the information the customer is looking for) are not natural behaviours. On the other hand, asking questions and having a conversation are innately human traits. Forward-thinking retailers are building their shopping experiences around this with conversational commerce.

With conversational commerce, shoppers can converse with brands and make purchases through the digital channels they already know and use with family and friends, such as Facebook Messenger, iMessage, and WhatsApp. Through a combination of human agents, artificial intelligence and bots, retailers can provide a hyper-personalised experience to shoppers, guiding them from a question ("I'm after a little black dress, can you help me?") to purchase without leaving the conversation, gaining meaningful insights and data in the process.

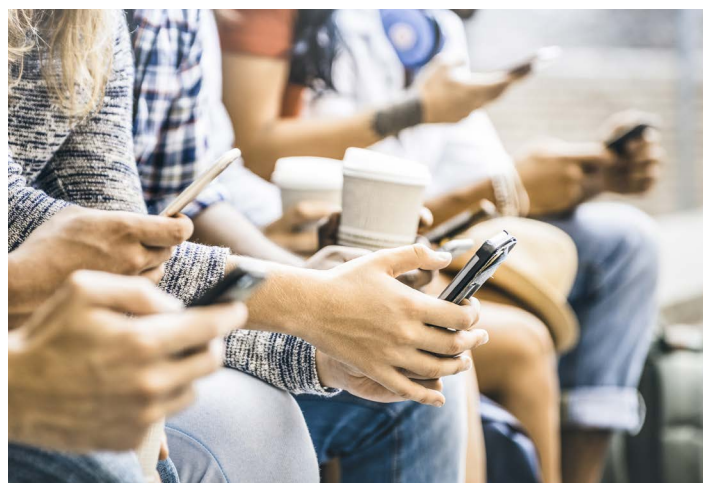
The rise of messaging apps and voice technology is transforming how people communicate and get information. Consumers already

prefer to use conversational interfaces, such as SMS and Facebook Messenger, to interact with their friends and family. Retailers are now able to bring that same interactive experience into the business realm by having conversations with customers either in their branded application or directly in third party messaging applications.

This new frontier of brand-to-consumer communication enables retailers to forge more immediate, impactful relationships with their customers and maintain a continuous connection with them at every step of the customer journey.

Take this from the former CEO of online outdoor recreation retailer, Backcountry: "We're hearing from our customers that this is an experience that they're not finding anywhere else in e-commerce ... We're seeing more loyalty, higher lifetime value, and just a deeper relationship with our customers."

This begs the question: with the website not working for most retailers, why wouldn't you go conversational? 📱



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By 2020, there is no doubt that customer experience will **overtake price and product as the key brand differentiator.**

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MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE BY GOING OMNICHANNEL

In fashion and philosophy, the beauty of a circle is marked by an absence of a beginning and an end.

BY MALCOLM KOH [ZENDESK]

How do I make a purchase? What delivery options are available? Why haven't I received my order? How do I organise a refund?

These are just some of the questions customers are likely to ask a retailer's customer service representatives. And it's how these questions are answered, and the overall experience created that can have a big impact on a customer's relationship with a retailer.

Meeting consumer expectations of customer service and customer experience (CX) in the digital age has become increasingly complex over the last decade, and technology has had a positive impact on the world of retail in many ways.

Customers can make a purchase and organise a refund all without leaving the comfort of their home. At the same time, with these new channels, customers want that same accessible and easy purchasing experience around the clock, with every purchase they make. The focus now is on creating a seamless experience that is integrated across all of the channels consumers are using.

Our recent research shows, almost half of Australian customers have significantly higher expectations of customer service than they did a year ago. The result has been a decrease in customer satisfaction, both in Australia and around the world.

Even more concerning, bad shopping experiences can remain front of mind. Customers are four times more likely to remember

As we look towards a new era, there's no doubt that **customers' expectations of CX will remain high.**

unfavourable experiences from two years ago than favourable experiences with retailers. And that one bad experience has the potential to impact a customers' perception and long-lasting relationship with a business.

As we look towards a new era, there's no doubt that customers' expectations of CX will remain high. For retailers, there is an inevitable need to look at how you're interacting with your customers to build long-term, positive relationships.

The silver-lining to CX is in the approach.

While it might be daunting to think that eight in ten people will leave a company following just one bad experience, customers are very clear about what it is that makes a good experience, and how businesses can ensure they meet this.

A quarter of customers view providing multiple options for contacting customer support as helping to build a positive experience. In essence, it's an omni-channel service approach to customer experience that will help businesses to establish seamless, positive experiences for customers.

An omni-channel approach is one that integrates customer service across channels, so customers can reach out in whichever way they find easiest. This ensures customers receive a seamless experience across the board, and customer service agents can easily share information with customers to ensure issues are solved quickly and easily.

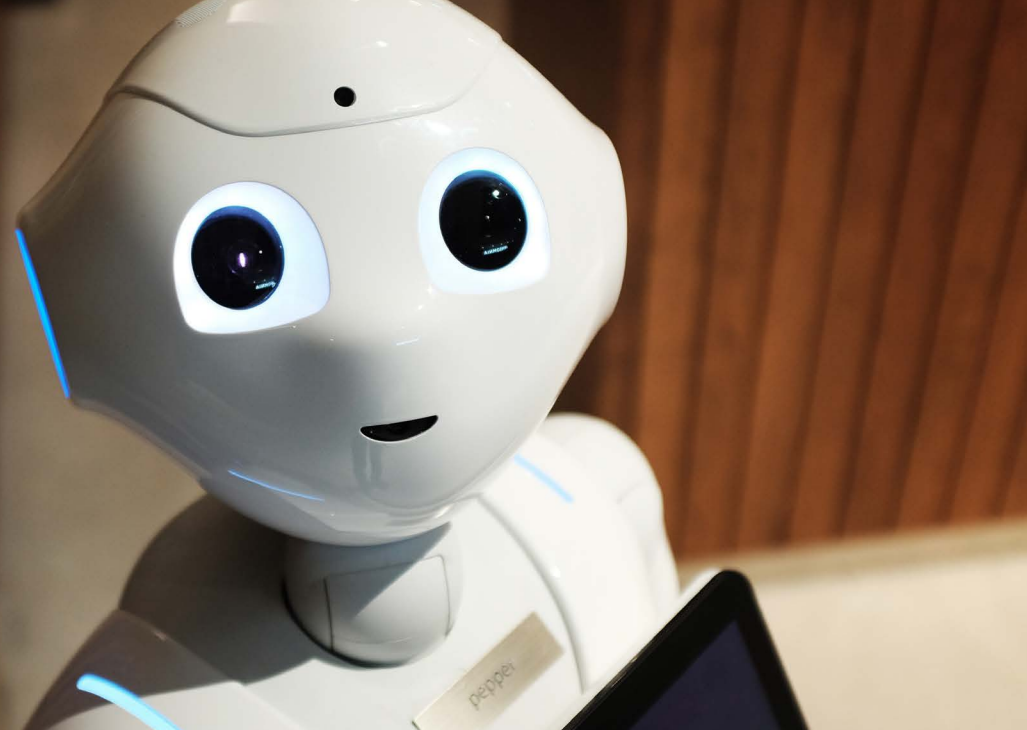
But an omni-channel approach shouldn't forego the value of self-service. Over half of customers value companies that provide them with online resources to help answer their questions before having to rely on customer support.

There is a significant opportunity to further enhance the omni-channel approach by augmenting CX with technologies like automation, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning. For example, automation can be used on chat to automate responses. AI can even go a step further to recommend articles that may be of interest to customers based on their previous actions and supporting them with self-service to resolve issues quickly. The overall benefit of technologies like AI, whatever their use, is to create a seamless customer experience, improve efficiency, and reduce cost.

While businesses are always looking to offer the best products or services, it's important to focus on creating a positive customer experience to foster strong, long-term and positive relationships with customers that will last into the new era. Omnichannel CX is one way to make this happen. 📌



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Stay true to your brand in an age of upheaval and 'disrupt without damage'

A business ready to disrupt is one which first knows
its brand values and customer intimately.

BY CHRIS GRAY [DAYLIGHT AGENCY]

New technologies, innovations, and trends continue to influence and shape the retail environment. An age of disruption is certainly upon us, and there is evolving pressure on retailers to adapt and respond to changing trends and consumer demands.

While the word 'disruption' often has a negative connotation, it can have a positive effect on an industry if managed in the right way. The goal of any organisation is to be a 'positive disruptor' which means staying true to its core brand values while at the same time delivering customers new, exciting, and innovative services.

It is possible to 'disrupt without damage.' Here are five ways to ensure your brand is protected during a time of change.

1. DEFINE WHAT YOUR BRAND STANDS FOR

A brand is more than a name, logo, product, website, or tagline. It's certainly the sum of all these elements, but importantly, it is the intangible feeling it creates – its personality if you like. This is what defines a brand and gives it competitive difference.

Seek to understand your brand's personality and know what makes it distinct to a rival. Consider your values, your purpose, and your actions. Defining the true essence of your brand's personality is key to ensuring these precious elements are preserved during a time of change.

2. UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR CUSTOMERS LIKE ABOUT YOUR BRAND

Is your brand known for creativity, leadership, heritage, integrity, cooperation, innovation - or all of these things? Knowing what your customers like about your brand is key when considering whether new trends and innovations will be appealing to your biggest fans.

If your brand is known for exceptional face-to-face customer service and you plan to implement a product that will disrupt this positive attribute of your business, your customers could be left confused and disgruntled.

From a customer's point of view, disruption in the marketplace can be bewildering. It is essential to ensure any new product or trend that your company introduces is in line with your brand values and customer expectations.

3. CONSIDER THE RISKS OF NOT ADOPTING CHANGE

What would be the impact to your bottom-line if your business chose not to adopt an innovation? What would be the impact to your customer?

It may be significant, or it may be wise to let the wave of disruption pass by and stand strong in your current processes, especially if new trends do not complement your business.

In some cases, businesses that have 'jumped on the bandwagon' and introduced changes in the fear of being left behind, have experienced a negative impact on brand reputation and customer experience. In other cases, new trends have grown brands and reinforced their leadership and adaptability in the eyes of consumers.

The move towards sustainability, which has seen supermarkets in some States eliminate plastic shopping bags, has been a major disruption in the industry, and consumers are adapting to the trend knowing ultimately it is for a greater purpose. In this case, the impact on a brand that may have chosen not to adopt this change would have been monumental.

4. BE THE INNOVATOR

When you know your brand personality and understand your customer well, your business can feel brave enough to become the disruptor. What new product could revolutionise your customers' experience? What innovation could add value to your industry? Is there a trend you choose to avoid?

A consumer feels comfortable, and trust grows when they know a brand they support is making tough decisions that ultimately has their best interests at heart.

Key emerging trends such as artificial intelligence, sustainability, and blockchain will certainly require brands to be bold and respond, or continue along the same path.

5. REVIEW YOUR COMMUNICATIONS ROADMAP

Communications is the lifeblood of any business and connects the brand with the consumer. If your business introduces a new product or service, the way it is communicated to the consumer is essential. It may be in the form of advertising, social media, traditional media, digital media, or point of sale. Or all of the above.

While it's important to get the channel right, it is crucial that the messaging reflects your brand values and communicates to your customer the positive impact the change will have on their shopping experience.

Finally, when a brand decides to disrupt, they need to ensure there is a full company commitment to the new approach as any false claims can lead to distrust or over-promising which could potentially dilute a hard-earned reputation.

A business ready to disrupt is one which first knows its brand values and its customer intimately. 'Disruption without damage' can then proceed and be an overwhelmingly positive experience.



What would be the impact
to your bottom-line if your
business chose not to adopt an
innovation? **What would be the
impact to your customer?**



The Daylight Agency is an integrated communication services firm which specialises in advertising, digital/social, marketing, public relations, and reputation management. For more information, visit daylightagency.com.au

HOW RETAILERS CAN CREATE A DIGITAL FOOTPRINT WHICH ACCELERATES SALES

Are you leaving revenue on the table? Maximise your online sales through these five steps.

BY **ANDREW RASO** [ONLINE MARKETING GURUS]

While Australian retailers understand that digital holds enormous potential, many don't fully understand how to maximise the opportunity. There are countless Australian retailers with substantial untapped revenue.

Let's take the case of an Australian fashion retailer client as an example. This retailer services hundreds of thousands of customers and has over 110 stores Australia wide. However, they aren't gaining sufficient sales online.

After seven months of digital optimisation, search engine optimisation (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM), this retailer noticed multiplied sales, achieving more than \$2 million in incremental sales. They also increased their return on ad spend (ROAS) to 14:1, so that for every dollar spent on advertising, \$14 of revenue was generated.

The great news is that by following some straightforward steps, these kinds of results can be - and have been - replicated over and over again. Here's how to do it.

Do your research.
What are your top competitors doing? What buying behaviours are common to your customers?

How are customers searching online for your product?

STEP 1: AUDIT YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT AND DO YOUR RESEARCH

Start by auditing your digital footprint to assess how wide the gap is between where you are and where you want to end up. Is your website content and user experience resonating with your customer? How well can Google index your website?

