



MOTHELCARE: SIX PILLARS TO BRAND SUCCESS

Gary Kibble, Global Brand and Marketing Director, Mothercare on the retailer's new website and how it fits with its omnichannel, turnaround plans.

INSIDE OUR 'OMNICHANNEL' EDITION:

- RETAIL REVIEW: SUPERDRUG P19
- TRACKING ACROSS DEVICES P47
- DASHING TOWARDS THE INTERNET OF THINGS P50
- THE OMNICHANNEL STORE OF THE FUTURE P52

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Contents

ISSUE 60 | SEPTEMBER 2016

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Internet Retailing
 SJP Business Media Ltd,
 52-54 Gracechurch Street, London, EC3V 0EH
 Printed in Great Britain.
 ISSN 1759-0582



SJP
 business media

For subscription enquiries contact:
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06 FRONT MATTER

The shorts that get you noticed. Analysis of the key announcements affecting internet retailing, in store and mobile.

10 MOTHERCARE

Gary Kibble, Global Brand and Marketing Director, Mothercare on the retailer's new website and how the launch fits in with its omnichannel, turnaround plans.

16 DASHBOARD

Two studies have recently investigated what consumers think about retailers. One reports that there are inconsistencies in the shopping experience across channels as consumers say that retailers don't know what they want while the other says consumers are willing to pay more from retailers with excellent customer service.

19 RETAIL REVIEW

One retailer, four angles. Our team of experts reviews Superdrug.



21 COMMENT

Ian Jindal, IR's Editor-in-Chief, considers the latest musings in the retail sector.

 **InternetRetailing Conference** sponsored by 
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30 NOW & NEXT

October sees the eleventh, annual InternetRetailing Conference taking place at the Novotel, Hammersmith, London. Emma Herrod shares a preview of who'll be there and how you can join in the debates.

43 INTERNET RETAILING

InternetRetailing examines how touchpoints and 'channels' are being bent and blended into a seamless service for the customer. What is the state of the art now that 'omnichannel' is an old term. How far off is the channel-neutral world to which some leading retailers aspire?

52 INTERNET RETAILING IN STORE

The introduction of click and collect gave shoppers an alternative to waiting in all day for a parcel to be delivered, but is the service merely patching up an underlying fault with ecommerce fulfilment? And what steps could omnichannel retailers be taking to improve the physical store experience?

58 MOBILE

Paul Skeldon worries that mobilising your shop floor staff isn't omnichannel nirvana that meets a growing customer demand, but is the end of society as we know it.

62 INSIGHT AROUND THE WORLD

Insight into retail in the US, Asia and the EU as well as insight into a Czech retailer expanding into the UK market.



Editor's comment

AMAZON IS wanting consumers to press a button on the washing machine to order more washing powder. The launch of these Dash Buttons in the UK heralds the next stage of one-click ordering. I wonder though whether they are also a stage towards the coffee machine automatically placing an order for my favourite brand when supplies run low or the ability to order by voice with Amazon listening for opportunities to take an order or propose a purchase. The launch of its Echo speakers into the UK already show how voice can be used to control the smart home – and they will place an order with Amazon too.

While Amazon pioneers new ways of selling us everything, other retailers are still grappling with connecting their stores, online and mobile operations. From how the organisational structure and working practices alter to recognising customers across different devices, omnichannel throws up many challenges. And there's not a one size fits all solution. For every company that says it's on an omnichannel journey, there is a different transformation plan and many of those are rolling plans as customer expectations continue to shift and technological advancements open up new opportunities.

Mothercare, for example, has six pillars to its transformation plan which, the company hopes, will see it turn around its financial position too. Gary Kibble, Global Brand and Marketing Director, Mothercare, appears on the cover of this issue of InternetRetailing and spoke to me in depth about the company's new ecommerce site, omnichannel store refurbishment programme and ambition to become the leading global retailer for parents and young children.

Mothercare's old site was losing the retailer sales with half of its customers dropping out between adding items to

their basket and ultimate conversion. The new site includes responsive design, simplified checkout, natural search, improved navigation, performance and speed – all things that are necessary for it to engage with its young, digitally-savvy customer base.

As consumers have become increasingly connected, expecting retailers to give them the full digital experience in store – something which Mothercare is moving towards with the use of Zappar codes on swing tags to link customers with rich content and product reviews – so shop assistants have been kitted out with tablets and apps to provide a greater level of digital service. Mothercare has rolled out iPads to store staff, so too has Boots, while at Halfords staff can use tablets and smart watches when a customer comes in to collect their order.

“Such mobilisation projects are few and far between though,” says Paul Skeldon in his feature on mobile and omnichannel later in this issue. “What mobile tech can offer should go way further for retailers and should be part of the everyday,” he says.

According to Eva Pascoe, founder of the world's first internet café, Cyberia, and now at The Retail Practice, an analyst firm hired by big brands to deep dive into the future: “Mobile is the answer to retail's prayers in terms of customer engagement and loyalty, and helps retailers achieve what I call the “minimum viable utopia” for shoppers. With innovations such as Apple Pay, what happens on an EPOS can happen on a mobile device. Every employee is a cashier and every point in the shop is a money taking point. This solves the biggest customer satisfaction issue, long queues. This is a fundamental change in our retail behaviour of the past 100 years.”

There are pitfalls for retailers though. Paul Skeldon investigates

these, alongside examining some very good reasons why many retailers aren't looking to mobilise their staff any time soon.

From mobilising staff in store to voice-controlled ordering in your own home, omnichannel continues to evolve rapidly and who knows where the future will take it. As Ian Jindal, InternetRetailing's Editor-in-chief, says in his editorial comment, “I am old enough to believe that Star Trek showed us the future”. Maybe voice will be it.

The future of retail – through mobile, international and marketplaces – will be examined and debated at this year's InternetRetailing Conference. Returning for an 11th year to the Novotel, in Hammersmith, London, the 2016 event takes the theme of New Horizons.

Speakers hail from retailers and service providers as diverse as Home Retail Group, Urban Outfitters, Lego, Woolovers and Vente-Privée, as well as AirBnB. A full listing of the topics and speakers, along with a preview of the event, can be seen later in this issue as well as online at www.internetretailingconference.com.

“Ecommerce professionals, for over a decade at the vanguard of innovation and radical change, are themselves now having to adapt and change as ecommerce is no longer a channel but an equal partner with stores,” says Ian Jindal. “For 2016 we're looking to new horizons that the modern digitally-enabled retailer can scan as we seek to satisfy the demands of the connected, savvy customer.”

The team at InternetRetailing will be at the one-day Conference on 12 October, as well as at the eDelivery Conference which is taking place on the previous day. We looking forward to seeing you there.

Emma Herrod
Editor



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Chloe Rigby highlights recent industry changes but to keep up to date with the news and her insight between issues visit www.internetretailing.net.

Notonthehighstreet expands

Notonthehighstreet.com plans to focus on the customer experience by bringing innovative technologies such as Apple Pay to its website and holding more offline events, after raising investment of £21m.

The marketplace for creative small businesses plans to use the funding, which comes in a round led by magazine and digital publisher Hubert Burda Media, as it expands categories and builds its position in the gifting market. Gifts are an important part of Notonthehighstreet's sales – and experiential gifts are the fastest growing category within that. The company will invest in marketing and brand partnerships to grow its position, while working with partners to bring innovative products to the site.

One use of technology will be to bring Apple Pay to the Notonthehighstreet.com website. The company already uses the payment method on its Gift Finder app, and says it has helped boost sales conversion by 200%, compared to

traditional credit card checkouts.

The marketplace plans more “physical manifestations of the online marketplace,” following on from its Open Door event. Its next offline event is scheduled for Stylist Live in October.

“Notonthehighstreet.com was born out of the belief that customers want products that are more thoughtful, unique and personal and that, through technology, we could connect thousands of independent businesses – the makers of these great products – with customers around the world,” said Notonthehighstreet.com Chief Executive Simon Belsham.

Notonthehighstreet.com will also use the funding to invest in the technology and operations that enable its 5,000 sellers to use its platform. Its Pitch Up programme enables start-ups to present their products to the marketplace, while it is also working with the University of the Arts to encourage art students to design products.

GROCERY ROUNDUP

Tesco has upped its delivery offer with the introduction of same-day click and collect. The UK's largest supermarket now offers collection after 4pm for orders placed before 1pm Monday to Saturday, excluding bank holidays, at 261 Tesco stores and 36 locations outside the store.

The extension to Tesco's click and collect service brings its service into line with competitors including Asda and enables it to compete with the convenience of Amazon Fresh. Asda offers same-day collection from 250 stores and Sainsbury's is currently trialling the service.

Amazon Fresh does not offer collection but offers delivery as quickly as an hour in the limited Greater London area where it is available.

Meanwhile, Asda's new management team will continue to focus on the customer offer, both online and off, after like-for-like sales fell by 7.5% compared to the same time last year in the second quarter of the year. The supermarket, a Top50 retailer in the IRUK Top500 research, will continue to focus on improving retail basics through its Project Renewal transformation plan. That will include strengthening the customer offer online and offline by lowering prices and boosting quality, said its parent company Walmart.

Morrisons has struck a new deal with Ocado that will help the grocer expand its online retail business to cover the whole of the UK at significantly reduced costs over its existing deal. The move, which sees Morrisons, a Top100 retailer in the IRUK Top500 research, take capacity in Ocado's state-of-the-art new warehouse in Erith in Kent, will allow for a million more shoppers to use Morrisons.com for shopping.

Meanwhile, Ocado is to develop a store pick solution for Morrisons.com, which will lift prior restrictions on using Morrisons own stores to fulfil online orders.

Once this deal comes online, Morrisons old contract – which saw the retailer obliged to share a proportion of its future online profits with Ocado – will end.

OMNICHANNEL BOOSTS SCREWFIX

Enabling customers to buy when and how they want continues to boost business at Screwfix, which has posted second quarter sales up by 24.5%, compared to the same period last year.

The DIY and trade tools business saw like-for-like sales grow by 13.3% in the quarter to July 31. According to parent company Kingfisher, growth, was “driven by its leading omnichannel capability” as well as new branches and wider product ranges. Screwfix, an Elite retailer in the IRUK Top500 research, led the way in introducing multichannel shopping to the trade supplies industry, introducing a standout click and collect service that enables customers to pick up as soon as five minutes after placing an order, while next-day delivery is free for orders over £50. Quickshop and catalogue apps enable easy shopping via mobile. The approach has reaped rewards and Kingfisher is now taking the Screwfix business and model to other markets, including Germany.

At Screwfix' sister company B&Q, a Leading retailer in IRUK research, sales rose by 0.3% at a time when the retailer was closing stores. Like-for-like sales, which strip out the effect of both closures and openings, rose by 5.6%. Kingfisher said closures had resulted in nearby stores benefiting to the tune of around 2%, overall, in like-for-like sales growth.

Overall, Kingfisher's group sales rose by 8.4% to £3bn, with like-for-like sales up by 3% once currency fluctuations were discounted. UK sales of £1.4bn were up by 0.5%, with like-for-like sales up by 5.6% in constant currency.

The update comes as Kingfisher brings all of its systems and processes together into a single group-wide approach to joined-up retailing. Chief Executive Véronique Laury said: “We continue to focus on our One Kingfisher plan, based on always putting customer needs first.”

GAME CONTINUES DIGITAL-FIRST STRATEGY

Game Digital has said that multichannel and digital were strategic priorities as it continues to move from being a business that predominantly sells products to one that sells products and services.

At the same time, said the gaming retailer, a Top100 retailer in IRUK Top500 research, it is developing its new business activities, including e-sports and competitive gaming, events and digital services. It is trialling e-sports and competitive gaming activities in UK stores and local communities. In July it opened its first in-store gaming zone.

Martyn Gibbs, Chief Executive of Game Digital, said: “We continue to focus our efforts on maximising the potential of our core retail markets; driving operational improvements and efficiencies across the business; and developing our broader consumer and enterprise gaming services to support deeper engagement with our customers, communities and supplier partners.

“Next year will see several significant industry developments, with new console launches, the arrival of new ground-breaking virtual reality devices, as well as continued strong growth in competitive and social gaming.

“We are well positioned to benefit from these exciting developments and have clear plans in place to drive our retail businesses forward whilst developing our strategic initiatives to support future growth.”

The update came as the retailer unveiled falling sales, with gross transaction value (GTV) of £914.1m down by 5%, or £48.3m, across the group in the year to July 23 compared to the previous year. In the UK alone, GTV was down by 10.8%, and in Spain it was up by 12.4%, calculated in sterling. Store numbers fell to 580, from 592 a year ago. Game in the UK ended the year with 313 stores, down from 319 last year.

Digital content GTV grew by 15.5%, while sales of preowned technology products (+65.1%) and accessories and toys-to-life technology (+19%) also up.

AMAZON TO OPEN 13TH UK WAREHOUSE

Amazon is opening its 13th UK fulfilment centre as it expands its network to meet customer demand. The new centre, at Tilbury, Essex, will feature robotic technology that has been shown to speed up the time it takes to process an order while cutting the amount of space needed for storage.

That’s important when Amazon, an Elite retailer in the IRUK Top500 research, is widening its product range from more than 150m lines. At the same time its third-party Fulfilment by Amazon service is being taken up by more marketplace sellers, and expansion will also provide more space for that.

“We are excited to announce that we will be opening our 13th fulfilment centre in the UK in Tilbury in spring 2017 to enable us to continue to expand our product selection, support more third party sellers including small businesses with our fulfilment expertise and meet growing customer demand in the UK,” said John Tagawa, Amazon’s Vice President of UK operations.

