

DIMENSION REPORT

THE CUSTOMER: FEBRUARY 2019

" Retailers are discovering that traditional, demographic-based targeting no longer works "

INSIDE

- Learn from the best: case studies on the work of Asos, Ikea and Ocado
- Why customer behaviour is changing
- The Top100 European retailers in this crucial Performance Dimension

www.internetretailing.net/ireu
research@internetretailing.net

whitepaper.



Providing colour to insight

InternetRetailing's White Papers provide a practical, case-study led view on a single topic of interest to retailers. Working with suppliers with domain expertise, ongoing research investment and a retailer-centred, market-based view of the topic, we combine these into an accessible briefing paper, rich in insights and reference sources.

Explore our growing selection of White Papers

Download Free at www.internetretailing.net/whitepapers



Introduction



Welcome to the latest of our IREU Dimension Reports. The focus this time is on The Customer, which is of course where the focus of retail should always

be. By this, we mean that retailers – and brands selling direct too – operating at the cutting edge are increasingly building their offerings around customers, personalising offerings.

In one sense, this is simply a continuation of something shopkeepers have always done, staying close to customers and understanding their needs. The difference now is that retailers that operate across channels and across territories, and which have different brands sharing much of the same infrastructure, have to stay close to customers at scale and in an increasingly competitive environment.

This is not going to change. Rather, as we discuss in our Context feature (page 6), reaching different demographics is only likely to become more complex in the near future – so much so that the assumptions underpinning traditional targeting techniques can no longer be relied upon.

So what should retailers do to prepare? The case studies (page 10) in this Dimension Report offer clues and we will also be looking at new ideas around the customer experience in a second Dimension Report, to be published later this spring.

IAN JINDAL,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
IAN@INTERNETRETAILING.NET

CONTENTS

Dimension Report The Customer 2019

- 05 Partner perspective
- 06 Context
- 07 The IREU The Customer Top100
- 08 Analysing the numbers
- 10 Case studies
- 14 Conclusion



Sponsored by

Klarna.



The most extensive analysis on Europe's Top500 Retailers

IREU Main Report plus 12 Dimension Reports, including six initial Reports:

Brand Engagement: October 2018

Strategy & Innovation: December 2018

Operations & Logistics: January 2019

Merchandising: February 2019

Mobile & Cross-channel: February 2019

The Customer: February 2019

The InternetRetailing Europe Top500 (IREU 500) is the first Europe-wide retail performance index, gauging and comparing best practice across the trading bloc's 500 most significant retailers.

The Top500 blends quantitative data and qualitative assessment to create the most important and thought-provoking index of its kind. The Reports provide case studies, best practice and suggested approaches, emerging trends and interviews.

Register as a member for access
internetretailing.net/membership

The thriving European ecommerce sector

Online retail in Europe is maturing quickly. New technology is launching all the time and, for us at Klarna, the overarching trend is the rise of new and flexible payment solutions. With competition hotting up across Europe, ensuring that consumers are attracted to a retailer they want to stay loyal to is vital

GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

Despite retailers currently focusing more than ever on their online offering, and the high street facing challenging times, we continually hear from retailers that some of the basics of online are not where they should be. For example, many retailers are still not optimised for mobile, despite this having been a growing channel for years. The headlines around online retail often centre on future technologies such as delivery by drone. But sound advice for retailers is not to get distracted and forget the basics. Quality product, UX, stock management and a slick checkout experience are must-haves for success.

Customer experience and customer service are both key battlegrounds among online retailers – this is where the fight to stay on top of the high street and battle online behemoths like Amazon will be won. Retailers must resist implementing technology for the sake of it. We find that customers want frictionless tech – things like easy payments – that make their shopping smoother and more convenient. Consumers need technology that works seamlessly behind the scenes to make the buying process more enjoyable.

FORTUNE FAVOURS THE BRAVE

When it comes to technology, it's true that fortune favours the brave. Innovation requires bravery – it means making the first move by recognising the need or future need for change. The advantage of implementing something first is huge, yet retailers need to make sure that they're focusing on areas that shoppers will value.

When it comes to doing something new, there is an inherent risk. Retail leaders must ensure that, at every level of the organisation, there is a focus on the areas that are important to the business, and an understanding that new things can take time to be established. Successful retail leaders inspire others within the company to get excited about innovation and are consistent with pushing boundaries for the benefit of the shopper.