Do your research. What are your top competitors doing? What buying behaviours are common to your customers? How are customers searching online for your product?

Once you understand the data, you can create a scalable growth strategy.

STEP 2: SHAPE YOUR SITE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT AROUND YOUR CUSTOMER PROFILE

Examine what your competitors are and aren't doing and where opportunity calls. Base your website structure and content around the market leaders and customer profile data.

When it comes to content, the goal is to strike a balance between both quality and quantity. There's a strong correlation between website content length and search engine rankings. More website content delivers a 90% chance of fast keyword ranking uplifts.

STEP 3: BUILD A ROBUST LINK BUILDING STRATEGY

How many sites are talking about and linking to you? The number of referring sites is statistically significant when it comes to increasing your rankings.

What is the quality of these sites? Higher quality backlinks with higher URL ratings will give you domain authority and has a high correlation to better rankings.

Competitive analysis can uncover quick wins and real opportunity. What types of links are competitors getting? Start by auditing the top three. Look at the volume of links competitors are building in the top three spots and shape your strategy around this.

Strategic link building takes time. That's why it should form a core part of your ongoing efforts. Focusing on quality and quantity of links over a long period is crucial for building real authority online.

STEP 4: INTEGRATE SEO AND SEM TO CREATE THE ULTIMATE POWERHOUSE

An integrated Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) strategy will maximise results. Introducing high performing SEM campaigns into SEO will drive extra results in both SEO and SEM.

The learnings from SEM should guide your SEO keyword methodology. SEM allows you to validate the keyword selection process. SEO content initiatives will deliver a better quality score for SEM, which brings down the cost per click and increases the return on investment.

SEO site architecture initiatives will also boost quality score and usability. Better site categorisation will again deliver a better quality score and cheaper traffic.

STEP 5: OPTIMISE YOUR WEBSITE FOR CONVERSION

Make sure your website is optimised for conversion. Some simple tweaks can double or triple your website conversion rate, leading to a very healthy sales pipeline.

Is your website easy to use? Is it mobile responsive? What are the loading times? Conduct A/B tests to see how two groups respond to different versions of your website so you can determine which performs better and optimise accordingly.

Are you worried about leaving revenue on the table? Then make sure your digital footprint is working overtime for you. 📈

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How the next generation of devices will improve the retail experience

The importance of retailers investing in more in-store mobility and how next-generation devices (mobile devices, scanners, etc.) will transform the retail experience.

BY MICHAEL DYSON [SOTI]

As the e-commerce industry continues to grow, bricks-and-mortar stores must ensure they are creating a seamless experience across all channels. From in-store, online, mobile, and social, it is important to provide customers with the kind of shopping experiences they crave.

THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE STORE ASSOCIATE

Australian shoppers often blur the distinction between online and in-store shopping to create their most preferred retail experience on an as-needed

and item-by-item basis. This is because they prioritise buying high-quality products at the most affordable price.

With the explosive growth of online shopping and birth of the omnichannel, shoppers demand a seamless experience across all retail options. This means bricks-and-mortar stores should be aware and proactive in designing seamless shopping experiences, that will continue to attract shoppers into their store and entice them to fill their shopping baskets.

To create a fluid omnichannel experience, retailers need not only to think of leveraging mobile technology and Internet of Things (IoT) for online shopping and the supply chain but also how these technologies will play out in-store.

Store associates are essential for fostering an accessible and enjoyable in-store shopping experience for customers. While some may think that associates are becoming less and less relevant, innovative retailers who have embraced mobile technology know that equipping sales associates with

new mobile tools, creating the 'connected associate,' retailers can boost customer engagement and build customer loyalty while reducing sales friction.

EQUIPPING ASSOCIATES WITH NEXT-GENERATION DEVICES

The next-generation retail associate is young, tech savvy and wants to be appreciated for their work and make an impact on the job. Empowering these associates with the right training, new technology, and additional responsibilities is a win-win.

An optimised mobile tablet provides the associate with access to all the information and data they need to do their job. However, to ensure they can provide value and build customer loyalty, they must be able to access information that the customer cannot get on their mobile device. This includes real-time inventory visibility, accurate price, and promotion information, and more detailed product information and warranty data.

Empowering the connected associate with mPOS (mobile point of sale) devices allows the associate to scan the product, share the screen with the shopper for verification and then complete the sale, allowing customers to avoid long checkout lines. Associates can also print receipts on the spot using a mobile printer.

Wearable Bluetooth barcode scanners can make it easier for store associates to maintain more accurate and real-time stock management. Additionally, a hands-free voice solution can keep sales associates connected with warehouse staff, store management, and other associates.

Adoption of in-store technology such as mobile tablets, mPOS, wearables, hands-free voice solutions, self-service kiosks, smart shelves, digital signage, and beacons is the way of the future for the industry.

Retailers need to get on board with technology soon. Otherwise, they might find themselves left behind by competitors.

ENSURING THE MANAGEMENT OF NEXT-GENERATION DEVICES

Retail organisations have been managing mobile devices across their supply chains for years. But as retailers equip connected associates with mobile devices and deploy more in-store technology, they are intensifying many of their existing Enterprise Mobility Management (EMM) challenges and introducing many new ones. Compliance, security, and management can all present compounding problems if retailers don't put the correct systems in place from the onset.

A recent study conducted by VDC Research found that even though workers are relying on mobile solutions more than ever, many are still not leveraging EMM solutions to their fullest potential. The study further revealed that only one in five respondents claim to have complete visibility into their mobile devices and application usage.

To avoid any disruption to your business, ensure full visibility across all devices, and establish security protocols, retailers must ensure their next-generation devices are fully managed, and the data they contain is secure.

If retailers are going to invest in mobile technology, then they need also to prioritise investing in EMM solutions. 📱

To create a fluid omnichannel experience, retailers need not only to think of leveraging mobile technology and Internet of Things (IoT) for online shopping and the supply chain but also how these technologies will play out in-store.



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FIVE STRATEGIES TO UPSKILL YOUR RETAIL EMPLOYEES

Providing your team with the skills needed to succeed in retail.

BY AUSTRALIAN RETAILERS ASSOCIATION [ARA]

The retail industry offers golden career opportunities for anyone, regardless of their level of experience.

From the teenager seeking their first job and the parent juggling part-time hours with family responsibilities to the person with a long-term career goal of reaching and maintaining a management role, a job in retail is the ideal fit.

Who are the right people for the job? Here we look at the qualities and characteristics necessary to succeed in retail, whether it is a temporary position, a part time job, or a long-term career path.

1. COMMUNICATION

Strong verbal and written communication skills are essential for successful interaction with both customers and work associates. Staff at any level can use their communication skills to work effectively as a cohesive team and support a smooth and efficient working environment, where the customer's needs are met. Senior employees, such as supervisors and managers, can build a strong, confident team, whose members feel free to discuss problems or challenges and even provide valuable feedback.

2. CUSTOMER SERVICE

Good customer service involves identifying the most efficient and cost-effective solution for the customer's problem. This involves

demonstrating strong listening skills, empathy, and focus, along with the ability to maintain the customer's confidence. Customers won't necessarily complain to management about vague inattentive service or incorrect information – but there is a high chance that they won't come back.

However, they will come back if the retail assistant can knowledgeably discuss the best options, give them accurate price information and for retail staff in higher positions, customer service is a more delicate operation, dealing with serious complaints by coming up with a solution that makes the customer feel validated and heard.

3. PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is one of the foundations of strong customer service skills and effective communication. In the retail world, product knowledge is essential. Customers will ask unexpected questions about a retailer's products and service, and it is not possible to answer all these questions effectively without a thorough, in-depth knowledge of the items in question.

Read all the information, make comparisons, know the strengths and weaknesses of each product, and keep track of any changes to provide the right options for each customer. In a management role, product knowledge

Knowledge is one of the foundations of **strong customer service skills and effective communication**

takes on new dimensions – how does the product compare to the competition, how does it answer changing market needs, how can it be improved or remarketed to stay relevant.

4. TEAM PLAYING SKILLS

There are many different aspects to retail service, and every individual in the team has their specific responsibilities. A team player understands the need to be prompt and reliable to contribute to the smooth running of the organisation. For senior staff, team leadership is a valuable strategy to ensure all staff feel valued for their contribution and retain their loyalty and enthusiasm for the company.

5. MOTIVATION

The most important skill in any job is motivation – feeling a personal investment in supporting the company and seeing the job as more than just a way to earn money. A motivated staff member will take initiative and maintain enthusiasm, constantly putting in that little extra effort to keep everything running smoothly. However, motivation is particularly important in a customer-focused role because the retail assistant represents the company.

A salesperson who is bored or indifferent will give customers a bad impression. An unenthusiastic staff member will drastically reduce the energy and enthusiasm of the team. Motivation doesn't just promote efficiency and prompt service – it also sets the mood to create a stimulating and cohesive work environment.

All these skills have a common basis of enthusiasm and commitment to doing the best for the customer and the employer. Whether a retail worker is planning to transfer to another field of work or wishes to move up the ladder into a retail management role, these five interlinking skills will be an enormous asset throughout their career. 📖

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Ethical fashion is the new black for the future of retail

How local retailers can use digital networks to create ethical supply chains and address the growing demand for purpose led brands.

BY HENRIK SMEDBERG [SAP ARIBA ANZ]

The fashion industry is no stranger to an ethical pickle, with forced labour, underpaid staff, and toxic textile pollution among the many issues that have plagued the industry.

In the past, it was easy to lose sight of the real impact fashion houses had on our society, especially when so much of the focus has been on well, the fashion, and the marketing that many of the questionable practices were hidden.

The business of fashion has never been held more strongly to account than it is today. **The Baptist World Aid Report**, which grades 130 local apparel companies on their policies towards ethical and sustainable practices, has been downloaded more than 50,000 times.

It's proof Australians are more aware than ever of where their clothes come from, pressuring retailers to shift towards more ethical and sustainable business operations. However, the report also shows that this growing consumer demand for ethically made clothing does not match the reality of the Australian retail landscape. While retailers are feeling the pressure from their customers (and their wallets), progress has been sluggish.

Only one third of local retailers have improved their ethical rating since last year, and virtually



every brand (95%) still failed to pay a living wage to all workers at their final stage of production.

There are myriad reasons why these hidden horrors crop up in today's climate, but to label its cause as just "greediness" would be to oversimplify the issue. The process of getting a basic white t-shirt to stores is a complicated, multifaceted one that can be easily mismanaged by people with even the best of intentions.

The passing of new Australian legislation recognising modern slavery working conditions is a step forward to address this issue.

The Federal Government passed the Modern Slavery Act in 2018, recognising the widespread exploitation of employees and ultimately, motivating more businesses to take concrete steps towards ensuring the integrity of their supply chains.

The truth is, modern supply chains have fast become a complex tapestry of people and processes. The systems of procurement, production, distribution, and sales are dependent upon each other and are continuously impacted by external factors like the market, customers,

and suppliers. It's this complex nature of supply chains that makes modern slavery working conditions difficult to eliminate.

The Baptist World Aid Report identified working with third party suppliers as one of the biggest challenges for local retailers when it comes to achieving ethical business operations.

ETHICAL FASHION

For businesses looking to action their intentions to address the ethics of their supply chain, technology will be key. As the march (or rather, catwalk) toward ethical fashion and purpose-led business continues, so too does the march of technology. The future of retail undoubtedly sees these two marching in tandem.

One of the technological advancements already transforming the fashion industry is digital business networks and cloud-based procurement solutions. These provide organisations with new-found transparency and visibility into their supply chains, enabling them to quickly and easily measure trading partners against huge volumes of data points. This includes whether a potential trading partner keeps its supply chain clear of forced labour, and has a record of responsible environmental stewardship.

By extending transparency into the operations of trading partners with the help of technology, retailers have a greater understanding of who their suppliers are, can keep track of their activity and most importantly, help achieve a greater sense of purpose in business.

Digital business networks are just the beginning of the future of fashion but will increasingly become the backbone to every retailer's business. Ethical apparel is not just this season's chic new trend, it's here to stay, and the role technology has in this industry transformation cannot be underestimated. 🌱

SAP Ariba is the world's largest business network, linking together buyers and suppliers from 4.1 million companies in 190 countries. For more information, visit ariba.com

The truth is, modern supply chains have fast become a **complex tapestry of people and processes.**

Unlocking the potential of AI

How AI and technology will play a key role to calculate a shopper's size and habits, as well as help retailers gain valuable insights into warehouse and supply chain management.

BY DAVID GRIFFITHS [ADJUNO]

In today's market, expectations are growing, and the stakes are high, with a new age of retail quickly approaching. To keep up, brands must be one step ahead of the competition and offer every customer the innovative experience they desire. But this doesn't start and finish in-store. Retailers must ensure they're also looking at their back-of-house processes and implementing the right technologies needed to embrace this digital era and achieve success.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is picking up pace when it comes to the retail industry. From anticipating orders to personalising the shopping experience, retailers who embrace this technology will stand out on top.

AN ERA OF CHANGE

There is no doubt that there are some obstacles to overcome when it comes to the stigma attached to AI. It is still in its infancy and, as a result, some

retailers are hesitant to put their brand in its hands. But the industry is evolving, and there is an even greater need for retailers to define their processes to keep up.