He said the use of Amazon Robotics technology was “the newest example of our commitment to invention in logistics on behalf of our employees and our customers”. The robots slide under a tower of product storage shelves to lift it through the fulfilment centre. Amazon says the robots help speed order processing time and reduce walking time by moving the shelves to employees, reducing the time taken to store inventory or pick it for new customer orders. They also save significant amounts of space: Amazon says 50% more items can be stored per square foot.

The new centre will have more than 1,500 staff when it opens in 2017, adding to a payroll that by the end of this year will include more than 15,500 people. The announcement comes shortly after news of a Doncaster centre, employing 500 people, that will also open next year.

We’re witnessing an Amazonian mission to speed everything up. This additional fulfilment centre is in line with Jeff Bezos’s obsession with bringing product physically closer to the consumer.

BATTLE OF THE BEDS

In a bid to shake up the ‘stagnant’ mattress market by injecting some online nous, Innocent Smoothie founder Richard Reed is joining forces with leading investors and a family of bed makers to launch Simba.

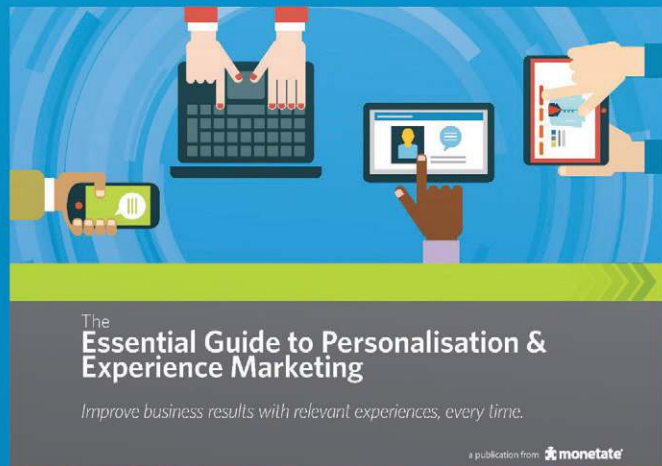
Aiming to gain the lion’s share of the £1bn UK mattress market, Simba is looking to offer a one-size-fits-all mattress that can be ordered online and delivered next day in a box to make the process of buying and getting home one of life’s most essential, but oft-overlooked, purchases.

Simba was co-founded by James Cox, Steve Reid, Founder of Tribesports.com and mattress veterans, the McClements family who have been a major mattress supplier to John Lewis for decades.

James Cox explains: “People spend a third of their lives in bed; sleeping, chatting, reading, watching TV, ‘dancing in the sheets’, planning and laughing. That’s a lot of life lived out on their faithful mattress. But, traditionally, making a mattress purchase is expensive and confusing for the buyer. We wanted to create a product that addressed an issue and made people’s lives that bit better, in terms of comfort and convenience.”

Simba’s pioneering online ‘bed in a box’ concept, he believes, allows your mattress – ingeniously rolled up and boxed – to be delivered to your door the next day. No more awkward manoeuvres in the hallway. Simba is so confident in their product that they are also offering a 100-night no hassle return service.

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Read more of *Paul Skeldon's* insight into the fast changing mobile channel and keep up to date with the significant news at www.internetretailing.net.

GLOBAL TIPPING POINT

Mobile is about to surpass desktop as the global path to ecommerce, with the UK and Japan leading the way. So finds the performance marketing technology company Criteo in its H1 2016 State of Mobile Commerce Report, which reveals insights into consumer shopping habits and forecasts predictions for mobile commerce across the globe.

“Mobile commerce has reached a turning point and is surpassing desktop purchasing as retailers continue to evolve their mobile shopping platforms,” says Elie Kanaan, EVP, Marketing, Criteo. “Retailers need to create a truly seamless mobile and cross-device experience and be prepared to engage with users no matter where they are along the path to purchase. Brands that master the mobile trend will have a head start on competitors and the momentum to lead the pack through the shopping seasons ahead.”

Criteo's research shows brands can no longer ignore mobile platforms as a primary means to drive ecommerce sales. While technology enhancements have facilitated shopping on mobile,

marketers are challenged with targeting consumers across every environment along the path to purchase. Retailers must employ both strong app and mobile web presences together with mobile targeting strategies to engage with shoppers wherever and whenever they browse and purchase to boost revenue.

According to the report, the number of shoppers going online – be that via desk top or mobile – to both browse and purchase products continues to grow with a higher rate of transactions captured on mobile devices than via traditional purchase paths.

Interestingly, Japan and the UK have surpassed parity with desktop and now sell more on mobile devices. The biggest year-over-year increases in mobile's share of retail transactions were seen in Brazil, Australia and France.

Mobile conversion rates are highest in Japan, the UK and South Korea.

Countries with the highest percentage of mobile-friendly sites – including South Korea, Australia and Japan – also saw the greatest share of mobile transactions.

FRONT ROW AT NEW YORK FASHION WEEK

The fashion world opened its door for the annual New York Fashion Week on 8 September to parade the latest trends and styles of the season. The event, attracts A-listers, industry insiders and shoppers alike, who are all able to view a livestream of the catwalk on mobile.

Fashion Week has made an online presence on social media with SnapChat set to have exclusive stories which follow the different catwalks, bringing the world of luxury fashion closer to the customers. While Instagram provides polished and refined images, SnapChat offers a raw glimpse behind-the-scenes of shows, allowing users to get exclusive access to top brands. Luxury brands need to explore the value of social media to strengthen relationships with customers.

Burberry is leading the way in this regard, with investment of more than 60% of its marketing budget on digital. According to Contactlab's “Digital and Physical Integration: Luxury Retail's Holy Grail” study, Burberry is also bringing together online and offline operations, with click and collect already representing 15% of Burberry's online sales. While Burberry paves the way for luxury brands, others are still struggling to grasp the significant impact engaging with customers online and offline will have on their brands.

Contactlab found in its Digital Frontier 2016 study that customers with a digital presence who are digitally contactable are high spenders in-store and account for 27% of in-store revenue and 73% of ecommerce revenue. With the rise of ecommerce and digital engagement tools, luxury brands have access to customer data which allows them to create a dynamic and personalised approach which integrates people preferences within the customer interactions.

BOOK BY VIDEO

A picture paints a thousand words – a video tour many more. That is the thinking behind a new ‘Book by video’ service being trialled on UK Airport Car Parks site and app, which could usher in a new era in how people shop, especially on text-unfriendly mobile screens.

Users can now view and experience airport car parks, hotels and lounges before deciding which one to book with the service. The unique feature means that customers can see elements first hand, such as the level of car park security, hotel amenities and airport lounge facilities, before deciding to buy, rather than simply reading about them from the company's perspective.

Chris Fryer, Developer at UK Airport Car Parks, explains: “The way people want to shop has changed, they no longer want to read about what they should expect to receive but see footage of it with their own eyes, giving them a better understanding of what to expect and pick out a product or service that best suits them and their needs. By embracing modern technology and listening to what our customers want they can now watch short video clips and view available airport car parks, hotels and lounges for themselves through UK Airport Car Parks.”

Fryer continues: “Our new View and Book by Video function was developed with mobile users in mind. Just imagine being on a small mobile device and having to read through endless text to get an idea of what an airport product is like. Instead from our site simply watch the video and click book if it meets your requirements!”

To access the new feature users simply need to go to the UK Airport Car Parks website and select ‘View & Book Products by Video’ in the top right corner of any of their pages. From here they can select their chosen product or service to view an informative video and will be shown similar offerings at the same airport to ensure they have the best deal.

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since 1961



Gary Kibble, Global Brand and Marketing Director, Mothercare

Mothercare: six pillars to brand success

Mothercare's new website is the next step in its ambition to become the leading global retailer for parents and young children. *Emma Herrod* spoke to the company's Global Brand and Marketing Director, *Gary Kibble*, about how the launch fits in with its omnichannel and turnaround plans.

BABIES, FOR all that they only eat, sleep and use nappies for their first few weeks, come with a huge list of requirements before they are even born. There are the maternity clothes, hospital bag, car seat, crib or basket, blankets, muslins... and that's before you get to the clothes, memory boxes, toys etc. And then there's the decision about whether to buy a pram, a pushchair that lays flat or a travel system. It's enough to drive one mum on an online forum to ask whether buying such a thing should be as difficult as childbirth itself.

Mothercare aims to come to the rescue of all those mums and dads debating these

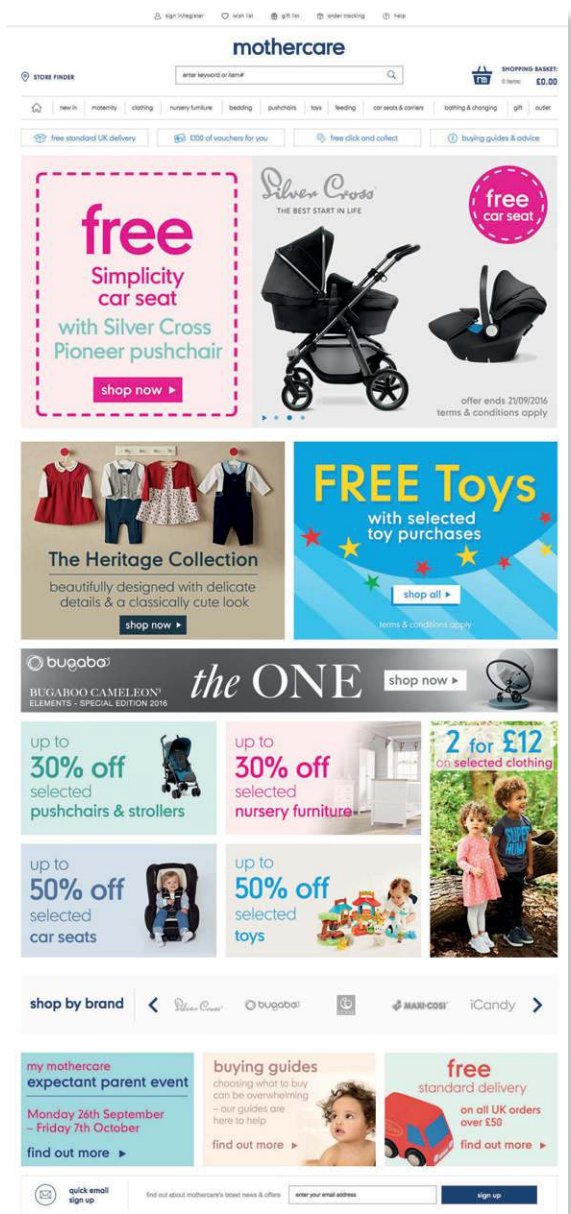
prenatal purchases by sharing advice and giving guidance at every stage of pregnancy and into their children's early months.

"We have ambition to be the leading global retailer for parents and young children," says Gary Kibble, Global Brand and Marketing Director, Mothercare.

The retailer is also part way through a turnaround plan which saw it return to profit in its last financial year after reporting losses for the previous four years.

CODING RELATIONSHIPS

It has just taken a major step on that path to omnichannel success with the launch of a new



Mothercare's new website includes responsive design, simplified checkout, natural search, improved navigation, performance and speed

website, which is better suited to its young, digitally-savvy customers. This launch was vital since the old site was losing the retailer sales with half of its customers dropping out between them adding items to their basket and ultimate conversion. "We weren't giving the customer what they wanted and needed," Kibble says.

He explains that Mothercare evaluated different platform options before taking the decision to remain with Demandware in the UK – Mothercare's international business runs on Magento. The move to a direct relationship with Demandware gives Mothercare full use of the platform's capabilities. These include, what Kibble calls the key points of responsive design, simplified checkout, natural search, improved navigation, performance and speed.

“Buying a stroller shouldn't be as difficult as childbirth”

Responsive design is an important factor for Mothercare since 86% of sessions are on mobile phones with the figure increasing to more than 90% when visits from shoppers using a tablet is factored in. The new platform can also move Mothercare to a 3-point checkout from a 7-point one, and for the retailer to optimise for natural search. Kibble says the Demandware platform also “gives us the ability to serve up content in a better, more user-friendly way”.

A new content hub is also coming into operation. This will sit centrally as part of the core platform, allowing Mothercare to serve content across different channels as it helps guide parents from the prenatal stage to postnatal and through the many issues and ‘teething pains’ of the early years.

BITE-SIZED CONTENT

“The millennial customer wants to access content in a bite-size way and be able to interact through multiple devices at different times of the day,” says Kibble. As with other shopper groups, they may move from tablet at home, to mobile on their commute, PC at lunchtime and back to a mobile or desktop or laptop to complete the purchase at home in the evening. They also still visit the stores.

Mothercare aims to engage with shoppers in the prenatal stage when many need advice not only on which products they need to buy but also on what is happening at every stage of pregnancy. Kibble explains that someone who becomes a customer in the prenatal stage is worth three times to the retailer as much as one who starts purchasing after their baby is born. This is hardly surprising in the baby care market considering the amount of paraphernalia that seems to be ‘must have’ for a new baby.

As well as six different shopper personas, Mothercare has a series of 224 emails which are triggered by the different stages that the prospective parents go through. These include weekly pregnancy messages which allow the firm to engage in the journey with each customer.

Kibble explains that Google found that 69% of all maternity search terms are content related rather than for products, and that the number one search is for boys’ and girls’ names. This is why Mothercare has incorporated a random name generator into its app. Every time the phone is shaken, a new name is presented in text and audio form.