ADVICE FOR RETAILERS

Increasingly, shoppers are expecting to be able to pay however and whenever is most convenient for them. There is still an issue with consumers abandoning baskets in the checkout and being frustrated with online payments, which really chimes with what we hear from retailers. Improving the customer experience will be key in the future for retailers looking to improve their sales. Streamlining steps to purchase, enabling one-click purchases and providing multiple payment options, will all be vital to keep pace with the high expectations of consumers. For example, take the common issue of wanting to see, touch and try out goods before parting with your cash when shopping online. Klarna's Pay later solves this by giving consumers up to 30 days to pay for online purchases, meaning they only have to pay for what they love.

THE FUTURE OF PAYMENTS

Now is an incredibly exciting time for the industry, with Europe a hotbed of new financial technology. This is partly due to a culture of fintech innovation but it's also down to customer demand. As retailers integrate this tech into their customer journey, we'll see a payments revolution. We predict we will see greater collaboration between the new wave of fintech, retailers and banks. Once this connection is made, we believe that the industry can reach its potential. The focus should always remain on how we can solve problems for consumers and for us, that's what our proposition is all about. ■



LUKE GRIFFITHS
GM, KLARNA UK

ABOUT KLARNA

It's all about smooth (yes, with three 'o's). Klarna is Europe's leading payments provider and a newly-licensed bank. It wants to revolutionise the payment experience for shoppers and merchants alike by giving online consumers the option to pay now, pay later or over time – offering a trusted, frictionless and smooth checkout experience. Klarna works with 89,000 merchants, including ASOS, Topshop and JD Sports in the UK, to offer payment solutions to users across Europe and North America. It is active in 14 countries.

ADAPTING TO A CHANGING CUSTOMER BASE

Understanding customers is essential for successful retailing but, as Penelope Ody explains, digital technology and changing demographics are presenting new challenges

ONLINE CUSTOMERS, WE are often told, expect rapid service, convenience, free delivery and easy returns. They are demanding, impatient, wedded to social media and increasingly shop via their smartphones. Most retailers have built their websites to match this profile but is this *really* an accurate description of consumers' behaviour or needs?

Traditionally, retailers have tended to focus ranges and marketing on the perceived product preferences of high-spending consumer segments: younger age-groups buying the latest fashions; the 25-plus setting up home and looking for furnishings; new mums with expansive (and expensive) needs for babies and toddlers; and so on. However, as retailers are now discovering to their cost, such traditional targeting no longer guarantees sales.

The 18-24s may still be interested in fashion but the proportion of the population in this demographic is diminishing and, in many locations, they're also very short of cash. Unemployment among the under-25s averages around 15% across the EU, but it's more than twice that in Italy and Spain and almost three times as much in Greece (43.2%). Even seemingly affluent France has a youth unemployment figure of one in five (20.4%), so it is hardly surprising that one survey found that 57% of millennials actively compare prices in-store, or that those websites offering low-price 'disposable' fashions are so popular with this age group.

As for those 20-somethings wanting to move into their own home, it is not only in the UK that this age group struggles to get on the housing ladder. Italy has its *bamboccioni* – a generation of 'big babies' in their 20s and 30s who cannot afford to rent or buy, so still live with their parents. A report earlier this year by *Caritas Europa* highlighted the same problem in Portugal, where the majority of young adults remain in the parental home, often well into their 30s, due to a lack of cash.

While the young do not conform to traditional life-stage behaviour, neither do older age groups. The time-pressed 'sandwich generation' in their 50s are no longer empty nesters but now have adult children still living at home, as well as ageing parents to care for. And those 'silver surfers'

“As retailers are now discovering to their cost, traditional targeting no longer guarantees sales”

past retirement age aren't always using the internet to buy products, since their homes are already full of too much stuff after the boom decades of mass consumption. Instead, they are finding new experiences such as exotic holidays, sky-diving or a foraging course.

When any of these disparate consumer groups buy, they certainly expect good service, competitive prices and minimal delivery costs, but they also want products that are distinctive, possibly highly personalised, or with some other additional spin. Among leading retailers in this Dimension, Nike offers "inspiration and innovation", Gucci promises to "redefine modern luxury", while Zalando plans to put personalisation at the heart of its business and "to ultimately offer 23m different Zalandos for our more than 23m different customers in Europe."

Retailing has always involved understanding customers but today, those customers' preferences and needs are changing faster than ever before. Digital technology is one key driver for that change, but so too are demographics. Understanding how, when and on what today's consumer segments wish to spend their money is something every retailer must strive to achieve if they want to stay in business and to stay ahead. ■

IREU 500 THE CUSTOMER DIMENSION

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Klarna.