Shoppers want to receive high-quality products and want to receive them now. A seamless shopping experience is at the top of their list, and if this isn't what they get, then, they'll go elsewhere. These expectations are taking us beyond the traditional methods of retailing and leading us into a world immersed in technology, a world that benefits from the helping hand of AI.

THE CUSTOMER IS KEY

With AI, retailers will be able to innovate their supply chain to provide the new, conscious consumer with a greater level of detail and transparency. This, along with the ability to personalise the shopping experience, will help to build the long term customer relationship needed to succeed.

Utilising this technology to help with size suggestions, brands can relieve the stresses on customers as they battle a sea of sizes in a bid to choose the one that will fit. Rather than spending time deciding whether a garment will be oversized, tight, etc., AI can perform that calculation for them. This ease of ordering will not only eliminate the amount of hours spent in a post office, or going back into the store to return multiple sizes, but will help to reduce the level of returns retailers need to process.

And this is just the start; the benefits of AI for the consumer are endless. In the future, this technology has the potential to offer customised product suggestions, based on a consumer's previous shopping habits or their activity on social media. This is invaluable for the consumer, helping to make the entire shopping experience personalised and friction free. And when the customer is happy, there is no doubt that the retailer will feel the benefits.



BEHIND THE SCENES

AI can transform decision making within the supply chain. Retailers can adopt a far more proactive and innovative approach to their processes, with a greater opportunity to carefully analyse key data sets. Team these data sources up with machine learning and companies can further enhance decision-making and optimise opportunity, whether that be through considering historic quality trends or forecasting the likely impact of a weather event.

Having a better picture of the hero products, sizes, and colours, for example, will not only impact the customer but allow retailers to forward plan. With a clear report on product

lines and an understanding of what the market expects, buying teams can assess partners, analyse stock patterns, track costs, improve capacity planning, and optimise shipments.

AI is set to transform the retail scene as we know it. From in-store to back-of-house, this technology is bursting onto the scene and providing an outlet in which innovation can be exercised. And it is those retailers who embrace this new era of change and lead the way for modernisation who will thrive. 🚀

Geraldine Osman is the CMO of StaffConnect, a provider of mobile employee engagement solutions. For more information email geraldineo@staffconnectapp.com

In the future, this technology has the potential to offer customised product suggestions, based on a consumer's previous shopping habits or their activity on social media.

SENSING A SUCCESSFUL STORE DESIGN

Appealing to all five senses creates unique selling environments.

BY GARY MCCARTNEY [MCCARTNEY DESIGN]

To disrupt is to get noticed. In the three-dimensional world of physical retail, the best form of disruption is one that challenges our existing perceptions, and to effectively do that, one or all of the senses must be engaged.

A recent trip to Paris and London showed us how other successful retailers are engaging the senses in different ways and unusual combinations.

Seeing is the most obvious sense associated with retail. In a cluttered retail landscape, cut-through is key to grabbing the customers' attention. Galeries Lafayette on the Champs Elysees have done that in style with their entrance- a glowing tunnel of light that not only gets cut-through but arouses curiosity. It serves as a “decompression zone” between the busy, noisy streetscape and the wonders inside- and is a great Instagram moment.

Music has long been known to be an essential in stores- if it's right, you tend not to notice it, but it enhances your emotional state. Or you might love it and Shazam it. If it's wrong, you notice it, and it jars to the point where it's uncomfortable. If it's not there at all, it's as if the store was closed.

But perfumer Miller Harris in London's Coal Drops yard has uniquely combined sound and smell.

Record-shop-like listening booths provide an aroma and a sound associated with it- for example, woodland sounds with a fresh forest based scent. Both smell and sound are hugely evocative- combining them both is an interesting and powerful idea. This adds to the intense colours in-store to create a hugely sensuous environment around the merchandise.

Retail experiences are tactile. Experience shows that touching a product is one step towards buying it. The sink is a prominent feature in all skincare environments from Aesop to Rituals, but the award for biggest and best goes to L'Occitane in their London flagship, where the sink resembles the centrepiece of a village square in Provence.

Tasting the product would seem to be the province of food retailers- chocolatiers, for example. But L'Occitane on the Champs Elysees have added taste to their multi sensual experience by incorporating a Pierre Hermé macaroon bar with a full dessert menu.

Desserts and skin care might not be an obvious combination, but it appeals to a tourist-based audience in the centre of Paris, and the place is packed.

It's in L'Occitane on London's Regent Street that the five senses come together. It's a hugely colour packed environment, with lighting that enhances the colours of Provence. In store, music harmonises with the visual environment.

The architecture itself is built partly from L'Occitane's natural ingredients- there are columns of lavender, lemons, and almonds. There is the aroma of all the natural ingredients and the merchandise itself, and the flavour of the delights of the Pierre Hermé café. And of course, you can feel the running water on your hands that takes you back to that square in Provence.

Our senses contribute to our emotions. In a retail environment, we should be looking to stimulate as many of the senses as possible and try to do it in new and innovative ways, combining two or more senses to provide personal and intimate communication with our customers — something they can't find online. 🛒



Retail experiences are tactile. Experience shows that touching a product is one step towards buying it.

McCartney Design are specialists in the design of retail and hospitality interiors and brands. We have created customer centric and profitable environments for national and international clients, including Super Retail Group, bp, Woolworths Group, Greencross Group, and Baby Bunting. For more information, visit mccartneydesign.com.au

THE FLOURISHING DIGITAL NETWORK

How an expert business consultant uses technology solutions to impact the bottom line and create new business opportunities.

BY **ZOE THOMPSON** [ARA]

With online and global competition continuing to be a strong force in the retail environment, harnessing the power of digital connectivity, social media and data can assist retailers to understand consumer preferences better and increase engagement with target audiences.

To help breakdown what appears to be a difficult entry into the digital marketplace, the ARA reached out to Jessica Sullivan, Founder of sbFlourish. With extensive experience across digital, technology and data within business consulting firms, start-ups, large corporations, and institutions, Jessica is an expert business consultant, who specialises in using cutting-edge technology solutions, marketing, and sales channels to impact the bottom line and create new business opportunities.

SO, JESS, TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR RETAIL HISTORY, I.E., WHEN YOU STARTED, THE STORES/START-UPS/ BRANDS YOU'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN?

In 2015, I decided to take the plunge and start my own business in social media consulting. It was scary being a single Mum with a mortgage, but I had a lot of support and encouragement to get started.

My first big consulting gig involved developing a social media app for Clapit. and following a successful launch, I began to develop my own technology using social media ID's and grew passionate about their connectivity implications and applications for businesses.

I sold the tech to two Universities, but I wanted to work with retailers. To my developers delight,

Facebook built out their back-end advertising platform to support the use of social media ID's and personalisation using pixels and website integrations.

I hit the ground running with these advancements using every new tool Facebook was introducing. I developed my approach for retailers through working with a range of businesses including BCF, Accor Hotels, Palm Beach Collection, Destination Port Stephens, Mustard Made, and The Lady Shake. Each of these businesses have contributed immensely to my understanding of personalisation, cross-channel marketing, social media advertising technology, and the applications that have been built to serve retailers.

I also really enjoy working with one of Australia's top art and design markets; The Olive Tree Markets. These markets are great at launching online shops through their community of inspiring makers, movers, and shakers. They offer retail experience, access to lots of customers; wholesalers attend, media, and there are amazing brand activation opportunities. With popular digital networks, they can also offer terrific exposure.

HAVING WORKED WITH SUCH AN IMPRESSIVE RANGE OF RETAILERS, WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT RETAIL? AND WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

I love the fast pace of retail; it's always changing and dynamic. Being able to make an impact on revenue in real time is fun. A seamless solution makes the whole marketing process almost gamified. As an advertiser, when you're onto

Data centric businesses know what their customers want, when they want it, and have the agile engagement processes in place to service their needs.

something, it's a real buzz and supporting social brands is what inspires me.

I enjoy the challenge of keeping things simple to empower the talented people I work with – most of them women. Some of them are both the creator and retailer of their product, and all of them are ultra-specialised at their craft with an impressive head for business.

I love using technology to accelerate my client's purpose, and it's an amazing experience to be part of the journey that is building digital capability, connectivit, and capacity in a business.

THROUGHOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES AND CAREER, WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED THE MOST ABOUT YOURSELF?

I always thought my love for shopping and social media wasn't necessarily a good thing until I turned those perceived weakness into strengths. I enjoy social media and shopping, so by combining the two, I not only enjoy my job, but I'm breaking more ground in my craft, which is digital marketing.

I'm thankful for being exposed to a whole range of pressures in business early on with a great mentor who was able to keep throwing me new challenges. I'll always remember once lying to him. He stressed to me that lying was only for incredibly smart people with a good memory, smarter than him, smarter than me. He said it was much easier to get through life by sticking to the truth and making decisions with honesty and integrity. He was right! He showed me what integrity in business was all about, and today, this is something I really think is one of my best attributes client's value.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST CHALLENGING POINT IN YOUR CAREER?

The challenges are ongoing, with new ones emerging all the time. One of the most consistent is knowing how to use social media to transform your business strategically. It's surprising how many people tell me that they have tried social and it doesn't work when the issue is that they don't know 'how' to make it work.

Helping people to understand 'how' to make social work is how I've positioned my business uniquely compared to other agencies. We work to build our clients capability, while most agencies try and keep the capability on their side of the fence. I'm the opposite because I understand that we all get the best results if social is built into the culture of your business, and that can only be done if we commit to the journey together. I have full access to my client's business, so integrity and trust is paramount. I always ask if what I'm doing builds both confidence and competence, which is what's key in the long term for my business.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE INDUSTRY WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT MAKING A CAREER IN RETAIL?

Start on the front line and then make the move to behind the scenes. I think you should always learn the basics first. In retail, it would be in-store customer service and sales. Even though I'm a digital marketing expert, I specialised in market research first, which is paying off now.

Don't ignore trends like technology that have practical long-term implications.

At the same time, change things up, don't get comfortable. Just recently, a client offered me a lucrative challenge to help with their alliance program in a specific location out west. It was completely outside of my comfort zone, personal selling in a place I've never been to before with no contacts. I signed up everyone on my target list and enjoyed every minute of it! I like working with people; I like traditional marketing just as much as digital. I chose digital, but now and then I need to make changes to spend more time with people.

WHAT IS ONE CHALLENGE/ISSUE AFFECTING RETAILERS TODAY?

I think retailers need to understand the importance of financial acumen and how advertising can work as an investment for the business. Like any investment, you need good metrics to understand and improve your return on that investment. You wouldn't invest in the stock market without the ability to track prices and returns, so retailers should expect the same from their advertising investments.

HOW DO YOU THINK RETAILERS CAN ENGAGE BETTER WITH CUSTOMERS?

Data competency is now a basic competitive need for business and the gateway to future growth. This is because most interactions with customers and potential customers are now digitally based (including in- store traffic) and leave a personalised data trail.

For those with data competency this is a gold mine of customer preference and intent that can be used to enhance brand loyalty and impact, build continuous customer journeys of repeating sales and guide business investment decisions to where they can create maximum ROI.

Growing data competency is at the heart of success for both inbound searched based marketing and outbound social media advertising for any retail business.

Both pathways are already reliant on powerful artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms (at Google and Facebook in particular) that use data footprints to decide what is served to customers on an individual level. This trend will only continue to accelerate with the continued emergence of the AI based personal assistants now being built into the operating systems of personal electronic devices including smart phones, computers and smart speakers such as Amazon echo, Google home, and Apple home pod.

Being competitive in the world of data driven AI means having a business that has data literacy at its core. This is because a data centric business is one that is not flying blind. Data centric businesses know what their customers want, when they want it, and have the agile engagement processes in place to service their needs.

They understand what device and technology platforms their customers prefer and have a range of automated systems that are guided by live data to meet the customer with the right offer at the right time. 📱



For more information on Jess or SBflourish, visit sbflourish.com.
To read more inspiring stories from exceptional female leaders
in retail, visit the Australian Retailers Association's
Women in Retail Series at retail.org.au/womeninretail



Maximising profitability starts with advanced inventory insight

Retailers need inventory visibility in omnichannel environment.

BY RAGHAV SIBAL [MANHATTAN ASSOCIATES]

Not long ago, retailers had a clear differentiation in sales channels. Inventory located in-store was only consumed through that store. And inventory located at a warehouse was only consumed through the catalogue, phone, or perhaps online site associated with that warehouse.

In the past, companies sunk significant funds into extra inventory called “safety stock.” But the rise of warehouse management solutions, RFID, mechanical automation, and robotics has raised inventory accuracy to 99% and eliminated the need for safety stock.

Stores have traditionally struggled with inventory accuracy, often hovering down around 60 to 70 %. That’s because there are a lot of moving parts. Potentially hundreds of people have access to the items, and they can be moved (or removed) with little obviation.

In the past, the chaos of inventory in stores caused inefficiencies, but the effects on customers were limited. If an item they wanted was there, they picked it up. If it wasn’t, then they went in search of it elsewhere. Since they didn’t expect the item would be there, even if they left empty handed, they didn’t feel

deceived. Their experience wasn’t negative, and the consequence to the business was minimal.