The priority for Mothercare, then, is to get shoppers to convert early on. One of mums’ first purchases is a maternity bra, ►



The Mothercare app gives omnichannel functionality while being fun and engaging

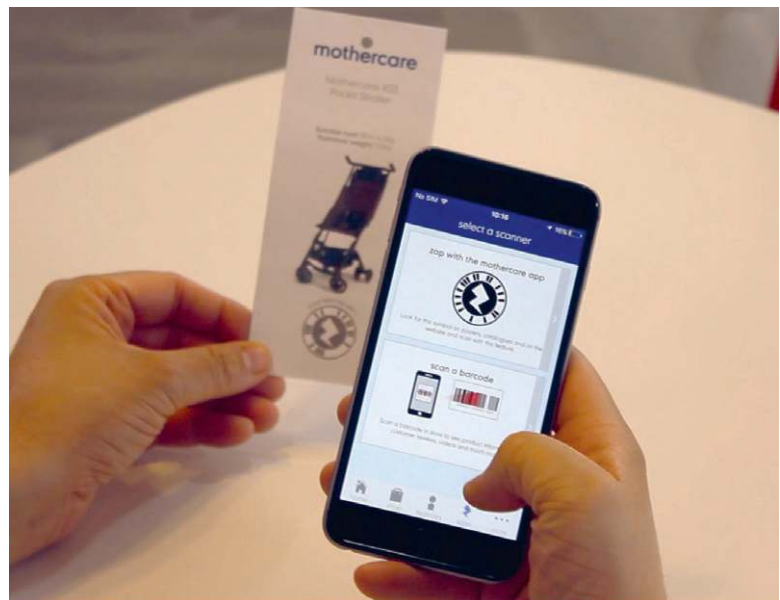
so Mothercare assists with zapcodes in its catalogue which, when scanned, automatically link the shopper through to connected, relevant content, such as a video on how to measure for the undergarment.

Customers do much of the research for these products online before they go to a store to see them and then either to purchase in store or online. More than half of those who buy a maternity bra in store will have researched it online in the past week, explains Kibble, so that led to an increase in bidding for the terms as a keyword, even though the ROI doesn't necessarily stack up when online transactions are accounted for alone. "We've invested in where keywords will convert in store rather than just online," he adds.

He acknowledges that there is still a lot of work to do to optimise the new site – including the checkout – and the business is talking to its partner Qubit about running A/B multivariate tests as well as looking at further personalisation. A Head of UX has been hired and there are plans to implement a small user lab.

Once the new platform is "firing on all cylinders", the retailer will further explore personalisation on the website.

Zappor codes link customers from catalogue pages and swing tags in store to rich content online



MOBILE

One of the other ways in which Mothercare is improving the experience for its omnichannel customers is through its mobile app. As well as the baby-naming functionality, it allows users to scan items in store and to see past purchases and their digital receipts. These custom-designed receipts include product images that link to the product details in the app. Customers also have the option to send eGift Receipts to friends and family directly from the app.

The app has also given Mothercare a place to build deep and meaningful relationships with customers because shoppers can use it as a centre of advice and guidance, as a tool for their maternity needs such as building a hospital packing list, as well as for shopping for products. A video by Mylene Klass, for example, links to an online checklist as well as to the online store. Kibble explains that the app converts higher than the old mobile site.

STORES

Mothercare's transformation is not restricted to online and digital. The stores, too, are undergoing a makeover with a number being closed and others opened. Mobile is becoming more evident in stores with swing tags with Zappor codes being put on products such as car seats and strollers. These codes, when scanned with a smartphone, bring up further information on the product and rich media. More importantly, customers can see reviews, explains Kibble. This gives reassurance in the product and a "final level of endorsement", turning interest into purchase.

At the end of August, Zappar codes appeared in the printed catalogue allowing shoppers to interact with products digitally, view videos of pushchairs being put up and car seats explained. They are being used on products whose price or complexity needs “the extra bit of hand holding”.

Digital screens are also being introduced into the refurbished stores to add further interest for shoppers and provide a platform through which the company can educate them. A video about car seats, for example, will loop on a screen near where they are located in store. Further interactivity is planned for these screens.

Store staff have been equipped with iPads so customer orders can be placed from anywhere in the shop. Some 1,200 iPads have been introduced in the UK stores and these have been linked to a sales growth of 25% over the past year. Customers currently have to pay for their purchase at the till, but in the next 12 months this will change so that store staff can take the payment along with the order on an iPad, without having to go to a physical checkout area. “Web-enabled store 2.0 will be more of a ‘clienteling’ service,” says Kibble.

The iPads and app will turn customers’ interactions with staff into more of a personal shopping appointment. Staff will have access to customer data, which through the analytical warehouse stores browsing and purchasing data, so they can give more meaningful and personalised information to individual customers. They will know what level of product and price point to pitch to each customer, whether it’s from the good, better or best range, for example.

Expectant parent evenings are held in stores three times a year. These bring together external experts including midwives and St John Ambulance to give advice as well as product presentations. These are attended by up to 25,000 customers each year, each carefully selected from the company’s database and invited personally.

Post-birth, it invites 20 to 25 new mums who have given birth around the same time to a meet-up in store. Kibble describes these new mum meet-ups as Mothercare being true to the brand.

To further improve omnichannel performance, to change company culture and to support the ethos that you deliver what you measure, one of the KPIs for store managers is online sales in their area.

“Mothercare’s old site was losing the retailer sales with half of its customers dropping out between adding items to their basket and ultimate conversion”

Kibble explains that this encourages omnichannel behaviour from store staff, who are happy to collect customers’ email addresses so they can be sent a digital receipt, for example. This enables Mothercare to improve how it connects customers’ online and offline purchases and behaviour, know what they’ve ordered online, their browsing behaviour, and be able to present them more relevant content.

He says that in 2012, the business had the details of 300,000 customers on its database. Today, that has reached 2.5 million active customers who have interacted with Mothercare by opening an email or purchasing something online or in store in the past three months.

THE VISION

Mothercare has a clear vision of its transformation and the way that it touches every part of the business. Led by Mark Newton-Jones, who was fundamental to Shop Direct’s transition from a catalogue business to a digital retailer, the Mothercare transformation is explained by its Brand House, a diagram which maps out how it will achieve its vision of being the leading global retailer for parents and young children and tells staff why each step is being taken.

Internally, the company’s plans are to unite mums and dads to take on parenting together; externally this is being promoted as ‘Welcome to the Club’, its new branding and marketing campaign which will launch on 6 October.

The transformation will be achieved through six pillars:

- Becoming a digitally-led business;
- Supported by modern retail estate and a great service;
- Offering style, quality and innovation in product;
- Stabilise and recapture gross margin;
- Running a lean organisation while investing for the future;
- Expanding further internationally.

These pillars will be based on the four foundations of modern systems, infrastructure, governance and talented people.

The launch of the new website is a major milestone in its first pillar of digital retailing. To date, 73 stores have been refitted as it reaches close to the half way point in the programme, with 8 new stores opened and 63 closed. This transformation to web-enabled stores has all happened over the past 18 months, explains Kibble. All of its 178 stores ►



From old to new. Some Mothercare stores hadn't had a lick of paint in 10 years

will have been refurbished by the end of 2017. "Some stores haven't had a lick of paint in the past 10 years," he says.

The transformation is being funded by the rights issue announced in September 2014 through which Mothercare raised £100m from shareholders. A large proportion of this funding is being spent on the stores and on digital.

CULTURAL CHALLENGE

One of the biggest challenges has been the cultural change; it's a big shift, especially when you consider that some people have been with the company – which was established in 1961 – for 20 or 30 years and are passionate about the brand. Kibble says: "One of the big challenges is helping people understand that the consumer has changed and continues to change at a rate of knots, and unless we are prepared to be left behind we have to move at a faster pace to catch up and then overtake so that we can pre-empt what the customer wants before they know they need it."

He explains how everyone across the business has to be brought along on the transformation journey and understand that they have to deliver what omnichannel shoppers want and if you don't give them what they want they'll go somewhere else.

There is also the financial challenge – especially in a turnaround situation like Mothercare's. The company can't afford to make any mistakes and this adds to the pressure that everyone is under. "There isn't really a way to overcome that. It's just the

“Mothercare has ambition to become the leading global retailer for parents and young children”

reality of being in a turnaround where profit margins are tight,” he says.

Kibble does say, though, that metrics help here since they make it easier to justify the ROI of every pound. A leap of faith is still needed “particularly when we're in uncharted territory.”

So how is the success of the transformation plan being measured? Financial is one way and customer satisfaction, too, is being taken into account. The latter is measured by customer exit surveys online and in store. It's also measured through the conversion funnel. “We obsess about checkout conversion particularly – every 0.1% improvement means a lot,” explains Kibble. Employee engagement is the third factor that Mothercare is using to measure success. “We want a team of people who are motivated, focused and show and give discretionary effort, and this comes in if people have bought into the story.”

Will a shiny new site and a lick of paint in store help turnaround Mothercare and keep investors happy? If what Newton-Jones did to turn around Shop Direct is anything to go by then the answer must be yes. With the digital leadership and new kid on the block Kiddicare having made an early departure from the maternity and early years sector after promising first steps, there is the opportunity for a company with Mothercare's heritage and heft to really engage with expectant millennials. With a rolling three-year-long roadmap for its digital strategy, there is more innovation to come as it catches up with its customers' expectations – and ultimately overtakes them. 🇧🇷



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Do retailers know what consumers want?

Two studies have recently investigated what consumers think about retailers. One reports that there are inconsistencies in the shopping experience across channels as consumers say that retailers don't know what they want while the other says consumers are willing to pay more from retailers with excellent customer service.

ONLY 4% of consumers believe retailers know what they like when shopping via a particular channel, but this could be improved if retailers embraced a consistent and coherent omnichannel strategy, a survey by Omnicore has found.

The first Omnicore Retail Gap Barometer explored the interactions 1,200 consumers' had with retailers across the channels they offer, the stock visibility and promotions they deliver and the fulfilment methods they provide.

Overall consumers awarded 72 points out of 100 for the quality of their experience across every type of interaction with retailers. However, the survey revealed that levels of customer satisfaction drop as a retailer employs more channels. Although 62% of consumers said they had a seamless experience more than once across online and in-store, this fell to 39% when mobile applications, phone and social media were included. Customers have high expectations that each touchpoint will be quick and convenient, with 74% of respondents saying these are the most important factors in deciding which channel to use.

The survey shows that, despite retailers' investment in multiple channels, traditional in-store shopping remains the most popular retail option, selected by 43% of respondents. Only 9% of respondents favoured the option of buying online and collecting in a third-party location such as a train station or supermarket.

"Shoppers now expect to hop between online and physical stores and have the same experience across every channel," says Mel Taylor, CEO, Omnicore Group. "While the overall score in our survey suggests a glowing picture, the details show shoppers today are frustrated by the service they're receiving. While it's clear that the store experience is still king, many retailers are then diluting the quality of the experience they offer as they

expand into more channels and touchpoints."

In addition, retailers are failing to provide the levels of stock visibility across channels that customers now require. 49% of consumers, for example, said visibility of stock in stores if products are unavailable online was no better than very poor-to-average.

Returns too, are an area of concern. Against a backdrop of 84% of consumers viewing a free returns policy as either important or essential to their decision to buy, 40% said they want to return goods by any method, irrespective of how they were bought. 30% of respondents, for example, rated their experience very poor-to-average when returning goods bought and paid for online.

Taylor believes that organisational siloes and un-integrated legacy systems have all hindered the progress retailers are making toward an omnichannel operation. "With these challenges overcome retailers can consistently and coherently deliver the same personalised brand experience across their channels. Ignoring these issues retailers face irreversible brand damage and will lose market-share as shoppers go elsewhere."

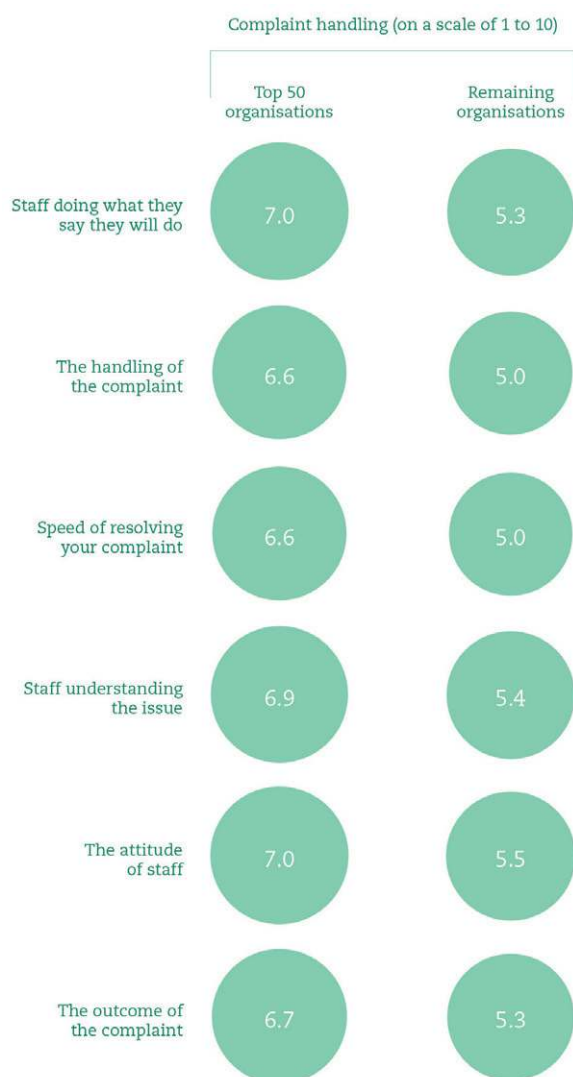
CUSTOMER SERVICE

Meanwhile, The Institute of Customer Service has released the latest edition of its UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI), collating customer satisfaction data from more than 10,000 UK consumers. Overall, the majority of the industries tracked, from insurance to retail, are giving consumers a better customer experience with this year seeing the largest year-on-year increase in companies' scores since July 2011 and the third consecutive yearly increase. Amazon retains its top spot as retail makes up over a third of the leading 50 companies. Wilko, Waitrose, M&S Food and Land Rover make up the top five.