The top retailers of the IREU Top500 2018
The Customer Dimension, measured
our metrics of innovative practice

Share your thoughts on #IREU500 with @detail

THE CUSTOMER TOP50

Apple	H.Samuel	Pull & Bear
Argos	Halfords	Sainsbury's
Asda	Hobbycraft	Samsung
Asos	Homebase	Screwfix
Bonmarché	House of Fraser	SportsDirect.com
Boots	IKEA	Superdrug
Cath Kidston	John Lewis	Swarovski
Cotswold Outdoor	MajesticWine	Tesco
Debenhams	Marks & Spencer	TK Maxx
Deichmann	Massimo Dutti	Tommy Hilfiger
Disney Store	Matalan	Waterstones
Dunelm	Nespresso	White Stuff
eBay	New Look	WHSmith
Euronics	Next	Wickes
Fat Face	Nisbets	Zara
Footasylum	Ocado	Zooplus
H&M	Office	

THE CUSTOMER TOP100

Adidas	G-Star Raw	The Perfume Shop
Aldi	Game	Post Office Shop
Ao.com	Gucci	The Range
B&Q	HP	Reiss
Bershka	Hugo Boss	River Island
Carrefour	Intersport	Schuh
Clarks	Kiabi	size?
COS	La Redoute	Smyths
Currys PC World	Lipsy	Space.NK
Decathlon	Lush	Specsavers
Desigual	Microsoft	Topman
Dunnes Stores	Mountain Warehouse	Topps Tiles
Ernest Jones	Nike	Urban Outfitters
Esprit	Oasis	Wilko
Euro Car Parts	Pandora	The Works
Evans Cycles	PcComponentes	Zalando
Furniture Village	Peacocks	

SEAMLESS RETAIL

Building memorable and consistent customer experiences is tough. RetailX research reveals that retailers often perform strongly here, yet there's plenty of room for improvement too. Jonathan Wright looks at the numbers

WHERE DOES THE customer experience begin and end? In the era of multichannel retail, it is probably best to assume that any area where a consumer interacts with the business, however briefly, is potentially crucial to that business. A thoughtless or glib response to a question via social media, a clunky website experience, or even a third-party courier who is rude when making a delivery: all of these are interactions that can fundamentally affect a customer's perception of a retailer.

Another factor here is that the best of the best within the IREU Top500 not only understand the importance of the customer experience, but increasingly build businesses around their customers. Consistency across touchpoints, we should also emphasise, is key. Shoppers who are used to high standards will simply not shop with retailers that underperform in comparison with competitors.

From this, it follows that RetailX researchers measure a broad range of metrics when considering performance within The Customer Dimension. RetailX's ongoing research considers the availability, consistency, convenience and cost of basic services such as delivery. Other metrics include the design and performance of mobile and desktop websites, responsiveness and helpfulness across multiple customer service channels, and the integration of feedback and reviews. The convenience of making and receiving a purchase is key to the customer experience, and it's also important for customers to be able easily to return goods.

CHANNEL COMPARISONS

Looking at responses across channels, research revealed one especially intriguing statistic. The median response time across the IREU Top500 for queries is quicker via Facebook than via email: seven hours for Facebook as against 15 hours for email and web submission forms. A number of factors may play in here. Facebook enquiries may be more straightforward to deal with, while knottier issues require an email (although RetailX researchers used the same type of simple question to test both channels). These figures may align more closely as retailers integrate social media teams, which tend to have a certain amount of autonomy when first set up, more deeply within the overall business.

That's not to say all sectors are performing equally well when it comes to dealing with Facebook enquiries. IREU

Top500 retailers selling jewellery responded to Facebook queries in a median time of 2.6 hours, while for fashion footwear retailers the figure was three hours. Sports and leisure clothing (3.4 hours) also performed strongly. At the other end of the spectrum, Music, film and TV retailers had a median response time of 14.4 hours. Garden supplies retailers (14.3 hours) were also quite slow.

Looking at the IREU Top500 as a whole, the median response time was 7.1 hours, yet brands outperformed the competition slightly here with a median time of 5.8 hours.

Turning to email responses, retailers in the fashion footwear, fashion clothing, and fashion accessories sectors were most likely to resolve an issue with one email. Conversely, retailers selling groceries, drinks and garden supplies were least likely to resolve an issue with one message. In terms of speed of email response, marketplaces had the shortest median email response time (seven hours), followed by ready-made food (11.4 hours) and fashion clothing (12 hours).