CHANGING RETAIL EXPECTATIONS

The retail world has changed significantly in the past five to 10 years. Forbes is reporting that now, 98% of consumers believe purchases, deliveries, and returns should be easily available across multiple channels. According to Aberdeen, companies with omnichannel engagement strategies retain 89% of their customers, compared to just a 33% retention rate for companies without that engagement.

However, the execution of omnichannel is proving to be difficult, with nearly eight out of 10 retailers not delivering a unified brand experience across their channels – even though they believe it’s the top innovation that drives digital growth.

OMNICHANNEL DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN PROFITABLE

Modern retailers know they need to move to an omnichannel operations model to compete for the connected consumer. Enabling the store network as a distribution point for inventory should be an advantage against online competitors that have no physical footprint. However, without investment in technology specifically designed for omnichannel, the workarounds required to deliver on the customer promise drag margins down.

Some recent research has found that when the average apparel retailer provided in-store shopping and delivery, it was quite profitable. When it sold online and delivered from the warehouse, it also did well. However, when it began utilising its network of stores for pickup and distribution, things changed. Inefficiencies, lack of in-store fulfilment tools, and the inability to source inventory from the most profitable location started to erode margins.

IDENTIFYING THE CHALLENGES

To create the same level of accuracy and efficiency with an online order fulfilled at a store as we get with an online order shipped from a distribution centre (DC), the first thing to recognise is that the store is not simply another DC. It is far more complex. Not in automation or mechanics, of course, but in the flow of people, processes, and chaos.

When a member of a warehouse fulfilment team is going through the tasks of picking items for shipping, no one ever taps him or her on the shoulder and asks, “Can you help me with something?” But that happens all of the time to store associates who have to fill multiple roles at once. This dynamic highlights the difficulty of inventory sourcing in stores.



For retailer to truly thrive, their omnichannel selling and fulfilment capabilities require multiple levels of visibility.

Back when online orders were fulfilled from warehouses only if you trusted the inventory accuracy, it was pretty easy to decide which facility to source from. As online selling has become more prevalent, and inventory levels more real-time, advancements like selling against inbound inventory or inventory located at third-party drop-shippers now make the process more complex.

For retailer to truly thrive, their omnichannel selling and fulfilment capabilities require multiple levels of visibility.

NEW TECHNOLOGY CRUCIAL FOR AN OMNICHANNEL ENVIRONMENT

Over 75% of retail CEOs think the next three years are more critical than the past 50 years. They know omnichannel services are needed to compete. But being able to deliver them profitably is what’s needed to survive. Currently, only 10% of industry leaders believe they can make a profit while fulfilling omnichannel demand. The reason is technology.

Retailers are trying to deliver sophisticated capabilities with older solutions because the software was never built with omnichannel in mind. Therefore, it is crucial that retailers are updating their systems and technology to be able to keep up with the increasing demands of customers in an increasingly omnichannel environment. 📱

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For more information, visit manh.com/en-au





Retail is a numbers game

How data is delivering better customer experience and boosting the bottom line.

BY STEVEN VOLZ [KRONOS]

The rise of online shopping has meant a seismic change in the way retailers achieve customer traction. Some retailers have been tempted to turn their bricks-and-mortar stores into skeleton operations, where sales versus head hours is the only method of driving profits.

But, as retail wages creep up every year, it is proving an unsustainable model and retailers are returning their focus to customer experience, boosting profits rather than cutting costs, and a new generation of analytic tools that can give them a competitive edge.

INVEST IN PEOPLE

While wages continue to climb every year, retail returns are not keeping pace. When margins are being squeezed, it's tough to think about investing in people; the reflex is to cut back on staff. But what differentiates your bricks-and-mortar store from an online offering is your people.

If you don't have the right number of good staff in store - at the right times - the customer experience suffers and so do the sales. Having the right number

of quality staff strategically planned throughout the day can be the difference in ensuring add on sales, developing customer relationships that may turn into return visits, not losing customers due to lack of assistance, and reducing shrinkage.

This is not to say you should blindly throw money at employing more staff — quite the opposite. You need a strategy supported by solid data. Workforce management software can be used to take a deep dive into your sales and staffing patterns to make an informed assessment of how you can better manage the rosters to ensure a high level of customer service that will drive sales but not break the bank.

Workforce management software uses machine-learning algorithms to better understand trading trends and staffing requirements over a given period - taking into special account events, holidays, or promotions. On average, you need six weeks of information to create an accurate forecast for regular trading periods and around 1-2 years' worth of data for holiday periods. The more data, the better to determine optimum staffing levels and patterns.

USE TECHNOLOGY TO TAKE A HOLISTIC LOOK AT YOUR BUSINESS

Data collection is partly about sales figures and staffing costs. But there's another volume driver that is just as important when it comes to understanding and improving the customer experience you are offering, and boosting sales. That driver is customer-traffic analysis.

Solutions measuring customer movement through mobile phones can tell how many people are passing through - or passing by - your premises, when you have spikes in customer traffic and which areas of the store are most visited. This data can inform how many staff you need to roster at a given time, potential product placement, even promotional activities.

It's important to note that this technology does not identify the individual. Unlike traditional CCTV systems, it doesn't even record images.

SUPPORT STORE MANAGERS WITH MOBILITY

Store managers will likely have the most retail experience of all your staff, so it pays to have them on the shop floor leading by example. A simple user-interface such as Kronos Workforce Dimensions will give them mobile access to sales figures and average purchase amounts and enable them to guide retail teams while making informed decisions about sales strategies and staffing throughout the day. They will be able to manage the figures without needing to be stuck in a back office. And because it's displayed using graphics (not an avalanche of numbers), it's quick and easy to understand.

As consumers become increasingly accustomed to online shopping, they expect more and more from an in-store experience. This is not an issue that retailers can ignore. Build it, and they will come no longer applies. We're seeing major chain stores open in prominent locations and tank within the first year, and major department stores struggling because they're not delivering what consumers want.

To be competitive, agility is key. By using smart analytics, retailers can be even better prepared to face the next ten years, head on. 



If you don't have the right number of good staff in store - at the right times - **the customer experience suffers and so do the sales.**

Kronos is a leading provider of workforce management and human capital management cloud solutions, including industry-centric workforce applications purpose-built for retail. For more information, visit kronos.com.au

THE ERA FOR THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY TO GO DIGITAL

Digitising the F&B industry is one way to increase efficiency and ensure a high-quality product output.

BY **ANDREW POOCH** [TETRA PAK OCEANIA]

E-commerce is increasingly the go-to shopping method for consumers, and it is no different when it comes to grocery shopping. According to Nielsen, Australia saw a 22.9% increase in new grocery online shoppers over 12 months.

Online grocery provides a significant opportunity for food and beverage (F&B) manufacturers and retailers. But to keep up with consumers' high expectations of online shopping, F&B companies need to understand the trends shaping them.

In 2018, we released the Tetra Pak Index, our annual research into consumer trends in the F&B industry, with a focus on online grocery. We found that convenience and time continue to have a big impact on consumer behaviour. Consumers want their shopping choices to be quick, easy, and convenient. The Amazon Dash Button is a great example of this. It's a small device which consumers place in their home

and set up to a mobile app to link the device to a particular product, such as soap. When a consumer runs out of soap, they have to push the button, and it automatically orders more through Amazon, removing the hassle and time of repurchasing in store or online.

Consumers also want assurance that the brands they purchase are doing the right thing by the environment and the community. As online grocery increases, this can also mean a growth in carbon emissions due to the higher number of deliveries. As a result, consumers will be looking towards F&B companies to reduce their overall carbon footprint and environmental impact in other ways along the supply chain.

One way to achieve this is by using packaging formats that are lightweight and space efficient, like cartons. Using cartons to store food and beverage products allows for more items to be transported in each delivery, cutting down the total deliveries required. Integrating renewable

materials into packaging is also key. Renewable materials are those that are natural and can be replenished over time, such as wood. Using materials that are responsibly sourced and come from FSC-certified and controlled sources ensures that these natural resources will be abundant in the future.

While these are the trends continuing to make an impact, the future of F&B packaging is undoubtedly digital. In the new era, we will take a step towards achieving a truly intelligent package. No longer is it only about protection, functionality, and sustainability. It is about connectivity. Using code generation, digital printing, and data management, these new digital platforms will benefit food producers as well as retailers and consumers.

With technologies like augmented reality, packaging can become a more engaging and interactive touchpoint with consumers. Connected or smart packaging that uses digital

The benefits of digitisation will also extend across the supply chain. Ensuring a production line is running at an optimal rate is key to delivering high quality products promptly.



identifiers like QR codes creates new value in end-to-end traceability. The codes provide consumers with detailed information about a product, including its carbon footprint, the materials in the packaging right down to where the food was produced. For retailers, this traceability provides an opportunity to accurately track stock movement to meet demand, while also improving product quality on the shelf for consumers.

The benefits of digitisation will also extend across the supply chain. Ensuring a production line is running at an optimal rate is key to delivering high quality products promptly. Using technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT), predictive maintenance

monitors patterns of operation so technology can predict if a fault or stoppage of machinery is likely to occur, allowing for these issues to be fixed in advance. This saves businesses both time and money and ensures a smooth supply chain operation.

The future of the food industry is undoubtedly digital. Digital technologies will enable food and beverage manufacturers and retailers to tackle many of the challenges they face today such as improving transparency and tracking each product individually, improving quality control to reduce the risk of food safety issues, connecting to consumers in new ways and reducing food waste. 🍷

Tetra Pak is the world's leading food processing and packaging solutions company. Working closely with our customers and suppliers, we provide safe, innovative, and environmentally sound products that each day meet the needs of hundreds of millions of people in more than 160 countries. With more than 25,000 employees around the world, we believe in responsible industry leadership and a sustainable approach to business. Our promise, "PROTECTS WHAT'S GOOD™," reflects our vision to make food safe and available, everywhere.

For more information, visit [tetrapak.com](https://www.tetrapak.com)

THE POWER OF THE SENSES: HOW IN-STORE ATMOSPHERE PERSUADES CUSTOMERS TO BUY

79% of Australians are likely to choose a store over online if there is an enjoyable atmosphere.

BY STEVE HUGHES [MOOD MEDIA AUSTRALIA]

Certain online retailers would like to believe that the modern customer has shifted to shopping in an entirely virtual environment. In reality, the sights, sounds, and scents of a physical, in-store shopping experience are still drawing crowds and helping to boost retailers' bottom lines.

In fact, 79% of Australians are very or fairly likely to choose a store over online if there is an enjoyable atmosphere made up of music, visuals, and scent. If retailers can nail the perfect atmosphere, customers will continue to come back for more, because the physical act of shopping in a store is something online retailers simply cannot offer. The research, *Elevating the Customer Experience: The Impact of Sensory Marketing*, was commissioned by Mood Media and surveyed more than 10,000 consumers across ten countries including Australia, China, United Kingdom, the United States, and France.

But can sights, sounds, and smells really have a big impact on shoppers?

Well, according to a study by Curtin University Professor Adrian North, the right kind of music can direct shoppers to specific purchases. North conducted research in a British bottle shop and found that French music led to consumers buying five times more French wine. The music was not designed to promote French wine, but rather turn a 50/50 decision into a 51/49 decision in favour of the French variety. It might seem like a small shift, but those subtle factors can have huge ramifications for retailers' bottom line.

It's not just sounds: visual content can affect shoppers' moods dramatically. First impressions are key, and while important, an attractive shop window and clever store layout will no longer cut it. Retailers are now using CGI animation, graphics, and video walls to bring their business to life. Video walls at the rear and in-front windows are increasingly being used to lure customers into stores with ambient, atmospheric content.

Customers can anticipate that they're about to enter a digitally savvy, relaxing space with a curated shopping experience and an environment that feels familiar.

Then there's scent, with its important memory-jogging and emotion-altering powers. Never underestimate scent, because shoppers are paying attention: 63% of Australians notice when certain stores have a pleasant and inviting smell. In the same survey, half of the global shoppers claimed that a nicely scented business 'lifts their mood.' It may be subtle, but the right smell can play an important role in transforming perceptions and evoking a certain lifestyle or emotion.

Finally, let's not forget about the power of touch. Imagine there's a customer who wants to purchase a silk shirt. Consider how much more powerfully persuasive the feel of that silk will be when it's in their hand, compared to a simple photo of it on a model. The ability to touch, feel, and try different products or services is

cited as the biggest driver to in-store purchases, making 56% of consumers more likely to want to buy something. It's why people flick through magazines they don't buy regularly – the front cover might have attracted them to pick it up, but is the content worthwhile? A quick flick will tell them.

When combined to create an all-encompassing sensory experience; music, visual and scent can increase consumer dwell time, with 75% of consumers admitting they've stayed longer in a store when these components were in place and worked well together. Even more importantly, nine out of ten consumers decided to return to a store because they enjoyed its music, visuals, and scent combination.

It's clear that to succeed; shops need to pay close attention to their in-store experience. A perfectly designed atmosphere will get consumers in the mood to buy and, more importantly, return. 🛒



But can **sights, sounds, and smells** really have a big impact on shoppers?