What differentiates the leading 50 companies

“The store experience is still king. Many retailers are then diluting the quality of the experience they offer as they expand into more channels and touchpoints”

THE DIFFERENTIATORS



Source: The Institute of Customer Service

is their high performance in handling complaints and the helpfulness and competence of employees, especially over the phone. Jo Causon, CEO of The Institute of Customer Service, comments: “Getting it right first time has to be a prerequisite for any organisation. Customers expect to be dealt with quickly and competently – as soon as they start to feel let down or ignored, their trust is lost. It’s encouraging to see that the non-food retail sector is making progress, but prevention is always better than cure, so the industry should take note of the areas which need to be focused on. Efficiency, effectiveness and empathy are key, and organisations should always follow up with customers to ensure that the problem is resolved.”

Along with scoring high levels of customer satisfaction, the leading companies are also increasingly being trusted by consumers. In fact, 96% of customers who rate a

THE TOP 25

Jul 2016 rank	Organisation	Sector	July 2016 score	July 2015 score	July 2015 rank	Change in score Jul 15 - Jul 16
1	Amazon.co.uk	Retail (Non-food)	87.2	86.3	2	0.9
2	Wilko	Retail (Non-food)	84.8	79.8	45	5.0
3 =	Waitrose	Retail (Food)	84.6	84.5	6	0.1
3 =	M & S (food)	Retail (Food)	84.6	82.8	12	1.8
3 =	Land Rover	Automotive	84.6	79.1	57	5.5
6	Nationwide	Banks & Building Societies	84.5	83.6	9	0.9
7	first direct	Banks & Building Societies	84.2	87.0	1	-2.8
8	Apple	Retail (Non-food)	84.0	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
9 =	Greggs	Leisure	83.9	81.8	25	2.1
9 =	Virgin Atlantic	Transport	83.9	81.9	24	2.0
9 =	John Lewis	Retail (Non-food)	83.9	86.2	3	-2.3
12 =	Next	Retail (Non-food)	83.8	80.2	39	3.6
12 =	Specsavers	Retail (Non-food)	83.8	84.7	5	-0.9
14	Premier Inn	Tourism	83.6	80.8	32	2.8
15	Iceland	Retail (Food)	83.5	83.5	10	0.0
16	AA Insurance	Insurance	83.3	77.9	86	5.4
17	Kia	Automotive	83.2	80.5	35	2.7
18	M & S	Retail (Non-food)	83.1	82.3	18	0.8
19	LV=	Insurance	83.0	82.6	14	0.4
20 =	Mini	Automotive	82.9	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
20 =	Ebay	Retail (Non-food)	82.9	79.3	52	3.6
22	RIAS	Insurance	82.8	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
23	H&M	Retail (Non-food)	82.7	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
24	Aviva	Insurance	82.6	79.9	43	2.7
25 =	TSB	Banks & Building Societies	82.5	80.4	37	2.1

Source: The Institute of Customer Service

company nine or ten out of ten for customer satisfaction also give the highest levels of trust. A year ago it was 83%.

Also on the rise is consumers’ willingness to pay extra for goods or services by choosing companies which offer excellent service; The UKCSI found that 28% of customers express a preference for the highest levels of customer service even if it costs them more, 4% points higher than two years ago.

This represents “a significant opportunity”, says the report, “but addressing this opportunity will require consistency in delivering the highest standards of service”.

Commenting on the findings, Edward Grant, co-founder and COO at business communications company, Solgari, says: “Good and bad, every company got the score it deserved. The brands we associate with speed and innovation quite rightly came out on top, whereas companies which have been too slow to adopt to the demands of modern consumers has found their service, satisfaction and score wanting.

“Retail continues to be a shining light for customer satisfaction in Britain. Competition is fierce and retailers know that, if they don’t offer a perfect service, customers will just go elsewhere. More so than ever, customers want instant communication, response and resolution – regardless of time, device and location. This is the challenge of the internet era, but one which businesses increasingly need to solve.”

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Retail review

As customers and retailers look across all touchpoints rather than siloed channels, so IR retailer reviews look at the entire retailer's eco-system of website, mobile, the use of digital in store and their overall strategy. Longer in-depth analysis of the four areas can be viewed online at www.internetretailing.net. This issue our reviewers examine Superdrug.

RETAIL STRATEGY 20/25

EMMA ROBERTSON,
MANAGING DIRECTOR, TRANSFORM

When you look closely at Superdrug it's a company of contradictions and surprises. Owned by an international holding company (AS Watson) there has been serious investment in its strategy, technology and logistics, rather than sweating the business as a revenue asset. As part of the AS Watson 360 Global Multichannel Strategy, Superdrug has seen investment in a new web platform supported by a multichannel logistics operation. More crucially, despite digital growth, the company has continued to invest in stores. More than 700 in its estate have been refreshed with new formats launched including the popular Beauty Studio which offers services ranging from Brow Bars to Glitter Lips.

Superdrug can still do a lot more to improve the customer experience within its digital channels, as well as across the full range of channels it wants to operate in. In a retail market where brands are battling to connect with millennials, Superdrug has a head start on its biggest rivals with a platform of products and brand permissions across both beauty and health. However, its digital experience lags behind an accelerating consumer expectation – and it's now time to catch up.

WEB EFFECTIVENESS 11/25

AMY MCINNES, PRINCIPAL USER EXPERIENCE CONSULTANT, USER VISION

The Superdrug website claims that their purpose is "to be the best in everyday accessible beauty and health". Unfortunately, their web presence doesn't appear to provide that same aspirational accessibility.

From the homepage through to checkout, the multitude of images and links focused on 'deals' provides a distracting experience, and while Superdrug communicates value, it is in a manner that risks taking away the appeal of the offers themselves.

Currently the site would benefit from category focused starting points on the homepage to encourage the user deeper into the site, reduced emphasis on conflicting deals and a focus on fixing broken links that are currently affecting the user journey.

MOBILE 14/25

ELLE HANKINSON, BURN THE SKY

Superdrug's site is fast to load, combining an extensive product range, which is easy to navigate. Tutorials, beauty manuals and ask the experts are easy to find, while the 7 Snapchat hacks shows Superdrug is working hard on being relevant to its teenage audience.

Some areas could be improved though, including the heart icon and welcome icon which both take me to a 'Sign in into Superdrug page'. Standard drop down hamburger menu and search buttons could be bigger. Also, the quantity in basket could do with a better user interface since opening a keypad menu to change the numbers feels clunky. The payment process and check out are slick and it's easy to add voucher codes before proceeding to delivery.

INTERNET RETAILING IN STORE 14.5/25

PETE BROWN, CONSULTANT, KURT SALMON

Superdrug is among the many discount retailers that have benefited from the recession. It offers a variety of low-cost toiletries that range from basic to premium brands, without much effort to differentiate the shopping

RETAIL LEADERBOARD

John Lewis	83/100
M&S	80/100
House of Fraser	78/100
Burberry	78/100
Mothercare	78/100
Debenhams	77/100
New Look	77/100
Tesco	76.5/100
Argos	75/100
IKEA	75/100
Topshop	70/100
Very Exclusive	70/100
Fortnum & Mason	70/100
Next	67/100
Oasis	66/100
Aldi Wine	62/100
Google Play	60/100
Superdrug	59.5/100
Boots	59/100
Majestic Wines	56/100
HMV	51/100
J Crew	50/100
Morrisons	27/100



experience. The store is completely lacking any input from the digital side and for that reason the customer journey can be quite dry and not unexpectedly, its mobile app is very basic. Most of the shoppers we spoke to said they were in Superdrug because of the loyalty programme and the quality/value of its private label products.

Younger consumers are more expectant of a digital experience, hence Superdrug's lack of digital investment is an issue in reaching this audience, an important missed opportunity for the retailer when competing in the busy discount toiletries market. 

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The voice of future commerce



The arrival of ecommerce offered customers the ability to ‘drive’ retailers’ businesses with their keyboards, accessing stock, information and logistics via their screen. Mobile retailing put that power under their thumbs, and ‘voice’ is promising to be the next behavioural change. Ian Jindal clears his throat and considers voice interfaces.

AM OLD enough to believe that Star Trek showed us the future. The Communicator became the StarTac and then an iPhone; Apple’s CarKit was in evidence driving the USS Enterprise; but the most prized aspect of human:computer interface was voice. Tapping one’s chest and speaking as normal, the whole crew, nearby aliens and a starship were at one’s disposal. Aside from the voice recognition, it was the ability to control a whole universe that encapsulated the hopes for humanity’s future: the addressable and controllable ecosystem was vast.

Voice-recognition technology itself is now mature and remarkably resilient across noisy environments and accents, and from train booking to banking. Cloud-based systems bring vast computer processing to bear on the challenge, with machine learning offering ever-better interpretations, consistency and speed.

With the technology nicely in hand, the customer rapidly bores with the simple phenomenon of a phone or computer being able to understand their words and simple instruction. In the realm of “So what?” the battleground becomes clearly about what you can do with voice computing.

There are three main players who impinge on our customers’ lives with voice: Apple, Google and Amazon.

On iOS, Siri allows you to do basic commands across a subset of applications and a sub-sub-set of features, mainly on your phone. Texting, calling, transcription and

– with difficulty – playing music. In the last months, Apple’s latest iOS upgrade to version 10, and the imminent porting of Siri to Apple desktop systems, heralds new access capabilities outside of the Apple walled garden. This should make things more interesting, but early indications show the scope of delivery is focused upon messaging and media consumption.

Google’s Voice goes a step further than Apple because it’s device-agnostic and has Google’s reach into your current location, search history and mail. In short, Google’s voice can “do more” for you than Siri – find, suggest, locate... Google Voice extends the context of operation into the ‘real world’ and your movements within it.

Alexa from Amazon, however, goes a step further by adding a ‘buy button’. While Google’s Voice can help you find products, Amazon’s Alexa lets you buy them and have them delivered to you.


So the experience of voice interfaces is a function both of their inherent capability and their operating context. “Voice Mediated Interfaces” (VMIs, anyone?) will really thrive when two further factors are considered: experience and openness.

Regarding experience it’s still a bit like talking into a Racal two-way radio from the 1980s, over. We have to think about how the computer will interpret our voice commands. Secondly, it’s too ‘serial’ – I ask, it does, I ask again... Conversation is full of interruptions, negotiations, amendments... That’s the next front. As things stand voice can’t distinguish instructions from the

babble of a dinner party, a raucous breakfast with teenagers or asking in the car while the radio is blaring and kids are fighting... The stage after that is predictive speech. A bit like a butler’s gentle cough and discreet comments, I suppose...

On the interoperation front, there’s a need to bring more systems and data into the scope of the voice systems... home automation, car systems, health records... It’s no coincidence that Apple, Google and others are investing in HomeKit, CarKit, HealthKit... However we should also be eyeing POS, warehouse and workforce automation and hooks into our ecommerce platforms.

The challenge to overcome is that openness is antipathetic to the business model of voice – namely to tie you into a single, dominant ecosystem. Apple’s iTunes+homekit+desktop+iOS+health+carkit... you get the picture. As retailers we need to have open systems and access upon which we can build. The early enablers of voice are also locked in a global battle over who gets the spoils.

We’re witnessing the early stages of change. The technology is ready for roll-out, the business model is typically early-stage-monopolistic, and the social and commercial cases are embryonic. However, with home, health, travel, information, media and entertainment already within the scope of voice, retail operations and logistics will inevitably follow suit. Not tomorrow, of course, but we’re in the transition from Sci-fi to social fact. 

The following guest article has been written for InternetRetailing by Saima Alibhai, Practice Manager – Professional Services at Bronto Software. Bronto provides a cloud-based commerce marketing automation platform to mid-market and enterprise organisations worldwide.

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Helping Christmas Shoppers Indulge

Saima Alibhai, Practice Manager – Professional Services at Bronto Software, explains how to leverage the self-gifting trend.

CONSUMERS ARE not only starting their Christmas shopping earlier, they are treating themselves to gifts when buying for family and friends. During the 2015 festive season, 50% of shoppers bought something for themselves when shopping for others, a seven percentage point increase from 2014, according to Deloitte. Consumers' willingness to stuff their own stockings means you need to be thinking about ways to entice consumers to splurge on themselves, in addition to developing promotions that appeal to early-bird Christmas shoppers.

Pitching a promotional code for hitting a spending threshold with a single purchase or over several purchases during the Christmas season is one way to encourage shoppers to spend on themselves since many consumers will use the code to purchase an item on their wish list. Setting a spending bar to earn a coupon not only helps increase average order size, but can keep shoppers coming back during the festive season to earn the incentive. Emailing consumers daily deals is another way to entice holiday shoppers to indulge. To make a daily deal appealing, segment offers among email recipients so that shoppers receive offers tied to their specific interests.