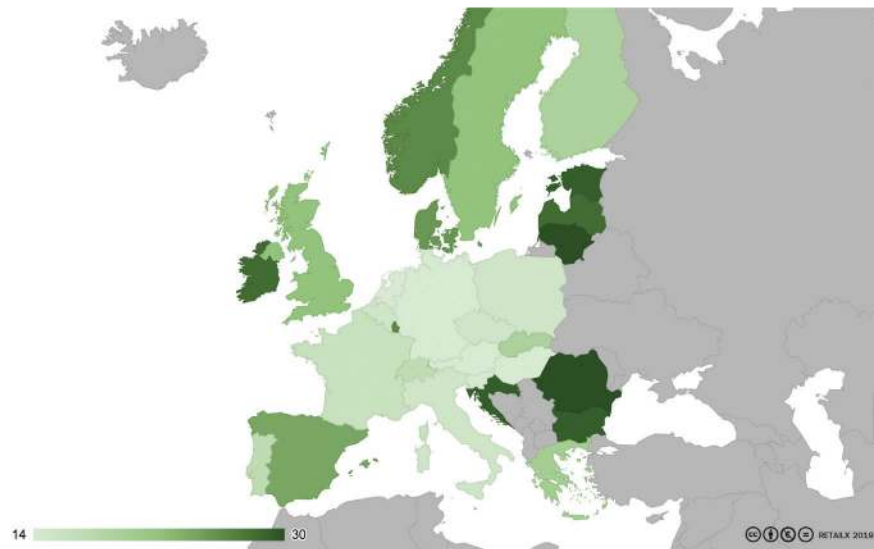
SECTOR ANALYSIS

Looking across the IREU Top500, the median number of communication channels that retailers used was four, rising to five for the ready-made food sector and six for direct-selling brands.

In terms of offering the facility for customers to leave feedback, RetailX researchers found that 71% of marketplaces enabled customers to leave product ratings. Retailers in the sports and outdoor equipment (70%) and consumer electronics (66%) sectors are also very likely to support that feature. Conversely, ready-made food showed the lowest adoption (32%) of this feature, followed by fashion clothing (42%) and fashion accessories (41%). Brands performed less strongly than we would have expected here, with just 42% offering this feature against an EEA weighted average of 52%.

Where brands did perform more strongly was on Twitter. RetailX research found that brands on average had 600,000 followers on Twitter, almost three times more than the figure for the overall IREU Top500.

THE MEDIAN RETURNS POLICY OFFERED BY RETAILERS IN THE EEA



Retailers in the EEA must offer the statutory minimum of 14 days for a shopper to change their mind about an online purchase, although it's common to extend that window – 55% of the Top500's returns policies are of 15 days or more, with an overall EEA median of 19 days. The heatmap above shows the individual medians by country

RETURNS

Not every purchase works out, and it is therefore important for customers to be confident that it will be a quick and easy process to return goods. In this context, it is intriguing to note that returns policies do vary from sector to sector.

Against a benchmark of 19 days (the median length of unwanted products return policy of the Top500 in the EEA), retailers in the fashion accessories, clothing and footwear, and sports and leisure clothing and footwear sectors (all 23 days) offer significantly more time. Retailers in the children's toys and accessories, consumer electronics, books, software, health, and music, film and TV sectors, by contrast, offer just 14 days, the EU-required minimum.

A NEED FOR SPEED

One area that's worth looking at in more detail is the loading speed for websites. This is important because usability studies reveal how consumers will react negatively to even the smallest delays. Despite this, it seems that many Top500 websites, when measured in 2019, were not appreciably faster than in previous years. Indeed, The median time to visual completion for IREU Top500 landing pages on desktop devices was the same (eight seconds) as 18 months ago. A more sophisticated aggregate metric, Speed Index, shows a slow-down in median load times, perhaps reflecting a 5% increase in the median page size.

This matters because, while consumers are increasingly investing in fast broadband connections, retailers are not keeping up here, with those who did achieve improvements often managing improvements that could only be measured in microseconds. While it is outside the scope of our research, the risk here is that consumers will begin to notice that distributed websites such as social media platforms and streaming services are faster to load than sites offered by retailers. Slow load times also close off options such as using augmented reality (AR) technology or video within merchandising.

IN CONCLUSION

To return to the idea of The Customer Dimension encompassing metrics across many facets of RetailCraft, it's clear that not every retailer is going to perform strongly across the board. Nevertheless, there are clearly areas where retailers can make far more than incremental gains – and need to do so just to keep up with competitors.

Looking ahead, this need for a seamless and consistent customer experience is not going to go away. Just the opposite. Retail will become more complex as customers expect stores, pop-ups, websites, apps and even packaging to convey a retailer's values. Mixed messages will only result in lost sales.■

OCADO: CUSTOMER RESPONSIVENESS AND INNOVATION



Image credit: Ocado

Ocado is investing in technology to keep its delivery promises

THE ONLINE SUPERMARKET Ocado has put customer care at the heart of its strategy. One key project has been to introduce the Orlo technology platform – also used by Iceland and Laura Ashley, among others – which integrates social media and live chat management so that the online grocer can move easily between communication channels when talking to customers, while at the same time, allowing Ocado to retain linked records of all conversations.