Mood Media delivers sensory branding, including retail music, digital signage, scent branding and mobile marketing to more than 500,000 active client locations around the globe. In Australia its clients include businesses of all sizes and market sectors, including Nissan, Myer, Kmart, The Hilton, BWS, Woolworths, Freedom, Amcal, and Michael Hill in Australia. For more details moodmedia.com.au

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Judges



BERNIE BROOKES

Bernie Brookes has expertise and substantial experience in retail and wholesale operations, buying, information technology systems, supply chain, and human resource management. One of Bernie's many roles is CEO Institute Chairman and Adjunct Industry Fellow at Swinburne Business School.



WARWICK PONDER

Warwick Ponder is Head of Corporate Affairs and Communications at eftpos Australia. Since joining eftpos Australia in 2012, Warwick has worked closely with ARA to help support Australia's retail industry.



PETER WILKINSON

Peter Wilkinson is Chairman of Forever New Clothing Company. Peter acts as an advisor to companies. He has also held several board positions for Coles Myer Limited, The Just Group, and David Jones. Peter was the inaugural President of the ARA and President of the Intercontinental Group of Department Stores.



RADINCK VAN VOLLENHOVEN

Radinck van Vollenhoven is the Country Manager of Stocard in Australia and New Zealand, the leading mobile wallet with over 3.4 million engaged shoppers. Over the last decade, he has launched and scaled multiple startup businesses in the technology, retail, and media space.



ROBYN BATSON

Robyn Batson is the Group People & Development Manager and has been with Sussan Group for 15 years. In her role, Robyn oversees community partnerships and is responsible for providing advice on people and developing strategic initiatives on business matters.



ALLA BUINOWICZ

Alla Buinowicz has been the Managing Director at Taking Shape for 15 years. With over 35 years of experience across design, buying, merchandise planning, marketing, and brand management, Alla is passionate about Australian and New Zealand fashion.

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Manhattan Associates is a global leader in supply chain and omnichannel software solutions. We deliver leading edge cloud and on-premises solutions so that across the store, through your network or from your fulfilment centre, you are ready to reap the rewards of the omnichannel marketplace.



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Rest is one of Australia's largest superannuation funds by membership, with around 1.9 million members and around \$55 billion funds under management as of May 2019. As a profit-to-member fund, we put our members first, offering low fees, competitive long-term performance, and flexible, cost-effective insurance.

Nominees



Winners In Customer Experience

Recognising Australian retailers who create and enhance the customer experience at every step of their shopping journey.

2019 MANHATTAN ASSOCIATES EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



PETstock

PETstock are an 100% Australian, family owned and operated business. Built on humble beginnings in regional Victoria, brothers David and Shane built the business on family values and a passion for pets. PETstock are proud to provide customers with good old-fashioned customer service.

Runners-up Brava Lingerie, On the Run, Retail Prodigy Group



Birdsnest

Birdsnest is a family owned retail business in Cooma, regional NSW. Despite its regional location, Birdsnest has become one of Australia's most respected and visited online fashion stores. Birdsnest inspire confidence in women by solving wardrobe dilemmas through unique online styling support and exceptional customer service.

2019 DAYLIGHT AGENCY EXCELLENCE IN RETAIL MARKETING



PETstock

After an extensive pet parent research study in 2017, PETstock developed the idea of Shop Smart and Save. Since the campaign's inception, PETstock noticed a substantial uplift in sales and received praise from loyal PETstock Rewards program members.

Runners-up Brava Lingerie, Vodafone



Bakers Delight

Working off the theme of Bakers Delight and BCNA being 'breast friends' for nearly 20 years, the Bakers Delight Marketing team opted for an idea that would remain a talking point long after customers left the store or well before they had even entered.

Winners In Customer Experience

Recognising Australian retailers who create and enhance the customer experience at every step of their shopping journey.

2019 PRONTO RETAIL INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR



Biome

The Biome team have worked tirelessly to implement a 100% palm oil free process. Working closely with Palm Oil Investigations, the team eliminated hundreds of products that contained palm oil from their store. Biome is the first retail store in the world to gain endorsement by leading consumer action group, POI, for having palm oil free store.

Runners-up Specsavers, Myer, George & Matilda Eyecare

2019 STORE DESIGN & FIT OUT OF THE YEAR



First Choice Liquor

The fit-out of the First Choice Liquor Market stores aligns with the wider Coles business strategy to continue to transform the Coles Liquor business. The First Choice Liquor Market fit-out is designed to deliver a personalised and knowledgeable service, combined with trusted pricing to bring together producers and communities.

Runners-up AWPL, On the Run

Winners In People In Retail

Recognising individuals and employers in the retail industry paving the future of Australian retail.

2019 REST RETAIL BUSINESS WOMAN OF THE YEAR



Chelsea McIntosh

Chelsea McIntosh is the owner of Spoilt Gift and Homewares. Leading a team of 40 employees, Chelsea is dedicated to ensuring her bricks-and-mortar stores remain stable in the ever-changing retail environment. She works with non-profit organisation, St. Kilda Mum's to provide more opportunities for people to be involved in the retail space.

Runners-up Rebecca Peterson, Karina Bruce, Ellie Degraeve

2019 FCB RETAIL EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR



PETstock

PETstock culture is built on family values. Throughout the last year, the team has taken initiatives to ensure that the values and vision are a true reflection of the company and people. PETstock understand that by investing in their people, they receive significant wretuns in engagement, performance, and retention.

Runners-up Vodafone, ALDI, On the Run, Retail Prodigy Group, AWPL

2019 REST YOUNG RETAILER OF THE YEAR



Aled Ball

Over four years ago, Aled Ball started his retail journey as a casual with On the Run (OTR – Peregrine Corporation). After being granted the opportunity to oversee over ten sites within OTR, Aled is now the operations area manager and aspires to move into a higher management role of a regional manager.

Runners-up Jacinta Farrell, Julieanne Willson, Marko Krndija, Thomas Kovacs, Amanda Styles

2019 RETAIL GRADUATE OF THE YEAR



Esther Laub

Esther Laub successfully completed the Retail Institute's Diploma of Merchandise Management course. Esther is currently the purchasing manager at The Sydney String Centre and manages the inventory for Violins Australia, The Sydney String Centre, Adlib Music, and Glanville & Co. She is currently implementing an Open to Buy system company wide.

Runners-up Anita Holman, Jamie Turner

Winners In Retailer Of The Year

Celebrating and acknowledging progressive retailers in Australia
who have transformed their business to adapt to the new era of retail.

2019 EFTPOS NATIONAL RETAILER OF THE YEAR



Vodafone

Vodafone's purpose is to give Australians the freedom and choice to connect the way they want. Through ongoing investments into digital commerce, business strategy, and staff training, Vodafone thrive on using technology to encourage customer interaction and providing exceptional customer experience.

Runners-up Retail Prodigy Group, Kidstuff

2019 EFTPOS DIGITAL COMMERCE RETAILER OF THE YEAR



YCL Jewels

YCL Jewels are constantly morphing as a brand and adopting the latest technologies and developments to enhance customers e-commerce experience. With customer service at the forefront of YCL's mission, CEO and Creative Director Fabienne Costa believes effective and supportive customer service is vital for online brands.

Runners-up The Party People, Myer

2019 EFTPOS FRANCHISE GROUP OF THE YEAR



**Bakers
Delight**

What started as a single bakery in 1980, Bakers Delight is now recognised as one of the world's most successful bakery franchise brand names. With over 700 bakeries located across Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, Bakers Delight has evolved into a household name.

Runners-up Specsavers, Poolwerx, Degani

2019 EFTPOS INDEPENDENT RETAILER OF THE YEAR



Birdsnest

As an independent, self-funded business in a regional area, Birdsnest believes investment in marketing and creativity is paramount to succeed in a competitive market. Birdsnest is dedicated to fostering a work environment where the team is passionate about their role and contribution to the wider community.

Runners-up The Party People, Brava Lingerie, Spoilt Gift and Homewares

See you next year

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REVOLUTIONISING RETAIL PAYMENTS WITH TOKENS

Tokenisation is forging a new future for retail to provide a more enhanced, digitally secure, experience for all shoppers and retailers.

BY **CLAIRE SHOEMAKE** [MASTERCARD]

Online, secure payments are a boon for retailers - combining the lower costs of online shop fronts with the ease of shopping anywhere, anytime.

As consumers have increasingly taken to online shopping, there has also been an increase in online fraud, with Australians losing over \$500m (85% of all fraud) last year to card not present fraud – that is fraud perpetrated where the card isn't physically presented to the retailer. Understandably, retailers are increasingly concerned about the threat of online fraud and the potential impact to their business bottom line.

However, thanks to the introduction of innovative, new payment technologies, retailers can make shopping online more secure for themselves and their customers, and continue to leverage online shopping to create more convenient, accessible and far safer shopping experience for all of their customers.

REDUCING THE EFFECT OF SECURITY BREACHES

Online, technology called tokenisation is reducing the risks of accepting and storing card details on retailers' sites. We know that having a customer's payment card on file enables faster checkout and a better online payment experience, but it can be risky, ensuring that the data is secure.

Tokenisation works by replacing a card's primary account number — the 16-digit number on the plastic card — with a unique, configurable security token that is unique to that retailer and site. This token is then used to initiate transactions, meaning that merchants no longer

store card holder's details, and in the event of a data breach, cyber criminals can no longer use those card details to initiate a transaction on another site.

Large data breaches from retailers have caused a huge headache for the businesses involved. In the past, it created significant reputational and monetary damage to the business, when card data stored by the retailers was stolen, putting the customers' finances at risk and causing a huge inconvenience to the customer, as well as a loss of trust in the online store.

As tokenisation becomes more widely adopted, the risks of card payment data being stolen in a data breach will be significantly reduced. Retailers will no longer have payment details stored on their systems, but rather safely inside Mastercard's vaults.

MORE THAN JUST ONLINE

Tokenisation and other payment innovations introduced by Mastercard provide an extra layer of protection for retailers against criminal activity. They reduce fraud related digital payments by making transactions more secure, a huge benefit for retailers while providing more customer-friendly services like faster checkout experiences.

This extends beyond digital transactions and into the point of sale. Retailers can incorporate biometric security, where users authenticate with a fingerprint or face verification, into digital wallets like Apple. Both of these technologies will introduce another barrier against fraudulent transactions.

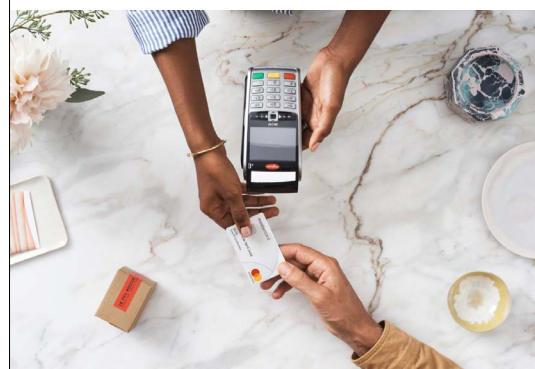
Businesses and consumers are now well aware of the dangers of fraudulent activity. **No consumer wants to lose control of their card details, and no retailer wants to be the victim of cyber fraud.**

EQUIPPING BUSINESSES FOR THE FUTURE

Businesses and consumers are now well aware of the dangers of fraudulent activity. No consumer wants to lose control of their card details, and no retailer wants to be the victim of cyber fraud.

Tokenisation is forging a new future for retail; it is and will be key to providing a more enhanced, digitally secure, experience for all shoppers and retailers. The result is a user-friendly method of paying for items online without having to worry about a breach or compromise.

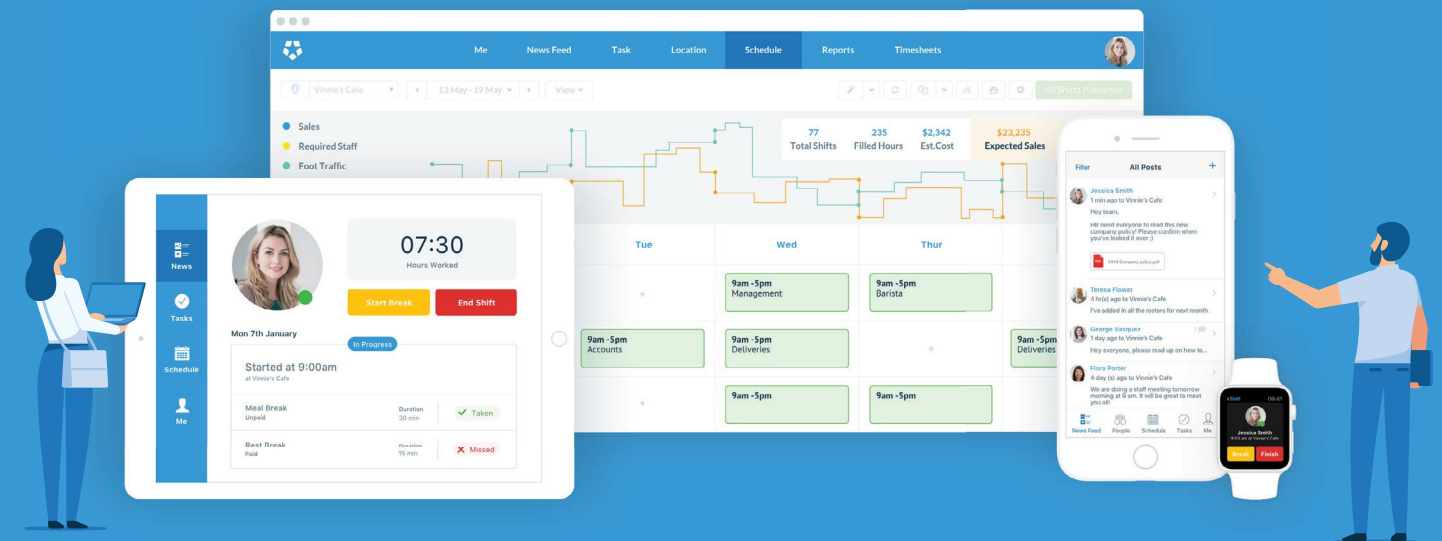
Retailers play a pivotal role in driving this change through enabling tokenisation and other enhanced security measures in all of their transactions. To learn more about how you can help combat fraud through adopting these measures, talk to your acquiring bank or payment services provider.