Consumers like to be treated special and VIP treatment helps a brand

stand out in a crowded marketplace. For example, athletic apparel and shoe manufacturer Brooks Sports Inc. notifies its loyal customers about deals and discounts first. Alternatively, promotions can be built around product categories or brands the customer favours. A lot of Brooks customers like to shop by outfit, so the brand offers deals that reward them with a free accessory when they buy an outfit or a discount on trousers when they purchase a matching top.

Offering gift card buyers a second gift card of lesser value for meeting a spending threshold, such as a bonus GBP 50 gift card when purchasing a card of GBP 100, can coax shoppers interested in buying for themselves to convert. In many cases, a shopper will keep the free gift card—and then spend more than the value on it when redeeming it later for themselves. By adjusting the redemption date on the free gift card to post-Christmas, you can maintain momentum in the new year. This works well in Brooks's industry especially since several people begin to tackle their fitness goals in Q1.

With some consumers starting their Christmas shopping weeks in advance of Black Friday, you can't afford to wait until November to start offering Christmas deals. But be careful, lest you sacrifice sales you'd otherwise get later in the season by offering your best deals early. Gradually increase discounts and other incentives as the Christmas shopping season progresses to keep shoppers interested. You can still offer good value in your early promotions, but the goal is to steadily increase the value offered so your marketing strategy doesn't peak too soon.

Also lay the groundwork to nurture future sales from customers gained during the Christmas season. Thanking customers via email for their business and including a coupon for a future purchase, or sending loyal customers sneak previews of future sales can keep shoppers coming back once Christmas is over. By recognising that consumers buy for themselves during the festive season and that Christmas shoppers are starting earlier, you will be more successful in your marketing efforts.



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Stephanie Hileman

Ecommerce Digital Marketing Specialist



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To find out how you could benefit from our fully tracked international service visit www.hermesworld.com or email internationalteam@hermes-europe.co.uk

 **Hermes**

IRUK 2016: The strategy and innovation dimension report

The latest in InternetRetailing's series of IRUK Top500 Dimension Reports focuses on Strategy and Innovation, a topic particularly timely in the wake of the UK's decision to leave the European Union...

THE RESULTS of the UK's referendum was a momentous decision that has thrown into doubt ideas once held as near-certainties.

Cross-border trade within the European Union has long been a straightforward way for British retailers to trade. Last year this was recognised by OC&C Strategy Consultants as the world's strongest online export market. With the introduction of the digital single market, EU trade seemed set to get ever easier. Is that all about to change in the light of Brexit?

As yet, the answer to that isn't clear. Retailers will no doubt be revisiting strategies as they consider how factors, including ongoing uncertainties and the continuing weakness of sterling, might affect multichannel and ecommerce growth strategies in years to come.

If it goes ahead, Brexit will no doubt come to be seen as one of the great disruptive events of the early 21st century for Britain. This is probably the moment at which multichannel retailers face the most significant strategic decisions they've had to make in more than a decade. But it's from such moments of disruption and uncertainty that innovation can be born. For it's from considering the needs of the customer as these new circumstances develop that ideas and practices of the future can emerge.

In this Dimension Report, sponsored by Barclaycard and PFSweb, we're considering the new leadership questions that face retailers in this brave new world, as well as mapping best practice in this Dimension across the UK.

Retailers in the Top500 were measured against the metrics that InternetRetailing judge to be the most strategic and innovative from the other five Performance Dimensions that make up the IRUK Top500 research. These include response times to customer queries, mobile load times, apps that are bug free, the ability to offer nominated-time

delivery, search visibility and how retailers respond when no products match a shopper's search. We've assessed which retailers offer international delivery, the number of payment options they use and whether retailers make it clear that payment is secure. We've also used Wiser data on pricing strategies to see which retailers compete with Amazon on price and which compete using other strategies. Its pricing review compares the relative prices of products that are sold both by the largest 50 retailers and by Amazon, and ranks our Top50 on their ability to beat Amazon.

As Researcher Polina Modenova explains: "Across the Top500, retailers in competitive markets stand out for a forward-thinking approach to strategic planning. Multichannel retailers that have created strong digital and mobile links between stores and online do well in this Dimension. Thus, House of Fraser stands out in this Dimension for a well-rounded strategic approach. It offers highly convenient delivery options that are planned around its customers' needs. It performs strongly on mobile and responds quickly to customer enquiries. As well as this, it innovates by experimenting with new technologies such as augmented reality."

The full list of retailers classed as Elite in this Strategy and Innovation Dimension Report are: Amazon, Argos, Boots, House of Fraser, John Lewis, Mothercare and Screwfix.

The Dimension Report looks in case study detail at some of these successful companies, analysing what their example says about best practice in this area. Also, there are 12 hands-on examples of effective approaches that leading retailers and others in related industries are taking.

Overall, the report sets the wider context through the Strategic Overview and looks ahead to the way this area looks likely to develop in future in its Emerging Practice feature.

Whatever lies ahead, though, retailers will of necessity have to cope. There are reasons to ►

“It's from moments of disruption and uncertainty that innovation can be born.”



High-Performing Campaigns
3 campaign(s) converted 63 contacts in the last 30 days.

LIFETIME VALUE: \$212
PREDICTED PURCHASE: Adaptive Trainers
CONVERSION PROBABILITY: 28%
PURCHASE INTERVAL: 42 Days

VOUCHER
50% OFF
for a limited time only
Redeem

DELIVER ON THE PROMISE OF MARKETING

Truly Personalized Consumer Interactions.

be optimistic even when the country is facing such an uncertain future. Most especially, we should remind ourselves that a nation of shopkeepers has become a nation of social media marketing experts, user-focused design gurus and ecommerce veterans whose expertise in these areas is so admired that Berlin is reportedly hatching plans to tempt disgruntled digital specialists of a Remain disposition to head east.

This expertise isn't going to depart the country tomorrow. Rather, leading British retailers will continue to test new techniques; leading British brands will continue to target the growing number of affluent shoppers around the world; and innovative startups will still spring up in the country's tech hotspots.

The role of those making strategic decisions

within such a landscape is, at one level, simply to hold their collective nerve. If the government opts for a hard Brexit? A good reason to look at new markets and to be innovative. If the government opts for a soft Brexit? Well that may change, so there's another reason to look at new markets and to be innovative.

Besides, whatever happens, retail is changing rapidly. It's one of the reasons why a feature on point-of-sale technology has been included in this Dimension Report. It's a reminder that companies still need to make big investments that take account of how shoppers' behaviour will change because of new digital technologies. Indeed, in or out of Europe, change remains the only constant in modern retail. 



Sponsored by



The full rundown of the IRUK 500, 2016, as measured across six Dimensions: Strategy and Innovation, The Customer, Operations and Logistics, Merchandising, Brand Engagement, and Mobile and Cross-channel.

Share your thoughts on #IRUK500 with @etail

Elite

amazon



John Lewis

SCREWFIX



HOUSE OF FRASER
SINCE 1849

mothercare

Leading

Asos

B&Q

Clarks

Currys

Debenhams

eBay

Halfords

Homebase

Marks & Spencer

Matalan

New Look

Next

Office

Sainsbury's

Superdrug

Tesco

Topshop

Waitrose

Wilko.com

Mariano Gomida de Faria

co-CEO and Founder



WHAT DOES YOUR COMPANY DO?

Vtex is a cloud based ecommerce platform provider – but we are the only TRUE cloud based ecommerce platform as we operate completely in the cloud. We allow retailers to completely build their ecommerce environment on our platform and expand it globally but locally. We also opened up the platform's CMS to third parties and to clients themselves so that they can build their own APIs, customise the platform and integrate with their own legacy systems.

This makes what we offer ideal for retailers and brands looking to expand overseas who want more than just a global website, but localised websites in each territory with one management back end.

WHAT IS YOUR USP?

Our USP is that we are truly cloud based and that we can take bring our extensive experience in the LatAm market to Europe. We work with many huge global brands and have developed highly capable technology that will help UK brands expand internationally.

We also offer some interesting logistical tools. Coming from the Brazillian market – which tends to be more 'chaotic' than those of Europe – we have built in logistics model that can handle inventory, omni-channel sales and multiple distribution centres in a simple and integrated way for the business.

We can also deliver and deploy very rapidly: typically within three and a half months and we have deploy many clients. We are also fully integrated into the likes of SAP and others and we allow legacy systems to integrate into the platform as well.

WHAT FUNCTIONALITY DOES THE LATEST VERSION OF YOUR PRODUCT GIVE TO RETAILERS?

As well as being able to rapidly deploy and offering some 250 third party apps, we have patented technology called Smart Checkout that allows for our clients to offer a one-click check out that isn't reliant on a password step and so is truly one click. This has a proven track record of upping sales by some 18% where it has been used by our existing customers.

Our latest version also brings access to 252 companies that have developed apps for our platform that they can tap into to manage everything from pick up in store technology, to drive throughs to WMS and more.

VTEX IN BRIEF

Company founded: March 2000

Global reach: We operate from our offices around the world USA, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Argentina. We can delivery the VTEX Cloud Commerce Platform in all Europe, USA and Latin America

UK launch: UK will be the global head quarter for Sales and operations

Turnover: Last year, VTEX shops run 1.2 GBP collective sales on aprox 10 million orders

Customers: approx 1,600 including Sony, WalMart, Whirlpool, C&A, Avon, Calvin Klein, Danone, Fnac, Electrolux, etc.

Number of employees: 187

Number of partners: 250+

For more information about VTEX products and services please visit www.vtex.com or get in touch directly via info@vtex.com

We also bring some interesting technology to the merchandising and promotions systems. In the US and Europe, merchandising and promotions tends to be done just along price lines. In LatAm it is often a more complex mix of elements such as delivery and price and more. We bring this to the UK market and hope to shake up how merchandising and promotions work.

WHEN DID YOU START THE COMPANY AND WHY?

The company started, technically, in 2000 when myself and a colleague were working on deep maths for the Nuclear industry as part of our theses. We soon realised that it was more suited to the retail industry and so started to develop that. In the meantime we created some ecommerce software that really took off. It was making us money while we worked on our other maths project – that was creating supply chain automation – and it took off.

By 2007 our Cost Call ecommerce platform was the biggest in Brazil, so when WalMart came looking to launch in Brazil, it looked at our platform. By October 2008 we had launched WalMart in Brazil and by 2012 we had 117 Brazillian companies using our platform.

We then expanded to Argentina, Mexico, the US and nine other LatAm markets. Now we are coming to the UK as it is the most exciting and best ecommerce market in the world.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR VISION?

Our vision is to offer a truly cloud-based open ecommerce platform that will let retailers and brands expand globally,

offer better customer experience to their customers and make ecommerce better for everyone. We also have the vision of expanding our reach in to the exciting UK market and letting UK retailers tap into all the markets of Europe, Russia and beyond – typically at a time when they need to think globally.

“The UK is the most exciting ecommerce market in the world and, post Brexit, many retailers are looking much more seriously at overseas expansion — what we offer allows them to do that”

WHAT IS YOUR MARKET POSITION AND WHAT GAP ARE YOU FILLING IN THE UK?

The UK is the most exciting ecommerce market in the world and, post Brexit many retailers are looking much more seriously at overseas expansion and what we offer allows them to do that not by just globalising their website, but by allowing them to build local websites in each territory that all work together.

This all comes from us being a truly open and truly cloud based platform that allows users to customise it and tap into its global power.

WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

Our customers are big brands and retailers – more than 800 retailers operating more than 1600 websites in 16 countries. We already work with WalMart, Sony, Calvin Klein, C&A, Lego, Levi’s and many more.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE CHALLENGES TO RETAILERS IN THE COMING YEAR AND HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The challenges for UK retailers in the coming year are those around Brexit and the need to expand overseas. All retailers need to expand and go international to grow: Brexit has perhaps made many think that they will have to cast the net wider than Europe and that throws up a bunch of problems and challenges. Our system is there to make this easier to do. It will also help with European expansion and open up the world to retailers.

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY: SONY

Savvy retailers and branded manufacturers doing retail who want to keep up with the changing demands of customers are looking for more robust yet flexible platform solutions. And most importantly, they want platforms that can prove a solid return on investment in shorter periods of time. That’s what Gabriel Cabrera did when he embarked on a large replatforming project.

As Sony’s regional director of online business in Latin America, Cabrera realized the company’s existing platform had become difficult to maintain and parts of it were outdated with regard to consumer needs.

Sony Latin America wanted to provide customers throughout the region a simple, secure and efficient way to acquire Sony’s products on its website from any accessed device. Additionally, the company wanted to expand into other markets.

Sony sought a more efficient approach to its e-commerce platform by considering cloud-based solutions that allowed for regional expansion, and were easy to integrate, scalable and cost-effective. It wanted technology that employed responsive design so that a single website would adapt automatically to the screen the consumer is using, whether that is on a computer, smartphone or tablet.

“We wanted to find more efficiency on our investment and through our expansion into other markets,” Cabrera explains, and says he found that in the VTEX platform. Cabrera also says the company was able to achieve its first implementation in what he calls “record time.”

“In four months, we had a full e-commerce site ready,” he says. “After launching that site, we were having rollouts every two to three weeks for the rest of the countries.”

Six months after launching the VTEX platform, Sony Latin America has seen its conversion rate increase. According to Soncini, that’s because VTEX has a business model that enables brands and retailers to focus on their business in addition to providing an updated platform evolving at the same pace as consumer expectations.

“At a lower ongoing cost, we offer an up-to-date solution that provides a competitive differential to our customers with upgrades on a daily basis,” he says.