Ocado's stated objective is to provide its customers with improved customer care as one more way of delivering a better overall shopping experience. It's been four years since Ocado launched its social media channels, with web chat launching in 2015. Since the business is online-only, Ocado wants its experience to be as easy as possible for users. With improved integration using Orlo, the hope is that the customer service team is now more responsive, regardless of the service channel, as well as being more joined-up in how it operates.

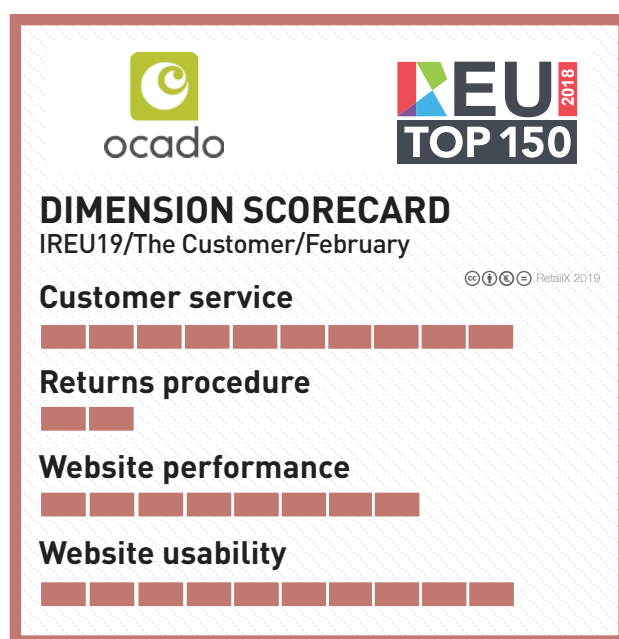
The latest statistics from Ocado show that its average customer basket has a value of £108.18, which is 0.2% down on the same time last year. It has responded by introducing new ways to help customers shop, including its 'Regulars' feature, which saves shopping time while maintaining the size of baskets. Its customers also continue to migrate towards ordering via mobile phone. While this does tend to mean that baskets are slightly smaller, it also means that they tend to be more frequent.

Ocado places emphasis on delivery punctuality and order accuracy in order to deliver on its customer promise. These

key metrics are backed up by its four robotic warehouses, which use its own cutting-edge picking technology that it is also now selling to other retailers. Ocado's Erith customer fulfilment centre, which opened in summer 2018, will be the largest online grocery automated warehouse in the world when it reaches full capacity.

In 2017, Ocado also launched the UK's first trial of autonomous grocery deliveries – in Woolwich in south east London – and got a positive customer response. Its small vehicle was developed by Oxford-based Oxbotica and it spent ten days delivering food and snacks to customers as part of Ocado's plug-and-play online shopping business offer.

The driverless pod tested in London was small – it held only eight boxes for customer deliveries – and staffed by a driver, who monitored its performance and intervened when required. The trial also required recipients to leave their front doors to pick up their shopping. It worked by the customer being notified when the CargoPod was loaded up from a 'mobile warehouse', located around a mile from the customer's home. A second notification was sent as it reached their front door and the customer then pressed a button to unlock their box from within the pod. ■



ASOS: SOCIAL AND PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR CUSTOMERS

ONLINE FASHION RETAILER Asos is taking a multifaceted approach to supporting its customers.

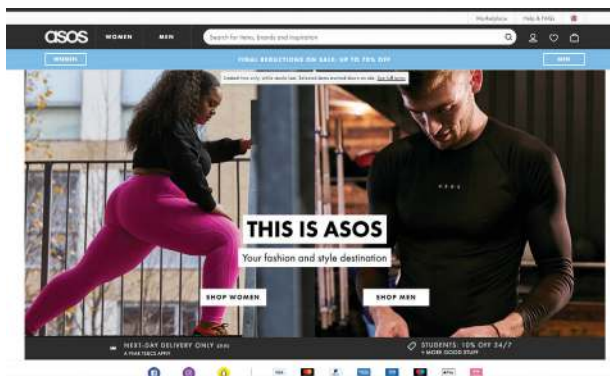
It recently launched Fit Assistant, an AI assistant built into the Asos app that helps consumers find their fashion fit before they order. Fit Assistant uses machine learning to offer consumers personalised size recommendations for particular products, based on their pattern of previous purchases as well as returns.