Mastercard is a technology company in the global payments industry. Mastercard's global payments processing network connects consumers, financial institutions, merchants, governments, and businesses in more than 210 countries and territories. For more information, visit mastercard.com.au/en-au



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ICEBERG LOYALTY: A NEW WAY TO DISRUPT YOUR COMPETITORS

In today's competitive market, a different way of thinking is necessary. It is disrupting the status quo of retail marketing that will drive genuine customer loyalty.

BY MICHAEL BARNARD [CUSTOMOLOGY]

Retailers are fighting to acquire new customers - targeting the same people, with the same message in a race to the bottom on price, where the cheapest wins. The truth is, loyalty can't be bought.

Instead of trying to buy customers, it's time retailers put their focus back on the customer.

ICEBERG LOYALTY: A NEW WAY OF LOYALTY THINKING

Marketers talk about the consumer and the audience, dehumanising the customer, forgetting that we're all customers. The human element is missing; the respect is lost. Retailers are creating non-stop noise, with a stream of sales and promotions, hoping their message will be seen.

But this won't help drive loyalty; in fact, the opposite is true.

There's a lot of white noise in retail marketing — some messages breakthrough. However, many customers stay mute - perhaps engaged, perhaps not. We refer to this customer group as the 'silent majority.' They're empowered by choice, with limited time at their disposal.

They have silent empowerment, which the retailer will never fully grasp. The social age has added to that empowerment and the power of decision within the customer's hands.

When referencing 'iceberg loyalty,' we're talking about a kind of loyalty that exists beneath the surface. Brands who are quietly building foundations, working on strategies and techniques to better understand and influence their customers. There's an element of surprise and delight for the customer when you can respond to and predict their behaviour.

TECHNOLOGY AN ACCELERATOR, NOT THE ANSWER

Marketers today are overdosed on technology that they think they need to solve all their problems. They're under huge amounts of pressure. However, they mustn't overcomplicate technology or forget the strategy behind it. There's no 'one size fits all' in retail marketing. Customers want to be respected and recognised as individuals. They don't want to be spammed three times a week. If they've shared their data - respect and nurture it, don't abuse it.

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When referencing 'iceberg loyalty,' we're talking about a kind of **loyalty that exists beneath the surface.**

Here's an exercise; take your marketing budget - have one column for acquiring new customers, another column for customer retention. For retention, challenge yourself to consider three tactics which don't rely on technology.

HOW SHOULD WE TALK TO CUSTOMERS?

If customers are transacting with you, you already have data. So, what should you do with it?

Use the data to get a lens on how the customer is behaving. How much they spend, how often they visit, and when they last spent with you. By doing this, you can respond to, and understand their behaviour, instead of hoping your latest sales campaign will miraculously perform better than the last one.

The moneymoon period is a key ingredient to iceberg loyalty. The moneymoon is the time after a customer's most recent purchase, where the experience can go one of three ways. These include buyer's remorse, contentment, or engagement; whatever the case, what you do next matters. If you send a genuine message at this time, you'll put them on a path to repurchase.

THANK YOU FIRST, NOT NPS

It seems whenever a customer makes a purchase, before even stepping out of the store, they've been sent an email asking for a rating on their experience? This is the brand's way of saying 'tell us how good we are.'

Retailers need to take a step back and think about the customer. This can only be achieved by thinking like a customer. Think of the type of messages you would personally like to receive. Genuine and respectful messages are always welcome, a thank you which doesn't contain an offer or promo goes a long way. This is the beginning of their moneymoon phase.

DISRUPT THE COMPETITION AND THRIVE

Brands that win are those that have spent time and effort on iceberg loyalty, silently investing in continuing a conversation with their customers - getting to know them and influencing their next behaviour. Iceberg loyalty gives brands the depth of engagement to drive sales and those brands who don't sink.

It may sound simple, but we genuinely believe that by continuing a conversation with your customers, you will disrupt your competitors and drive loyalty. Remember, loyal customers, come from the silent majority; they spend more and bring their friends back with them. 🛒

Customology specialises in creating customers for life, helping brands grow by understanding their customers and keep them coming back. Customology transform transactions into unique customers, identifying customer growth opportunities, activating the path to repurchase, and influencing the right customer behaviours to ultimately drive repeat sales. For more information, visit customology.com.au



Building digital success in retail

In the next ten years, digital experiences in retail will be everywhere. In this fast-paced industry, retailers will need to be able to utilise existing assets and adopt multi-channel IoT platforms to find success in the competitive marketplace.

BY JOY CHUA [MELDCX]

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Retailers will need to ensure they invest in assets with maximum life cycle. Building for success in this highly paced industry means, being able to use what they have, in conjunction with adding new technologies to pre-existing hardware.



Retail is undergoing huge disruption, with new technologies presenting exciting potential for innovation. From artificial intelligence and machine learning to automation and the Internet of Things (IoT), the world is changing rapidly.

We are now entering what is being described as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, or Industry 4.0. Technologies such as robotics, drones, and virtual reality are no longer remote and futuristic concepts. They are already starting to deploy at mass scale, with the International Data Corporation predicting the robotic systems market will grow from \$115.7b in 2019 to \$210.3b in 2022.

CHANGING CUSTOMERS

At the same time, consumers are getting much savvier about technology and knowing what they want. They expect immediate responses, a personalised and customised experience.

This is a particularly strong trend among younger consumers, with data from Accenture showing 70% of millennials have six touchpoints before they decide to purchase something, such as social media, a website,

a friend's recommendation. In addition to this, 91% prefer brands that personalise recommendations, 95% want personalised coupons, and 76% want offers based on purchase history.

Retailers need to understand these new consumers and continue to advance their technology.

THE IOT PROOF-OF-CONCEPT STAGE

The Proof-of-Concept (POC) era is at the dawn of the IoT age. There is a lot of excitement and experimentation taking place, but also a lot of disappointment. As with any new technology, some applications turn out to be unviable or unusable.

According to a 2017 Cisco report, 75% of IoT projects fail. Integration with existing technologies can be challenging, security is frequently an issue, and rigid platforms may not offer enough flexibility for development.

However, this failure rate isn't a reason to give up or to delay adoption of IoT. As IoT matures and becomes an established and accepted part of our lives, retailers who have invested in these technologies are the ones who will be competitive.

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL

To equip themselves for the IoT age, retailers must embrace change and get smart about technology. Data analytics, AI, and machine learning are no longer the "bleeding edge," to be embraced only by early adopters. All organisations need to start deploying them.

Over the next few years, there will be a rise in multichannel IoT platforms connected to a variety of cloud providers that can host different apps and connect to different clouds. These will serve as multichannel marketing hubs (MMH), orchestrating communications with customer segments across multiple channels, such as websites, mobile, social, paid media, and email.

Advanced analytics functionality will then enable customer-level data and analysis as well as modelling such as journey analytics and customer profile management. Successful vendors will create unified customer profiles that will strengthen machine learning and deliver insights to drive the relevant interaction in real time.

According to Adobe research, companies with a highly integrated, cloud-based technology stack are 131% more likely to have significantly outperformed their top 2018 business goal. Organisations who class themselves as "very advanced" at CX (customer experience) are three times more likely than their peers to have exceeded their top 2018 business goal by a significant margin.

FUTURE PROOFING

Retailers will need to ensure they invest in assets with maximum life cycle. Building for success in this highly paced industry means, being able to use what they have, in conjunction with adding new technologies to pre-existing hardware.

When it comes to multi-channel marketing platforms, open modular systems will offer the most flexibility and agility. Gartner cautions against providers who require users to purchase myriad solutions that are locked into a particular suite and recommends that retailers and marketers carefully evaluate what's on offer.

Marketing technology is a very fragmented industry with disparate, specialised solutions. But in the new era of individualised, omni-channel marketing, it's vital to take a more unified approach.

These emerging trends are here to stay: they won't change. The future of retail is about using data to drive machine learning to inform an even smarter consumer. And this will be powered by advanced, flexible platforms that enable organisations to be agile, innovative, and responsive to fast-evolving market and consumer demands. 📈

meldCX is the first comprehensive enterprise platform for development of digital transformation (DT), making it simple and cost-effective for organizations to develop, deploy and manage commercial applications for IoT devices and DT initiatives.

For more information, visit aopensolutions.com

The rise of the ‘gig economy’ and fall of traditional work structures

In a gig based economy, temporary and flexible jobs are becoming the norm rather than the exception.

BY **TANIA EVANS** [WORKPRO]

The way we work is rapidly evolving. Population growth, generational workplace shift, and advances in technology are altering traditional workflows and creating new avenues of work, challenging traditional working structures. One of the biggest paradigm shifts has been the rise of the ‘gig economy.’

In a gig based economy, temporary and flexible jobs are the norm rather than the exception, with companies making conscious hiring decisions to

involve contractors and freelancers to supplement (or instead of) full-time working arrangements.

Increasingly, workers too are reimagining and redefining the 9 to 5, Monday to Friday, permanent commitment. A gig worker is someone who actively seeks out and thrives in a more flexible environment, valuing variety, and growth over perceived job security. A study from Elance-oDesk shows that more than one third of workers under the age of 25 in Australia freelance, compared to only 25% of the total population.



Given the traditional ways of work most businesses are designed to support, employment structures and relations aren't yet firmly established to accommodate gig workers. A simple example being that gig workers can be engaged through an increasing variety of mediums – apps, websites, agencies, referrals, and more.

Right now, it's important that employers understand the ramifications of engaging freelance and contracted workers, and adapt processes accordingly to set gig workers up for success – for your workers, your compliance obligations and your business.

DUTY OF CARE

When you engage someone to work for you, or if you influence or direct a person to carry out work on behalf of your business or undertaking, a duty of care exists – regardless of whether you have engaged them directly or not, or the work is paid or voluntary. As the duty holder, you are required to ensure the health and safety of the worker, so far as is reasonably practicable.

You must provide adequate facilities and a safe and healthy working environment, ensure that safe systems of work are in place, and monitor workplace conditions. You cannot contract out of these responsibilities. You must be able to prove the exchange of information and the procedures applied to ensure their safety.

UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER'S GOALS


As with any relationship, it's important to understand what each party expects from the

exchange to achieve mutual success – this is no different with gig workers. While the formal transaction between employer and employee may be different, it still requires both parties to be invested in the overall success of the business. Ensure gig workers understand your business goals so they can align their goals with your plans and values. Also, setting goals alongside the gig worker can help to empower and engage with them appropriately, so that they thrive (along with your business).