In fact, VTEX provides an average of 846 upgrades per month; its clients experience, on average, a 46% boost in conversion rate; and its time to market is, on average, 103 days. Overall, the company provides services to more than 700 retailers—including major brands such as Whirlpool, Calvin Klein, Nokia and Disney—and supports 1,200 online stores in 14 countries using a multi-tenant cloud-based platform.

“Regardless of the type of platform you want for your replatforming strategy, it’s very important to analyze in the long term if that solution will be prepared to push you forward rather than hold you back,” Soncini explains. “Our end-to-end solution includes all the capabilities that allow our customers to increase their conversion rate, customer satisfaction and at the end of the day, their profitability.”



Internet Retailing Conference

Sponsored by demandware

12 October 2016, Novotel, Hammersmith, London

The InternetRetailing Conference returns to London on 12 October for its 11th year. *Emma Herrod* shares a preview of the speakers and topics to be discussed under the 2016 event's overarching theme of new horizons.

THIS YEAR'S Internet Retailing Conference (IRC16) explores the theme of new horizons as it looks to the future of ecommerce and omnichannel retail.

IRC16 is the 11th year for the Conference, and as the event moves into its second decade it focuses on changes in both the way that shoppers buy, and how retailers sell that are likely to come in future. Ecommerce professionals, for over a decade at the vanguard of innovation and radical change, are

themselves now having to adapt and change as ecommerce is no longer a channel, but an equal partner with stores. Thus for 2016, the one-day conference is looking to the new horizons that the modern digitally-enabled retailer can scan as they seek to satisfy the demands of the connected, savvy customer.

Marketplaces, the role of mobile and international – all key issues for the future of retail – will come under scrutiny during the plenary session. It's here that the InternetRetailing Conference sets a direction for retail that bridges the experience of the last decade and the next stage of digitally-led transformation. Delegates will hear from the industry trailblazers, who have been defining and shaping retail strategy for the past decade and are still at the helm, responding and reacting to new technologies and customer demands to map a blueprint for change and success in the years ahead.

James McClure, General Manager – UK & Ireland, Airbnb will speak as a disruptor, not just of marketplaces but of the travel and hotel industry. Airbnb is one of the success stories of the peer-to-peer sharing economy. Even No 10 Downing Street has been listed as a place to stay in London – although it was swiftly taken down from the site when it was discovered to be a hoax listing.

Tony Rivenell, Chief Digital Officer at Halfords will talk on the theme of new horizons in mobile. Delegates at IRC16 will gain insight into how he has helped the UK's leading organisations implement change and keep pace with the ever-changing demands of the always on, multichannel consumer. Currently Chief Digital Officer at Halfords, Rivenell has also held high profile leadership roles at Boots, Waitrose and Ocado. In the past financial quarter, Halfords has enjoyed an increase in sales both online and in store and through its use of the Nectar loyalty scheme the company now says that it “knows 25% of its customers” personally, up from just 3% last year. Recently, the retailer has successfully piloted contactless payments and also launched the Cycle Republic website.

Andrew McClean, Head of International and Chief Operating Officer, Urban Outfitters, will then give a presentation on international horizons. Having been responsible for all European shared service operations at Urban Outfitters since 2009, Andrew McClean can share insight into finance, logistics, development and talent acquisition from the point of view of fashion retail and wholesale.

Following the plenary session, the conference will split into three simultaneously-running conference tracks. These will anticipate the response to the new retail pressures of engage, grow and transform. Speakers hail from retailers and service providers as diverse as Home Retail Group, Urban Outfitters, Lego, Woolovers and Vente-Privée.

ENGAGE – THE MOBILE, CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL MARKETING

Mobile is driving the acceleration of ecommerce; tablets/smartphones have become shopping assistants of choice and customers are using these devices to place orders and demand faster, slicker and more convenient delivery. In this conference track, delegates will be able to get to grips with how their peers are using the latest technologies to understand customer preferences better, how the trailblazers are bridging the gap between



James McClure, General Manager – UK & Ireland, Airbnb, will keynote on new horizons for marketplaces



Tony Rivenell, Chief Digital Officer at Halfords, will present on the theme of new horizons for marketplaces



Andrew McClean, Head of International and Chief Operating Officer, Urban Outfitters, will give a presentation on international horizons

physical and mobile to deliver a more seamless and memorable customer experience.

Speakers will also investigate how retailers are leveraging the latest social and digital tools to shape a customer-centric culture, deliver compelling customer experiences and create campaigns to drive growth and behavioural change.

Opening this track is Jack Smith, Group Digital Director, New Look, who'll talk about how the dots are being joined up between mobile, customer experience and business performance. “10 years ago mobile was nowhere, now it's everywhere – connecting consumers to products and driving ecommerce forward at a seemingly explosive rate. The past few years have seen a radical transformation in how consumers are discovering, connecting and engaging with the world,” he says. Jack Smith will share insight into how retailers and brands can use mobile to reach the connected, on the go consumer, how the latest technologies can be harnessed to deliver winning experiences and importantly what the impact is to the bottom line.

As Airbnb changed the travel sector so Grapple is changing fashion – and all through mobile. Customers demand an increasingly fast, slick and user-friendly online and mobile experience and this is forcing businesses to rethink strategies for packaging and showcasing offerings to delight and engage the consumer anytime, anyplace, anywhere. Joel Freeman, Co-founder of Grapple – a site that's been called the tinder for fashionistas – will talk to delegates about what works and what doesn't and where creativity fits in.

Moving on to engaging shoppers in a multichannel world, just look at how children become engrossed with Lego – be that the plastic building blocks, the online games or the videos and film. Leif Bode Nielsen, Head of Omni-Channel EMEA, Lego will share his experience at providing a fast and frictionless customer journey to boost conversion. As he comments: “Reaching audiences needs to become smarter to cut through the other clutter fighting for attention. Understanding the series of interactions customers have with brands are helping retailers to reap significant benefits.”

Of course, meeting the multichannel consumer's increasing expectations for speed and convenience is forcing many retailers to rethink supply chains originally crafted for a single-channel world. As channel boundaries continue to blur, customers are demanding a combination of online ordering, in-store pick up and endless, seamless, always ▶

available inventory. A panel discussion – comprising speakers from Feelunique.com, Holland and Barratt and Woolovers – will discuss questions such as how are retailers responding to demands to achieve success and ROI in an increasingly competitive and rapidly evolving market?

If behaviour is measured in numbers then it's companies like Amazon and eBay that have the huge amount of traffic to understand consumers' needs and how they are changing. As we head towards 10 years since the launch of the iPhone, everyone knows that mobile has radically changed the way that customers shop and interact with products and services. Kit Glover, Director of EU Seller Experience, eBay, though can share insight as one of the pioneers of online shopping and explain how eBay and its sellers are using mobile to engage customers and grow their businesses in the UK and abroad.

GROWTH – INTERNATIONAL AND MARKETPLACES

The theme of growth and expansion through marketplaces is picked up in track 2, along with the opportunities for retailers to explore and deliver products and services across borders. This track will showcase strategies for overcoming significant challenges of planning, establishing and growing retail operations in multiple countries and in new territories.

Speakers will address how UK retailers are planning and executing successful growth opportunities in both established and emerging international markets, and how online marketplaces are providing new avenues for collaboration, growth and penetration of previously inaccessible markets – as well as how Brexit negotiations are effecting their business and future plans.

Sally Scott, Managing Director – UK, Vente- Privée, will open the track with a presentation on online marketplaces as a route to international growth. Ilan Benhaim, one of the French company's Co-Founders, spoke at the InternetRetailing Conference a few years ago so it will be interesting to hear how the company has grown and expanded and to get a perspective on its UK business. Sally Scott will also share insight into what traditional retailers can learn from global marketplaces about customer buying preferences and product demand.

As everyone ponders the future of the EU and what Brexit means for them personally and as retailers, there are other markets showing signs of growth and opportunities. The InternetRetailing Conference

“Engage, Growth and Transform will all be discussed by leading retailers at IRC 2016”

interestingly brings together a panel of Latin American experts so that delegates can find out everything they need to cash in on ecommerce opportunities in Latin America post-Brexit. The panel will debate and answer questions such as what is the size of the market? How does ecommerce compare to the market for physical stores? What are the 3 main challenges brands/retailers need to overcome to manage ecommerce in Brazil and Latin America? Do you need to open a company or could you operate by full-service companies? Do you need to receive in Reais? Do you need local fulfilment or sell cross country? They will help delegates get to grips with the industry numbers and facts driving retail leadership in Latin America.

For many retailers though, China still represents an untapped opportunity. Sainsbury's is the latest one to be reported on by InternetRetailing as it steps up online sales of its groceries in China following a successful trial on Alibaba. More than 100 Sainsbury's own-brand products are now available to buy on Alibaba Tmall Global site in four categories – British breakfast, drinks, organic and baby. Further ranges will be added in the autumn.

Sainsbury's Chief Financial Officer John Rogers comments: “Chinese online shoppers are increasingly demanding high quality international products. Many customers also want to replicate tastes and occasions that they have enjoyed or heard about through international travel.”

Leah Zhang, International Business Development, Alibaba will happily share her insight with delegates into how they can speed up market entry to Asia. She'll be sharing how British businesses can approach the Chinese consumer market, the biggest opportunities and pitfalls and give practical, hands-on advice about the best way to achieve business objectives in the lucrative Chinese market.

TRANSFORM – MULTICHANNEL RETAIL AND FULFILLING PROMISES

The Transform track at IRC16 brings together speakers to debate how in-store and online can work closer together to create truly high-impact results, what changes retailers need to make to the bricks and fabrics of their organisation to excel in a multichannel world and importantly what is on the horizon?

This track will also dig into the detail of how retailers are fulfilling their multichannel promises. Successfully evaluating, implementing and integrating the best



fulfilment options for each business is no mean feat, and in this track delegates will learn how peers are harnessing the latest available tools and practices to win over the hearts and minds of a consumer that is increasingly spoilt for choice.

Michael Durbridge, Director of Omnichannel, B&Q will be on hand to describe how, as a digital trailblazer, B&Q is harnessing the most recent digital technologies to harmonise communications and experience and generate more continuity between online and in-store.

Faye Roth, Head of Customer & Digital IT Delivery, River Island, will also present on how retailers can use the latest technologies to transform business from the inside out. She'll share details of how this leading fashion retailer is harnessing the most recent digital technologies to synchronise physical and digital and generate ROI.


In a world where companies are being stretched to make more frequent and costly technological investments to keep pace with the latest changes being driven by advances

“Will we see you in London on 12th October?”

in social media, consumer purchasing patterns and digital innovations, marketers are being challenged at the highest levels to demonstrate ROI for new marketing initiatives. The panel from Monsoon, Hotels.com and Marks & Spencer will debate how marketing can bridge the gap between the consumer and the boardroom.

Closing the track, Neil Dulake, Industry Head – Retail, Google will talk delegates through the market trends, technologies and biggest growth drivers in ecommerce today and tomorrow and how retail is being re-imagined.

The InternetRetailing Conference 2016 is being held at the Novotel, Hammersmith, London and follows directly on from sister event the eDelivery Conference, to be held the previous day, October 11, at the same venue. This event, for retail logistics professionals, focuses on ‘practicalities’ of everything behind the buy button, a theme explored through the twin tracks of availability and experience.

To learn more about the eDelivery and InternetRetailing Conferences or to book your place now, visit internetretailingconference.com. 

Jess Stephens

Chief Marketing Officer,

SMART FOCUS
THE MESSAGE CLOUD



WHAT DOES YOUR COMPANY DO?

SmartFocus is a personalised marketing cloud that covers contextual marketing from top of funnel acquisition right through to retention marketing and content for retention marketing.

WHAT IS YOUR USP?

It revolves around three things: content, context and crowds. More than any other vendor in the marketing cloud space, we are committed to those three things. In terms of crowds, we enable our customers to access new customers, so they advertise to customers who are more likely to purchase your product and more likely to book your services. We do that through the power of data, managed in real time.

We contextually advertise to anonymous users based on lookalike attributes and on what we understand about them. We acknowledge that in a multichannel, connected world, more content is needed for marketing moments that convert. We provide this through content curation, content management and user generated content (UGC).

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE VISION THAT YOUR COMPANY HAS FOR THIS AREA FOR THE FUTURE?

For the last decade, brands have been focused on channel, rather than customer. We're finding that some of the more advanced companies are moving beyond a siloed approach in order to create customer-centric organisations. Staff look after new and returning customers, so that whether they are coming into store today, or interacting through live chat tomorrow, they always get the same experience.

There's a lot of talk about how you provide that, but it comes from one source – from structuring your company in that way. Most notably House of Fraser and John Lewis have changed their marketing organisation to be less channel-siloed and much more cross-channel, and therefore customer-focused in its approach.

That's true for us too. We have one solution to create all marketing output, and trigger all of those contextual moments. That means it doesn't matter what channel the customer interacts with: what they see is based on their behaviour in real time.

WHAT NEW FUNCTIONALITY DOES THE LATEST VERSION OF YOUR SOFTWARE GIVE TO RETAILERS?

For a while now we've had a Smart Content product, around sourcing content and enabling the marketer to use it within the platform. We also have a retargeting tool that enables marketers to contextually advertise to

SMARTFOCUS IN BRIEF

Date founded: 1999

Global reach: headquartered with London with nine offices around the world, in Seattle, Buffalo, New York, Paris, Munich, Hong Kong, Barcelona, London and Sao Paolo.