In part, this tool is an attempt to overcome the challenge of being a fashion retailer that stocks so many different brands of clothing – something close to 900 in total. It's this spread of options that makes it difficult for many Asos customers to know what size they are in a particular brand.

Online customers – particularly fashion-conscious 20-somethings – are also less likely to be loyal, so features like personalisation, customer service, social presence and speed of delivery count for something, as Asos has clearly grasped.

Something else it has been working hard at is 'discovery' – helping customers to find the products best suited to them. Again, this has been driven by AI and machine learning to deliver a smarter outcome for the 15m users that browse its site. Earlier this year, for example, it launched Enki, which was first created as a Facebook-based fashion chatbot and now helps fashion lovers discover and shop on social media.

Its recommendation services also include features such as 'Your Edit', which shows products it thinks a customer might like, and 'Style Match', which shows customers products similar to those already bought or looked at.



The large number of brands makes size fitting hard for customers

There is also a curated carousel under the heading 'You might also like'.

Adding to this toolkit for customers is voice shopping capabilities through Google Assistant, which enables customers to use voice commands to browse the brand's AI shopping guide, Enki.

How well is all of this working? Visit numbers to Asos websites have grown by 19% year on year, while average order frequency is up 7%. Around the world, 18.4m customers bought from it – up 19% on the previous year. Asos has engaged strongly with the student community in the past year, with student customer numbers climbing 31%, and its presence on social media is also strong. Its Instagram 'Stories' were viewed 244m times during the year, while overall social media followers grew by 13%, up to 22.7m.

The volume of work Asos undertakes to support the customer journey is striking. It updated its technology through 2,900 releases in its last financial year, including many new customer features and shopping experience changes. Localisation was also enabled, both on the rest of the world and rest of Europe sites, while new sites were released for the Netherlands and Sweden. ■

asos
discover fashion online

EU 2018
TOP 100

DIMENSION SCORECARD IREU19/The Customer/February

© i f e RetailX 2019

Customer service



Returns procedure



Website performance



Website usability



IKEA: A SHAKE UP THAT EMBRACES DIFFERENCE

IKEA, THE SWEDEN-HEADQUARTERED home retailer, has created loyal customers the world over primarily through its distinctive store offer and well-designed products.

On the face of it, the company plans to stick to its proven formula in the years ahead, although with a few twists. It recently announced plans to invest billions of Euros in growing its store count to 70 over the next seven years, while also working hard at its developing omnichannel offer.

While its 43 existing stores are generally placed in suburban areas, this new roll-out will focus mostly on big city centres across Europe, Asia, North America and Oceania. The first will open in 2022 in the Linkong district of Shanghai, China, and will be a shopping centre with 300 stores and a roof garden, rather than just another 'standard' IKEA. Similar projects in Changsha and Xi'an are also expected to follow this new formula, while plans for a first shopping centre in India are also well developed, IKEA having opened its first store in the country in Hyderabad in August 2018.

The overhaul and transformation will also see the retailer upgrade its existing locations with extensions and refurbishments, as well as adding some other new facilities. IKEA's offer for customers is evolving in part through its plan to "embrace the digitalisation of retail". The plan here is to use customer data to "be more in touch with and closer to customers than ever before". To this end, IKEA will be implementing new types of payment option, exploring the use of loyalty programmes and online communities and introducing hands-free shopping.

MD Gerard Groener said at the international property trade show MAPIC recently: "The €5.8bn we are investing across the world will see us embark on new projects, expand into new markets and upgrade our existing portfolio to create next-generation meeting places for a more omnichannel world."

He added: "There will be no one-size-fits-all format for these IKEA anchored destinations. A mix of city centre, suburban and edge of town locations are all being considered, depending on local demographics."

Another change in IKEA's offer that's aimed at supporting customers is its opening of an 'advice centre' shop in central London. This links the real world of in-store with the mobile world of its augmented reality (AR) Place mobile app – all in the name of offering a personalised service for customers' home projects.

Still known best for its stores, IKEA is also developing its omnichannel services

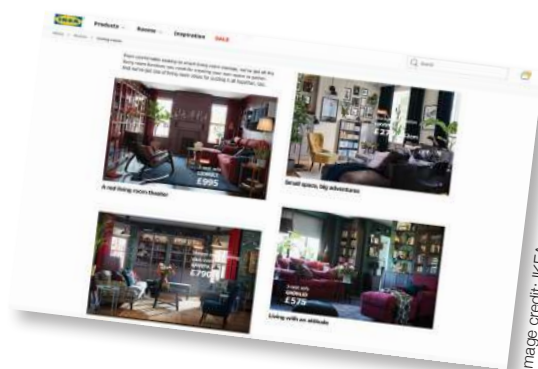


Image credit: IKEA

The store on Tottenham Court Road in central London opened in October 2018 and specialises in low-ticket kitchen and wardrobes assemblage, combining a mix of traditional and digitalised customer experience features. Among other roles, its in-store staff are on hand to help and advise shoppers in the use of the retailer's Place app for visualising products within their home space.