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

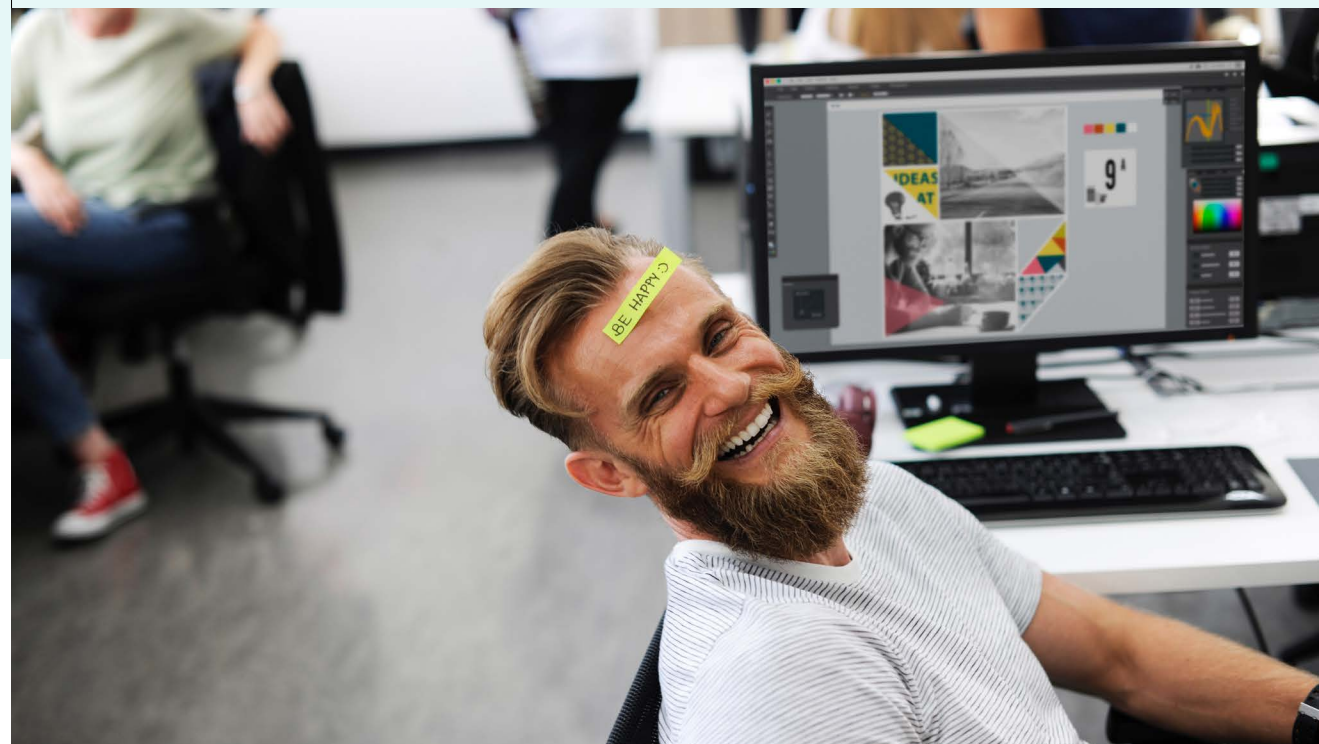
It's vital to have a corporate policy in place which is transparently available to all employees – including gig workers. This involves identifying the role or position that the worker will fulfil, as well as documenting the specifics of the arrangement. These details should include the schedule of work proposed, the specific duties to be undertaken, the start and end date, a suggested review process to monitor and address any issues about the arrangements, and more.

Communication is key, ensuring there is a structured and documented pathway for the gig worker to follow so that they can achieve the defined goals of the business.

So, if you're seeking to hire gig workers to supplement and support your business, then making sure you understand their requirements, as well as giving them room to grow, is key. Gig workers shouldn't be a last minute resort, but a considered and integral part of your business strategy. 

It's important that employers understand the ramifications of engaging freelance and contracted workers, and adapt processes accordingly to set gig workers up for success – **for your workers, your compliance obligations and your business.**

WorkPro is an online platform that makes workforce compliance simple and, as a result, organisations more efficient. The WorkPro platform centralises background checks; licence, ticket and document management; and safety and compliance training; and delivers powerful technology and continually evolving services to clients across Australia and New Zealand. For more information, visit workpro.com.au



Healthcare at the heart of retail

How meaningful experiences and customer data will shape the way consumers interact with personal and health care retailers.

BY GLENN COCHRAN [RB HEALTH]

The last decade was all about consumer behaviour influencing online shopping. While this 'trend' will continue to grow, the question is now how it can be supplemented by innovative retail activity. I forecast that 2020 and beyond will see more meaningful experiences by brands and retailers at the heart of all consumer interactions – be they online or in-store. And health care in retail is leading the charge.

The last ten years has been transformative for the world of retail, and the way health care brands market their products to online retailers – with the consumer experience involving almost no personal interaction if that's what the shopper wanted. However, we're now seeing Australians move away from this psychological isolation by seeking other people's opinions and authentic, meaningful retailer experiences before making a purchase.

Face-to-face human interactions are becoming more memorable due to the increasing amount of time Australians are spending online. This means that when shoppers head into store, an 'added value' experience with a retailer could win their loyalty for life. We're seeing this a lot in the pharmacy space, where consumers

are seeking advice for their personal or health care concerns and trusting pharmacists to be genuine in their recommendations, rather than to upsell and meet targets.

This pharmacy value-add strategy is one all retailers can implement, with these meaningful customer interactions providing a foundation for repeat customers.

In other words, treat your shopper relations as a marathon, not a race.

Think more about providing consistent and continual communications to sustain a long-term relationship with your customers.

For those consumers who continue to shop online, peer reviews will drive sales over price. Customers will head to Google, Facebook, TripAdvisor, and even Instagram's geotargeted 'Places' to determine with which retailers they spend their money. Once retailers have won trust, consumers will decide on products, where the choice for reviews is endless. Consumers can head to the retailer's website (Amazon, Priceline), consumer advocacy sites (Choice, Canstar, Finder), or independent peer review sites (ProductReview, Mouths of Mums), to inform purchasing decisions.



In other words,
**treat your shopper
relations as a marathon,
not a race.**

In this context, the definition of 'peer' becomes even more acute, thanks to innovations in data capture technology. For instance, where online retailers once targeted audiences through such categories as 'Mother, 21-55, New South Wales', we may soon be targeting with parameters based off detailed consumer behaviour, such as 'Mother, 32, two kids under 5 years old, who experienced pregnancy reflux, Parramatta, New South Wales'.

Using this data to develop relevant product recommendations for customers would not only increase repeat purchases and positive user experiences but also generate stronger relationships between retailers and their suppliers as forecasts becomes actualised.

For those brands offering a consumer experience across physical and online retail, the combined benefit of positive, meaningful experiences with favourable peer reviews will provide dividends in the personalisation decade of 2020.

Consumers are tired of choice paralysis. They want brands to deliver what they promise, and by providing retailers with product ranges that do just that, RB Health brands are setting retailer partners up for repeat business and thus, success. 🍷

Inspiring Australians to feel better and live longer by offering innovative solutions to put health in their own hands. RB Health brands include Dettol, Nurofen, Durex, Gaviscon, Scholl, E45, Veet, and more. For more information, visit rb.com

Influencing the customer experience to maximise sales

Understanding the shoppers’ in-store experience, and their ultimate ‘moment of truth’ in the shopping aisles is becoming more important than ever before.

BY **FRANK CARISTO** [NIELSEN PACIFIC]

A variety of factors have contributed to the slowly-eroding financial status of many Australian consumers.

A decade of government volatility; inflation at a 17-year low; an environment of stagnant wage growth; and we amid a major housing downturn across our two biggest cities. Add to this, our consistent concerns around rising gas and electricity bills and the cost of fuel - it's no surprise that consumers are actively seeking ways to save money on everyday expenses.

We all aware that growth for online grocery sales continues to massively outpace growth across the total market (up 35.4%). However, another emerging area of growth has come from discount retailers such as ALDI, Chemist Warehouse, and Costco. This sector has also shown relatively strong sales performance over the past year (up 4.5%).

The key to success for retailers is to focus on offering high-quality products at low prices.

With the rising popularity of discounters and online retailers, almost 5 million Australian shoppers claim they don't have the time to shop

around for groceries. And many will only shop when the need is pressing. This has resulted in the total number of shopping trips in the market to fall by 4% over the past couple of years, with online gaining occasions from other outlets – as well as increasing the average basket size (in dollar spend).

What this ultimately means is that there are fewer opportunities to convert a shopper to a sale while in-store. Retailers and manufacturers need to think very deeply about how to best influence each shopping experience to maximise the potential of a sale.

The rise of time-poor consumers has not translated into smaller, top-up shops. Over the last three years, Nielsen research has consistently shown that more than three-in-five shoppers still focus on their main shop to optimise their time, with many now turning to the convenience of online. The total number of shopping trips in the market has declined overall, but online grocery has seen an increase in the number of shopping trips and dollars spent.

Despite this trend, there is still an opportunity to win the shopper over when they are in-store.

Unlike an online environment where consumers will always tend to be heavily swayed by price, for bricks-and-mortar stores, the overall shopping experience is crucial, and in-store execution and shopper activation must take centre stage.

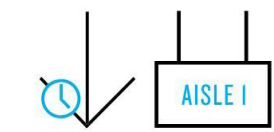
Understanding in-store shopper behaviour and their priorities is essential to determine the right offer. Nielsen research shows that three-in-four shoppers (74%) prefer to shop in a well-organised store with a pleasant ambience.

Solutions like Nielsen’s recently launched SmartStore uses virtual reality technology to help retailers measure, evaluate, and optimise a range of retail concepts and therefore, how to influence shoppers at the moment of truth. And, it helps advertisers measure the effectiveness of point-of-sale merchandise based on what shoppers “see, think, and do.”

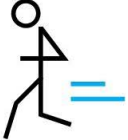
The in-store experience will always add a sense of premiumness and convenience that can't be matched. However, with shoppers increasingly rationalising their spend and their time, it is imperative that retailers and manufacturers understand in-store shopper behaviour and their priorities to attract them with the right offering. 📊



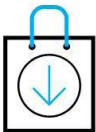
The key to success for retailers is to **focus on offering high-quality products at low prices.**



4.7 MILLION AUSTRALIAN SHOPPERS SAY THEY **DON'T HAVE TIME** TO SHOP AROUND FOR EVERYDAY ITEMS



64% OF AUSTRALIAN SHOPPERS SAY THEY ONLY GO SHOPPING WHEN THEY **REALLY NEED SOMETHING**

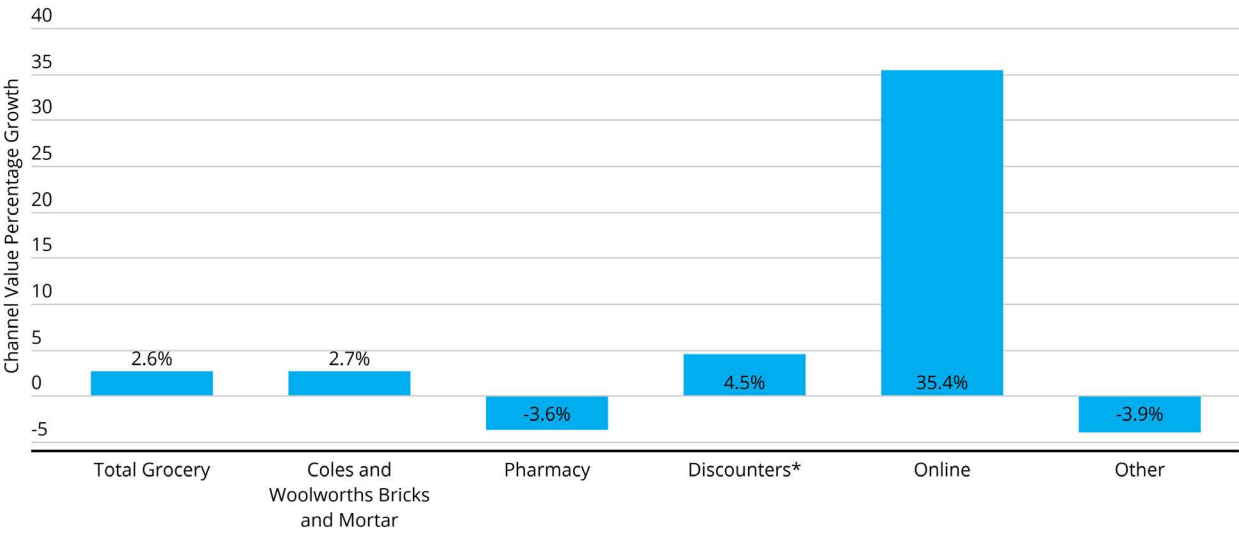


THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF **SHOPPING OCCASIONS** HAS **FALLEN BY 4%** FROM 2017

Source: Nielsen Consumer & Media View National Survey 10 2018 (Jan'18 - Dec '18)
Source: Nielsen Homescan - Total Defined Grocery (incl Fresh) – MAT

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CHANNEL VALUE PERCENTAGE GROWTH



*Discounters include Aldi, Costco, Chemist Warehouse; Online also include Coles and Woolworths online.
Source: Nielsen Homescan 52 WEEKS to 29.12.18
Source: Nielsen's syndicated Grocery E-Commerce Report Q4 2018

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THE TECHNOLOGY RETAILERS NEED TO KEEP ON TOP OF ONLINE REVIEWS

Make the shift from feeling overwhelmed to under control
in managing your online reputation.

BY KATE GORMAN [THE REALISE GROUP]

The only thing more horrifying than reading a negative online review about a customer's experience in your store is contemplating how many others are likely to read it too. Recent statistics tell us, close to 90% of potential customers read online reviews before visiting a local business.

The good news is that they are likely to be reading more than one and potentially from more than one platform, giving them a more rounded view of the business. Given the popularity of reading online reviews, perhaps we shouldn't be surprised to learn that prospective customers read an average ten reviews before they feel they can trust a business. And, if you want them to believe your star rating, you'll need at least 40 reviews. Yes, online reviews mean business.

So how can retailers keep abreast of all their online reviews, especially when they have multiple sites across the country?

It's one thing to be responding to customer comments on your social media pages or being aware of brand mentions, and it's another when you focus on the actual reviews.

Ask yourself, what does your brand reputation look like online?