Customers: 1,750, including House of Fraser, Nestlé, Levi's, and Waterstones.

Employees: 290

Contact details: SmartFocus, The Relay Building, 2nd Floor, 114 Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7PT, United Kingdom

For more information about SmartFocus UK, please visit www.smartfocus.com or call 020 7554 4500

new customers. In the next update, we are combining those two products.

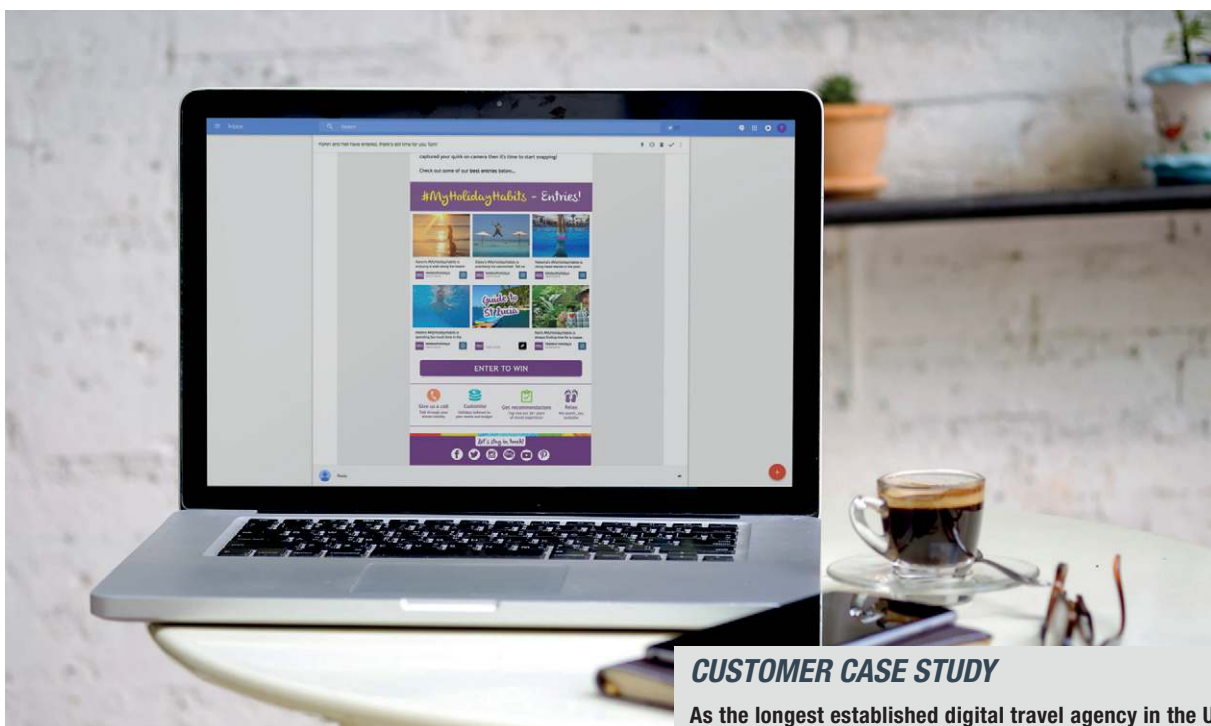
Let's say you are an automotive brand, you're suddenly in someone's Facebook feed with a photo that someone has taken on their phone with the brand of their car in it. Because that looks like it fits much more into the rest of the timeline, it's going to get higher engagement. The stats say customers trust user-generated content 80% more than brand-created content. We've been increasing engagement in social ads by a factor of two, three and sometimes four when UGC is used at scale. Where brands were able to do five or 10 campaigns a month they can now do hundreds, all massively populated for them – and that encourages conversion.

HOW DOES THIS COMPARE TO WHAT YOUR COMPETITORS ARE DOING?

We're the only marketing cloud that combines UGC and social advertising. We're also the only vendor able to deliver content creation for social, and across all digital channels because of our commitment to cross-channel. Let's say a holiday company wants to create a series of images of people on beautiful beaches. Our system uses deep-learning algorithms to find beach images, or, very simply, looks for a hashtag. Then that content can be distributed to any kind of digital channel, from email to mobile, in-store displays and websites. It's that commitment to content across channels that really separates us out from the rest.

WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

We have House of Fraser, T.O by Lipton, Nestlé, Levi's, Waterstones, TM Lewin, Heals, Age UK, Hobbycraft, Majestic Wines. Large retailers make up 58% of our customer base.



IS LIFE GETTING EASIER OR HARDER FOR MARKETERS?

I think we've gone through a step change when it comes to marketing. We did a study that asked for marketers' pain points. Unsurprisingly the number one pain point that every single marketer came back to was data, and their access to it. I think the most sophisticated marketing clouds now give access to that data – we're entering into a golden age where the question is about what you want to do with it, and what problems you want to solve with it. That's going to change on a case-by-case basis for all marketers.

What I've noticed in this golden age of data and marketing technology is that things are now resource-light, but the output you get is very much greater. Personalisation means it should take less time to send out a batch and blast email. Understanding data and acting on it should take less time than just looking at your data as a whole.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS CHALLENGES IN THE COMING YEAR AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MEET THOSE CHALLENGES?

I think the challenge is also a huge opportunity, this idea of the proliferation of content, and how marketers can both leverage that while dealing with the fact that customers are potentially seeing so much content from competitors.

The area of our business that drives the biggest value for our customers is our world-class data product, built out of Seattle by ex-Amazon and Microsoft engineers. It's from this data platform that we're able to deliver real-time moments regardless of context, content or crowds. The challenge, as companies require more and more data, is how they are able to access that in a meaningful way. Rather than pushing companies to this single customer view, we try and encourage a first step with the single marketer view, so that you can see every touchpoint your

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

As the longest established digital travel agency in the UK, Teletext Holidays have been providing great value holidays for more than 20 years – and last year nearly 300,000 customers chose to travel with them.

Teletext Holidays wanted to deliver even more engaging and personalised experiences to its audience, and to boost engagement and email conversion rates by using user content across all channels, while enabling hyper-personalised email campaigns.

The company was already using The Message Cloud, but turned to the SmartFocus user generated content (UGC) solution, Smart Content, to enhance its own brand content.

Now Teletext Holidays can create rules and filters against automated social feeds from platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter in order to ensure that only relevant content is included. Its marketers can choose to automatically generate, preview and schedule social content, while also choosing to delete at any time.

Approved social content can be added into email campaigns through social widgets within The Message Cloud, while social posts are always up to date and managed from one central location.

As a result of using UGC in email, Teletext Holidays found that engagement rates more than doubled.

customer has interacted with, every ad they may have been exposed to, and every offer they interacted with. Being in possession of that information is a source of constantly changing energy, leaving the machine to do the work and find the next best content to provide to that customer. The challenge is about the influx of data – the ability to stay on top of it and make the most of it and deliver the best possible outcome. Then, coming back to content, being able to use your own brand content as well as UGC for your own purposes. We live in a world now where content is currency. We, if you like, provide a bank for our customers to put their input into and withdraw output.

12 October 2016, Novotel West, London

AGENDA AT A GLANCE

PLENARY SESSION

PLENARY SESSION SPONSOR



09.00
Chairman's Introduction
 Ian Jindal, Editor in Chief,
 InternetRetailing Magazine



09.10
New horizons for marketplaces
 James McClure, General Manager –
 UK & Ireland, Airbnb



halfords

09.30
The new horizons in mobile
 Tony Rivenell, Chief Digital Officer,
 Halfords



URBAN OUTFITTERS

09.50
International horizons
 Andrew McLean, Chief Operating
 Officer, Urban Outfitters

TRACK 1 ENGAGE



11.20 – 11.50
Opening Keynote Address:
Joining the Dots Between Mobile, Customer Experience and Business Performance
 Jack Smith, Group Digital Director,
 New Look

11.55 – 12.25
Sponsor Case Study: Monetate
Knowing Everyone: Personalisation, the Future of the Customer Experience
 Speaker coming soon

12.30 – 13.00
Crabble
Creating Rich, User Friendly, Mobile Experiences and How Grabble Became the Tinder for Fashionistas!
 Joel Freeman, Co-Founder, Grabble

13.00 – 14.00 – Lunch

14.00 – 14.30
LEGO
Providing a Fast and Frictionless Customer Journey to Boost Conversion – do you know the biggest stumbling blocks?
 Leif Bode Nielsen, Head of Omni-Channel EMEA, LEGO

14.35 – 15.15
Panel Discussion: Multichannel Integration – Enhancing Customer Experience, Fulfillment and Delivery
 Neil Sansom, Former Managing Director, Moss Bros and CEO, Woolovers,
 Craig Wheeler, Operations Director, feelunique.com
 Emma Mead, eCommerce Director, Holland and Barrett

15.55 – 16.25
Sponsor Case Study: SDL Fredhopper
Success Factors for eCommerce Search
 Andreas Brueckner, Senior Search and Merchandising Consultant, SDL Fredhopper

16.30 – 17.00
ebay
Closing Keynote Address: How Mobile is Transforming Customer Behaviour
 Kit Glover, Director of EU Seller Experience, eBay

TRACK 2 GROW



11.20 – 11.50
DECKERS BRANDS
Opening Keynote Address:
Escaping the eCommerce Silo – how Digital Mindset can transform your Brand
 David Williams, eCommerce Director,
 Deckers Brands (UGG)

11.55 – 12.25
Klarna
Sponsor Case Study: Klarna
Online Checkout – the conversion killer!
 Jonathan Sheard, Head of Enterprise Sales UK,
 Klarna

12.30 – 13.00
 Watch this space

13.00 – 14.00 – Lunch

14.00 – 14.30
LSE
Special Q&A: Doing Business with Europe Post-Brexit
 Professor John Ryan, Visiting Fellow, London School of Economics

14.35 – 15.15
Electrolux
Panel Discussion: eCommerce in Latin America – Cashing in on New Opportunities Post-Brexit
 Melanie Frutig, eCommerce Manager, Electrolux
 Andre Beisert, Head of eCommerce, C&A Brasil
 Luciano Xavier de Miranda, Director of E-commerce, Grupo Boticário
 Juan Romero, VP – Marketing, Fravega Argentina

15.55 – 16.25
Pfister
Sponsor Case Study: Apptus
Driving Conversion Rates by 49%
 Franco Kölliker, Director eCommerce, Möbel Pfister AG

16.30 – 17.00
Alibaba Group
Closing Keynote address: Speeding up Market Entry in Asia
 Leah Zhang, International Business Development, Alibaba

TRACK 3 TRANSFORM



11.20 – 11.50
demandware
Opening Sponsor Address: Demandware
 Jamie Merrick, Director, Strategic, Demandware
 Anne-Marie, Chief Digital Officer, Grupo Cortifel

11.55 – 12.25
barclaycard
Sponsor Case Study: Barclaycard
Putting into Practice what Omni-Channel Means to your Business
 Nicole Olbe, Director of Sales, Barclaycard

12.30 – 13.00
B&Q
Harmonising Communications and Experience to Create Continuity Between Online and Physical Stores
 Michael Durbridge,
 Director of Omnichannel, B&Q

13.00 – 14.00 – Lunch

14.00 – 14.30
RIVER ISLAND
Synchronising Physical and Digital to Boost Performance
 Faye Roth, Head of Customer & Digital IT Delivery, River Island

14.35 – 15.15
MONSOON
Panel Discussion: Technology and Data to Drive Innovation and Business Growth
 Mona Basra, Head of Web Operations, Monsoon
 Thierry Bedos, CTO, Hotels.com
 Richard Hewitt, Head of Digital Stores, M&S

15.55 – 16.25
SAILTHRU
Sponsor Case Study: Sailthru
Focusing on Customer Retention to Drive Growth and ROI
 Senior Representative, Sailthru

16.30 – 17.00
Google
Closing Keynote Address: Re-imagining Retail – future growth drivers and trends
 Neil Dulake, Industry Head – Retail, Google

FREE-TO-ATTEND WORKSHOPS

Workshops last on average 60 minutes, followed by Q&A, and give you the opportunity to hear first-hand experiences and guidance from leading providers.