IKEA is now exploring other locations in London for similar outlets as well as opportunities to test and trial different formats in the city centre. It will also be opening a sustainability- and healthy-living-themed store in Greenwich, London in 2019.

All of these initiatives add extra layers to the retailer's long-standing customer strategy, which makes a virtue of delivering a customer experience that's memorable and distinctive rather than frictionless. ■



DIMENSION SCORECARD

IREU19/The Customer/February

© IREU 2019

Customer service



Returns procedure



Website performance



Website usability

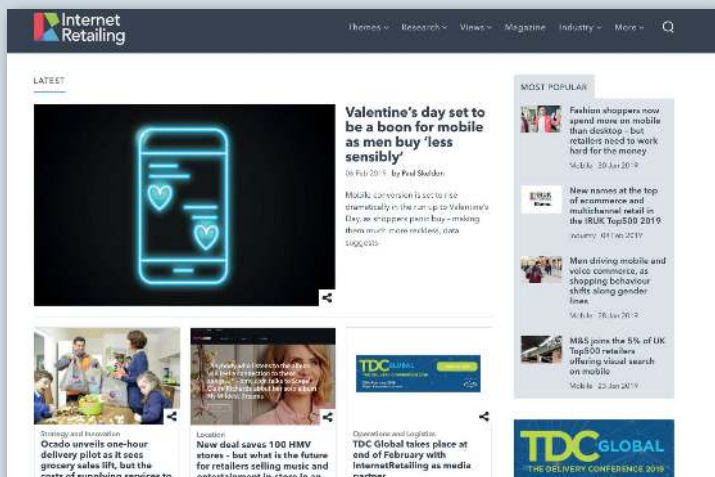




Sponsored by

Klarna.

Smooth payments.



Articulating the Themes

As we have already identified, understanding The Customer remains a key skill within RetailCraft. To see what's happening within this Dimension on a regular and ongoing basis, register to become a member at InternetRetailing.net, which is **completely free to retailers**.

The IREU Dimension Report series

Look out too for exclusive reports and online content detailing how the IREU Top500 are performing in our five other Performance Dimensions:

- Strategy & Innovation
- Operations & Logistics
 - Merchandising
 - Brand Engagement
- Mobile & Cross-channel

Becoming a member will give you access to round-the-year content on the website:

- Social retail index
- Demographic focus: in-depth reports on, for example, the behaviour of 18-24 year-olds – which retailers they are shopping with and what trends their behaviour reveals [research conducted in conjunction with Knowledge Partner Hitwise]
- Email engagement index: revealing open rates, spam rates and other interaction metrics [in conjunction with Knowledge Partner Return Path]. Plus analysis of email content [in conjunction with Knowledge Partner Beetle]

In addition, we will publish a second Dimension Report on The Customer in spring 2019, in which we will look at what's changed in key metrics over the winter, summarising the indices and trackers, and focusing on the most revealing aspects of our ongoing research.

Our **next IREU Top500** main report, collating all this research, will be released in **July 2019**.

Conclusion

WE ARE LIVING through an era where pricing is, if not quite transparent, at least far less opaque than it would often have seemed to previous generations. With access to a smartphone, customers on the move can instantly check prices on the items they want to buy. Yet despite this, customers do not buy on price alone. Issues around trust, in particular, always have an effect on purchase decisions. Customers want to buy from retailers and brands that are reliable, efficient and that keep their promises.

This is why issues around customer experience again and again turn out to revolve around a rather dull yet important word – consistency. When customers order from a retailer, they should move from an intuitive website or app through an easy-to-follow checkout process, and be able to choose from delivery and collection options that are appropriate to what they've bought. If these customers have to send an email or talk with a customer service advisor, they should get straightforward, polite and prompt answers. When they range across different channels, as customers do, they should not receive any information that does not tally with what they have been told elsewhere.