Online reputation management (ORM) encompasses many elements, from

requesting reviews, reviewing and responding to those reviews, through to communicating with customers on social media, and keeping your business profiles current. It's an important strategy to get your head around, as reviews are increasing in importance for local SEO rankings.

Local businesses that show up top of the local SEO pack have at least 47 Google reviews. From a consumer perspective, research indicates the quantity of reviews is becoming more important each year. In 2018, 49% of consumers valued the quantity of reviews, up from 35% in 2016.

While volume counts, the nature of the reviews are just as important. Studies show that 40% of prospective customers won't consider a business with negative online reviews. While it's not possible to have a perfect record of positive reviews, it is important to consider the ratio of negative to positive.

How is your business responding to negative reviews? More than 50% of consumers expect a business should respond to a negative review online within seven days, yet when customers were asked about their own experience, 63% say that they have never had a response after leaving a negative review. Failure to respond is a missed opportunity in itself, with almost 90% of prospective customers reading a business's responses to reviews, what does your silence say to these customers?



Ask yourself, **what
does your brand
reputation look like
online?**

Understanding and investing in online reputation management may seem daunting, but by burying your head in the sand, you are missing out on influencing what, for many customers, is their first impression of your store. If your target consumer is aged 18-34yrs, it's likely that 95% have read reviews from other customers before they visit your store – or decide not to visit it.

The good news is, inexpensive technology has been developed to allow you to do this within a click of a button. Better yet, you can empower your store manager/franchisee to do the clicking and set them up with the framework to manage success on review platforms at store level.

This technology provides you with a dashboard view of aggregate scores for social media review ratings, best practices (i.e., response time) and brand consistency. Data can be viewed by location, region, or overall company, allowing you to rank stores and track trending information.

Using ORM technology ensures you never miss an online review and enables quick feedback with a direct link to the original posting (on Yelp, Google, etc.) allowing for store managers/franchisees to provide prompt responses.

Savvy retailers are using this technology to help control the first impression of their brand and gain a better understanding of their brand and business perception at store level. You don't have to be a bystander to your online reputation. Technology will put you in the driver's seat. 🚗

Since 2000, The Realise Group has been helping some of Australia's leading brands understand their customer experience. Our programs are designed with our clients' specific needs in mind, but all to improve customer satisfaction, loyalty, advocacy, and value. Learn more at therealisegroup.com.au

Machine learning and artificial intelligence are transforming retail

From pricing sensitivity to fulfillment, AI and machine learning have changed how retailers make decisions.

BY **MICHAEL ORR** [BLUE YONDER, A JDA COMPANY]

Retail is about to hit a critical juncture. The capability for artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to completely transform the retail paradigm means we are on the cusp of hitting the point of no return.

While many retailers have some understanding of AI's potential, retail is largely characterised by inertia. According to JDA Software's 2019 *Voice of the Category Manager Survey*, 40% of retailers and manufacturers have admitted they are behind on leveraging AI and ML. However, nearly half of retailers and manufacturers plan to invest in customer-driven data science in the next five years.

So, are retailers simply putting AI into the too-hard basket for now? And if so, what are they missing out on?

TAPPING INTO THE POTENTIAL OF 'LITTLE DATA.'

AI and ML enable retailers to analyse the micro data and patterns which are undetectable by the human brain. Mining 'little data' gives retailers a wealth of insight into how the customer behaves. Blue Yonder measures over 200 unique data points, far exceeding the human brain's potential for analysis. By identifying patterns within patterns, decision making around pricing, fulfillment, assortments, and more can be based on data rather than on assumptions.

The great human flaw is that we are biased. There are around 20 biases which drive human behaviour and can cause us to make irrational decisions. These include confirmation bias, where we prioritise information which confirms our preconceptions or zero-risk bias, feeds into our desire for certainty and eliminates risk, even if its counterproductive.

By relying on ML, which can be free of human bias, we are presented with the ability to make more rational decisions without stamping our view on who our customers should be. Our job then becomes steering the machine to analyse the data. We focus on strategy, and the machine does the grunt work.

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

A good example is how we assess customers behaviour in a particular location. In a largely higher socioeconomic area, we may assume that all people in that area will be less price sensitive and will exhibit similar shopping habits. However, this ignores the fact that in even in wealthy areas, there are often pockets of poverty. AI and ML can capture the small nuances in the 'little data' which reveal the different layers of price sensitivity and shopper behaviour. This knowledge helps us move beyond the old ways of doing things. Rather than relying on 'gut feel' or developing shopper personas, the data can provide a much more accurate view of customer segments and behaviours.

Another example is demand pricing, which enables retailers to find additional margin. AI can isolate the relationship between price and demand, assessing when retailers may be able to charge more. An example of this in practice is Uber's surge pricing or the higher price of food and drinks on an airplane. The opportunity for retailers to claw back margin within the limits of the customer's pricing expectations are endless. Big players like Amazon and Alibaba are already trialing this.

There is also untapped potential when combining other technologies with AI. For example, Panasonic stock detection cameras combined with AI, which can identify and communicate when stock is low, without human intervention. Facial recognition cameras can also assess the demographics of shoppers in real time and use this information to refine assortments.

WHAT'S THE WAY FORWARD?

The most successful retailers are recognising that AI and ML provide a competitive advantage. Players like Morrisons in the UK set out to leapfrog the competition and now leverage AI for fulfillment and to mark down fresh food. ASOS has a culture of innovation which enables experimentation. By failing and learning fast, they have been able to test and adopt the best ideas.

The lesson for retailers is to start. The risks of inaction when it comes to AI and ML are far greater than the risks of a misstep. And with technology costs falling, the investment is now much more affordable. Analysis paralysis is costing retailers money, through leaving value on the table and falling behind competitors and the speed at which change is happening will make it even harder to catch up. 📈

The most successful retailers are recognising that AI and ML provide a competitive advantage.

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RETAIL LEASES FOR A NEW DECADE

Setting the scene for success through time.

BY **PHIL CHAPMAN** [LEASE1]



In setting the scene for success for the next decade, disruption to how we manage and deal with retail leases is a must.

By disruption, I mean change the traditional way the industry operates and introduce new and effective processes. To achieve disruption as a user of the resource – the land (shops we lease) as opposed to being the land owner, will require new thinking – a clean whiteboard approach.

The first mind set change is to understand the fourth dimension when leasing shops, and that is TIME.

Albert Einstein's quotes on space and time and their relationship come to mind. Every shop lease is different in unique location, size, dimension, and outcomes.

The pole constant is time, as every lease has a commencement date and most importantly, an expiry date. Unlike the past, where results were derived from what happens at the end of the lease, future outcomes will be measured by what happens during the lease.

The importance of managing the fourth dimension – time consistently throughout the lease term is the foundation to a more profitable retail sector that is for the majority wholly reliant on the landlord relationship.

The traditional processes of tackling lease renewals/options 6-12 months before expiry have failed the sector, as rents to sales volumes have continued to increase even during this record decade of low inflation and stagnant retail sales growth.

The lease is the foundation store contract upon which a successful retail business is built and must be managed for the duration and with a vision for the next lease and subsequent leases.

Retail Lease Legislation, albeit slow, has shifted to support a more transparent and informed market, such as Early Determination of Market Rent and Option (QLD & NSW, other States to follow) and the newly introduced Sales Reporting and Occupancy Cost Code of Practice.

And I am sure more will come as a result of the Franchising Inquiry; however, regardless of these positive changes, it is up to retailers themselves to disrupt their current processes and outcomes.

Retailers should not only be actively engaged at least 18 months at the end of lease but also at the beginning, so capital and ROI are amortised within the initial term.

But more importantly, during the lease, holding reviews of profitability, margin movement, sales trends as well as the effect of annual rent increases or occupancy cost benchmarks with your landlord must become the new norm.

Retailing today by its very nature is a life of disruption. With constant adaption to trends, threats, and opportunities happening throughout the year, lease terms are bound to be effected.

By leveraging the landlord relationship throughout the lease (time) to inform and condition them to a better understanding of your business can only improve outcomes for both. The retailer landlord relationship is symbiotic.

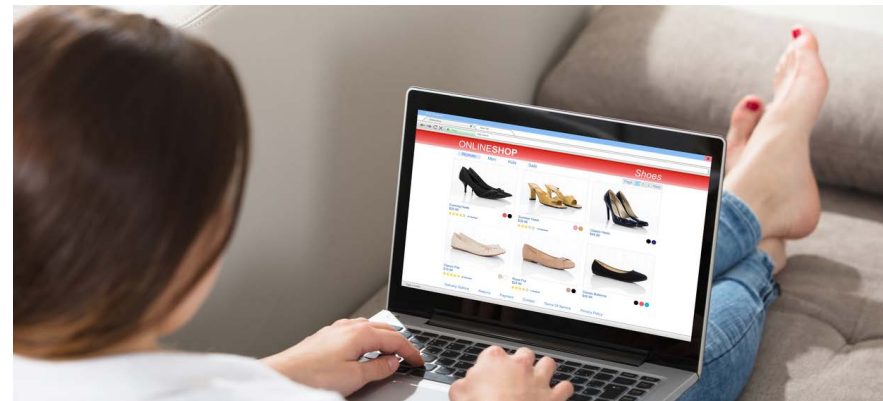
The past methods of reaching out to the landlord 6-12 months before an expiry or only when something has broken cannot continue. We want to experience years of retail names appearing rather than vanishing. 🏠

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WILL DISRUPTION SAVE RETAIL?

Disruptors disrupt by solving a pain in the customer journey and usually technology is at the heart of this, but what does this mean for retail in the years ahead?

BY **OLIVER GUY** [SOFTWARE AG]



If you step back and look at how much the retail industry has changed over the past 20 years or so, it boggles the mind.

Corner grocers, once the only way for many to get their staples, have evolved into global grocery franchises. The dress shop downtown has morphed into online shopping and home delivery. Department stores moved from downtown to shopping centres and now are being replaced by megalithic online shopping websites, like Amazon.

This is the beginning of a new era of retail, and old-fashioned business models no longer work. High street retailers, shopping centres, and grocery chains are all being replaced by more agile, digital-savvy disruptors. The phrase 'disrupt yourself or be disrupted by others' has never been more relevant.

Disruptors are winning because they solve a pain point in the customer experience. The example everyone uses is Uber –the pain they solved was being able to get a taxi where you needed it, without having to have enough cash to cover the fare.

Ten years ago omni-channel was a disruptor in retail – it solved the pain point of actually needing to go out and get the products you

needed. But now, omni-channel is 'table stakes' - you need it even to start competing.

There are many new forms of disruption appearing. First is subscription retail, where customer pays a certain amount each month for a product or products or has product curated for them. Examples include Birchbox Cosmetics, Bellabox, and Lust Have It.

As we move forward, other forms of disruption are bound to appear. These include:

IOT-DRIVEN DISRUPTION

Coffee machines, dishwashers, washing machines automatically re-order coffee or detergent based on usage – so that the consumer doesn't need to think about it. This is an example of IoT ordering; some predictions suggest that, within ten years, devices ordering product and requesting customer service will outnumber human orders.

REAL-TIME IN-STORE IOT

Releasing in-store devices from their data silos including, point of sale, traffic counters, security cameras, and inventory management, and combining them with new devices like electronic shelf-edge labels; smart employee

badges; hand-held devices and robots, will dramatically improve in-store operational efficiency.

Connecting these devices provides data insights into operations and customer behaviour that can enable predictive analytics and AI to be used to do things - such as proactively deploying staff or adjusting offers and pricing in line with demand. This can assist sale assistants in providing a high level of service to customers.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Predictive analytics has been in use in retail, in the form of sales forecasting and replenishment planning, for many years, but we are on the cusp of something quite amazing. Systems that forecast demand and then recommend replenishments have always needed a degree of human interaction to resolve exceptions - and the batch nature of calculations has created limitations.

The ability to run calculations much faster thanks to elastic cloud computing affords the ability to re-run calculations much more frequently and subsequently have the system recalculate and learn – the essence of AI. This creates a foundation towards autonomous operations from making recommendations as to how to deploy staff in store or re-deploying inventory in the supply chain – requesting human involvement only when necessary.

What all these disruptive ideas have in common is that they require the ability to connect multiple systems – existing and new. Retail has a great deal of data already – much of it untapped because it sits in silos. Only by linking across these data sources can you unlock the data and begin to understand what you truly have. To innovate and disrupt, you must first integrate.

Disruption can save retail, but it won't be retail as we know it. 🏠

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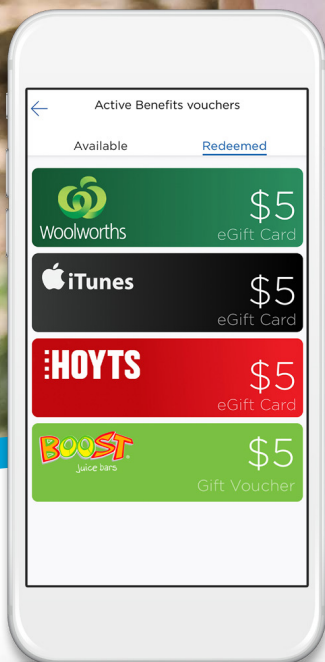


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