This all sounds simple, but as we have seen in this Dimension Report, the sheer number of variables here means that ensuring dull consistency is tough. Moreover, it is work that never ends, which constantly needs revisiting as, for example, demographics change and customer expectations similarly change. To stay ahead of competitors, retailers need to recognise this truth and deal with it – consistently. ■

Editor: Jonathan Wright
Editor-in-Chief: Ian Jindal

.....
Design: Lydia Cooke

.....
Managing Director: Chris Cooke
Commercial Director: Andy James
andy.james@internetretailing.net
Creative Solutions Director: Marvin
Roberts marvin@internetretailing.net
Tel: 020 7062 2525

.....
InternetRetailing Media Services Ltd,
2nd Floor, St Mary Abchurch House,
123 Cannon Street,
London, EC4N 5AU
Printed in Great Britain.
ISSN 1759-0582

.....
For circulation enquiries contact:
Internet Retailing Media Services Ltd,
2nd Floor,
St Mary Abchurch House,
123 Cannon Street,
London, EC4N 5AU
Tel: 020 7062 2525
internetretailing@circdata.com

.....
No part of this circulation may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted by any means without the publisher's permission. The editorial content does not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher. The publisher accepts no responsibility for any errors contained within the publication.

.....
Published globally by
InternetRetailing Media Services Limited.
Data supplied by RetailX.
www.retailx.net



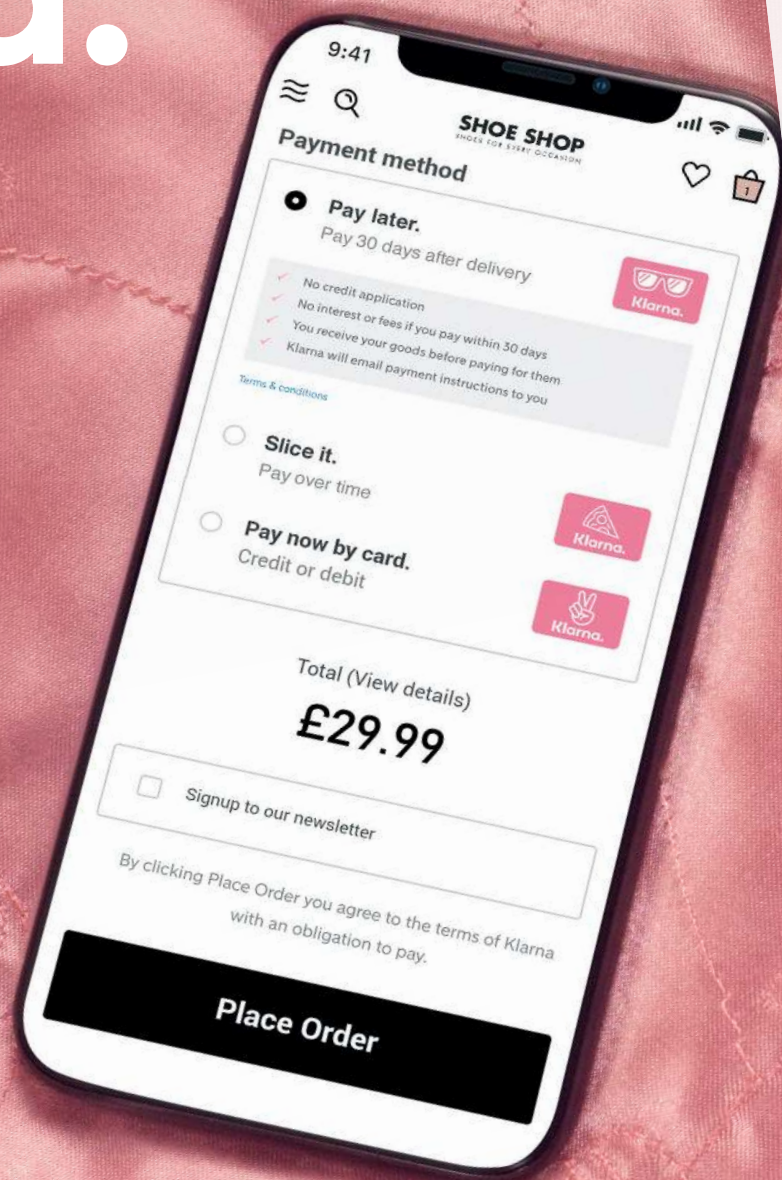
.....
www.internetretailing.net

Pay later gets you paid.

Let shoppers pay later or over time to boost purchase power right when it's needed – at the point of sale.

- Pay later, up to **30 days** after delivery
- Pay in **3 equal interest-free instalments**, collected monthly
- Slice up the cost into **instalment plans from 6-36 months** for larger ticket items
- Available for both **online and in store** channels

Klarna is completely risk-free for our 100,000 retailers across Europe and the US, who receive the funds for every purchase up front and in full.



Get smooth.

klarna.com/uk
sales@klarna.co.uk

Klarna.
Smooth payments.



In partnership with

Klarna.