WORKSHOP 1 – 11.45 – 13.45
Personalisation as a route to competitive edge
Andrew Hill, Commercial Director, Electio



WORKSHOP 6 – 14.00 – 16.00
How to Expand Your E-Commerce Business and Reach International Markets
Carsten Vennemann, General Manager Europe, FedEx CrossBorder



WORKSHOP 2 – 14.00 – 16.00
Are you ready to drive growth and expand your ecommerce brand overseas?
Mike Griffin, Vice President of Consumer and Merchant Solutions, Pitney Bowes



WORKSHOP 7 – 14.00 – 16.00
Writing the future of retail: How to innovate and make your customers love you
Stephen Langford – eCommerce Director, George.com at Asda
Eric Fergusson – Director of Retail Services, eCommera
Annabel Thorburn – Director of Retail Services, eCommera



WORKSHOP 3 – 14.00 – 16.00
Key Trends for 2016: Rise of consumers researching online & buying offline (ROBO)
Olav Bus, Head of Product Marketing, EMEA for Bazaarvoice



WORKSHOP 8 – 14.00 – 16.00
Roundtable workshop: Delighting Shoppers with Omnichannel payments
Myles Dawson, Country Manager – UK, Adyen



WORKSHOP 4 – 11.45 – 13.45
Optimise the Path to Conversion: Top Discovery Tactics that Maximise Personalised Product Findability
Philippe Riche, Director of Product Management, Certona



WORKSHOP 9 – 10.30 – 11.30
Solving the Internet Retailer's Dilemma: Turning Anonymous Visitors into Known Visitors
Hugo Vint, Business Development Director, EMEA, OtherLevels



WORKSHOP 5 – 11.45 – 13.45
Web Accessibility: Why You Need to Pay Attention Now
Carin van Vuuren, Chief Marketing Officer, Useablenet



WORKSHOP 10 – 10.30 – 11.30
Understanding Audience Segmentation to Drive Smarter Marketing
Becky Postlewhite, Enterprise Business Development Manager, Hitwise
Tim Covington, Commercial Analysis Manager, Argos

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AGENDA AT A GLANCE

PLENARY SESSION



09.20
Chairman's Introduction
Ian Jindal, Editor in Chief,
InternetRetailing Magazine



John Lewis

09.30
Turning Traditional Logistics Models on Their Head to Provide Delivery Solutions for the "Anytime, Anywhere" Consumer – Delivery Models for the 21st Century!
Ben Farrell, MBE, Head of Central Operations and Transport, John Lewis



amazon.co.uk

10.00
Fulfilling Customer Demands – getting to the root of what customers want, how they want it and knowing where to invest to deliver success
Katie McQuaid, Director-Fulfilment, Amazon

TRACK 1 AVAILABILITY





11.00-11.30
Sponsor Session: Royal Mail – Transforming Royal Mail to thrive in the modern environment
Roger Morris, Head of Royal Mail Parcels, Royal Mail



11.35-12.05
Retail Returns as a Business Opportunity – new models for service innovation and profitability
Speaker coming soon

TRACK 2 EXPERIENCE




11.00-11.30
Sponsor Session: Hypaship
Sid Hart, Director of Commercial Development, Hypaship



11.35-12.05
Introducing Virtual Reality into the Shopping Experience
Maxim Romain, General Manager, Wayfair

INTERACTIVE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS – 12.10 – 12.40

12.40 – 13.40 – Lunch



13.40-14.10
Sponsor Session: Cappgemini
Speaker coming soon



14.15-14.45
Click and Collect the M&S Way!
Ricky Wilson, Head of Operations, M&S

14.45 – 15.15 – Coffee

12.40 – 13.40 – Lunch



13.40-14.10
Sponsor Session
Speaker coming soon



14.15-14.45
Working Better with Suppliers to Maximise Visibility and Drive Customer Satisfaction
Craig Wheeler, Operations Director, feelunique.com

14.45 – 15.15 – Coffee

CLOSING KEYNOTE SESSION



15.15-15.45
How Agile is Your Supply Chain – 5 Things Every Retailer Should Know to Maximise Performance!
Walter Blackwood, Omni Channel Logistics Expert – W&MB Consulting Ltd, and Former Logistics Director, Mothercare



15.45-16.15
Making the Case for Successful Delivery
Andrew Starkey, Head of e-Logistics, IMRG



16.15-16.45
Redefining Operational Frameworks and Organisational Structures to Cash in on International Growth Opportunities
Leah Zhang, International Business Development, Alibaba

ROUNDTABLES - 12.10 - 12.40

Streamlining your organisation to achieve profitable availability each and every day, whilst also being adaptable and responsive to changing conditions is no mean feat. These brand new roundtable discussions will bring together the brightest minds to share successes, admit to failures (off the record!) and challenge conventional thinking.



ROUNDTABLE 1

How to Attract Talent

Maxim Romain, General Manager, Wayfair Europe

wayfair



ROUNDTABLE 2

Channel Management in the Retail Supply Chain

Richard Locke, Director of Analytics, Data and General Merchandise, Ocado

ocado



ROUNDTABLE 3

Dropshipping and Fulfilling New Customer Demands for Speedy, Efficient Service and Delivery

Edward Osborne, Head of Customer Delivery Model & Direct to Customer Operations, John Lewis

John Lewis



ROUNDTABLE 4

Putting Customer Experience at the Heart of Online

Kamal Bal, Head of Online Performance, M&S

YOUR M&S



ROUNDTABLE 5

Taking Fulfilment and Delivery Abroad – what to look for?

Paul Johnson-Barnett, Head of Distribution, Barbour

Barbour



ROUNDTABLE 6

Why is Order Management the key to your omni-channel customer experience?

Nils Breitmann, Enterprise Architect, Intershop

intershop



ROUNDTABLE 7

Decreasing the Size of your Delivery Window to Win on Speed and ROI

Florian Farber, CEO, Zipjet

ZipJet



ROUNDTABLE 8

Multichannel Wholesale – The Magic in the Mix

Mark Thornton, Marketing Director, Maginus

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Delegates also have access to the exhibition and are entitled to complimentary lunch and exclusive access to the post-event cocktail party from 5pm to 7pm.

*Please note the roundtables are for retailers only

Kevin Murray

Managing Director



WHAT DOES YOUR COMPANY DO?

Greenlight Commerce is a growth architect; a systems integrator taking off-the-shelf platforms and making them work for retailers and their individual digital growth strategies. Since Greenlight Commerce is a certified solutions partners for Demandware and SAP Hybris, its customers can be secure in the knowledge that they've chosen an expert in those platforms and the ecosystems that surround them.

WHAT IS YOUR USP?

Technology is very important as an enabler of digital growth but Greenlight Commerce sees its role as more than configuring a solution. It believes that revenue matters, and knowing that a retail client has certain revenue targets, the company ensures that ecommerce can achieve the return that's been promised to the board.

This can be achieved by increasing revenue while reducing cost through automation and making processes easy and cost effective when it comes time for the retailer to trade the site themselves.

Using the analogy of an iceberg, with one part that's seen above the waterline and the larger portion below, Greenlight works with retailers in two ways to achieve digital growth returns. Firstly, as part of the

“Have you promised your board double digit growth but have no idea how to achieve it? You need to talk to a digital architect like us”

wider Greenlight Group, the company has emerged from a digital agency background so understands how ecommerce platforms needs to operate, what can be automated and factors such as how digital marketing could be delivered and run and the control mechanisms that need to be put in place. By partnering with best-in-breed solutions providers it ensures that all the tools are in place to allow retailers to easily trade on the new

GREENLIGHT COMMERCE IN BRIEF

Greenlight Commerce is part of the Greenlight group of companies that include Greenlight Digital, OneHydra and Greenlight Power.

Date launched: Greenlight delivered its first commerce project in 2009. Greenlight Commerce was launched as a separate business in 2015.

Global reach: Offices in the UK and Australia.

Turnover: £24m.

Customers: Liberty, Furniture Village, Dixons Carphone, ghd, John Lewis, Debenhams, All Saints, Laura Ashley, TravelSupermarket.

Employees: 160.

Contact: For further information visit www.greenlightcommerce.com or contact us via @GLCommerceLtd, telephone 020 3326 1900 or info@greenlightcommerce.com

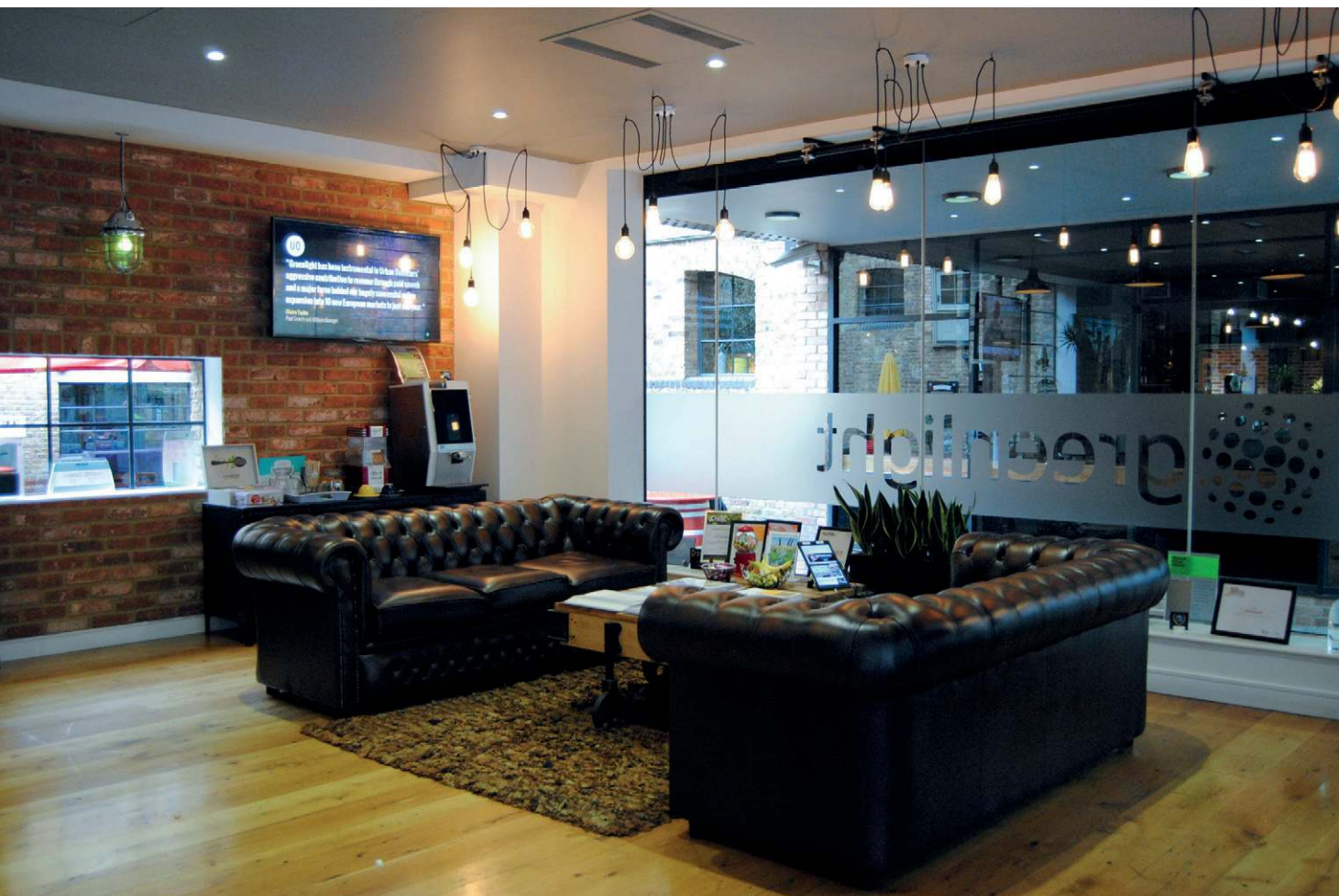
platform from day one rather than having to go back to them with extra work once the platform is live.

It's one thing for shoppers to be able to find the right products to purchase on an ecommerce site but they also need to be delivered. As the larger part of the iceberg is below the water so effective operations form a large and important part of the retail organisation. Greenlight Commerce works with retail clients to understand their business processes while matching the platform operations to work for functions from loading prices, managing customers and returns refunds.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR VISION?

Greenlight Commerce sees partnering with retailers as a win/win scenario in which it is very honest and doesn't automatically say yes to everything that clients ask for. The company is an expert in the platforms and solutions it works with and has experience built up over many years from different retail projects so will share lessons that have been learnt around best practice – and worst case scenarios.

Transparency is key – why say it's easy and cheap when a replatforming process is going to be hard. Greenlight Commerce is there to hold the client's hand throughout the project. Having a partnership requires both parties to be very open so Greenlight can get to the core of everything that's needed of a project and the roadmap to success and the client understands the stepping stones, contingencies and timings.



WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

The majority of Greenlight Commerce's customers are based in the UK but many have a global reach. RB, whose brands range from Dettol and Air Wick to Scholl and Durex, has operations in 60 countries and websites in many countries from India to the US. Other customers include Liberty, Furniture Village and Maplin.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR THE RETAIL INDUSTRY?

Over the next couple of years, retailers will have challenges with both front and back-end systems and operations. At the front-end, much has been said about personalisation and big data but many retailers haven't been able to do much about them. Relevancy and context will really come to the fore over the next 18 to 24 months as ecommerce systems are put in place to provide for this retailer and customer need.

Customers want to be engaged in a relevant manner regardless of where they are on their path to purchase and whichever device or channel they are using – be that in store, online, on a tablet, smartphone or watch. We're seeing the evolution from multichannel or omnichannel to simply commerce.

On the reverse side, it's about delivery and fulfilment. Retailers need to offer the full experience to the customer

and those customers expect more now around how and where they take delivery of their purchases, be that a one-hour delivery or white glove experience. The fact that the customer isn't standing in store shouldn't be a barrier to getting their purchase immediately.

There is a lot of work to be done automating processes wherever possible so that everything from credit checking to final delivery scheduling results in the right next steps for efficient operations. Ultimately, this will provide the experience that customers expect.

HOW ARE YOU PREPARED TO MEET THOSE CHALLENGES?

Greenlight Commerce doesn't work with every single platform. It has chosen to specialise as a SAP Hybris and Demandware solutions provider so really understands these platforms and the ecosystems of best-in-breed solutions that surround them. It understands how they work today and the roadmaps for future development so by understanding each client's requirements and their digital roadmap for the next 3 – 5 years they can be matched to the best solutions for their growth strategy. With Greenlight it's not just implementation, the company takes the leading technology, applies creativity and a deep understanding of each client's business to create a platform for growth with the best ROI.



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The following guest article has been written for InternetRetailing by Emma Robertson, Chief Executive Officer, Transform. Experts in all areas of the digital eco-system, and with experience across public and private sectors, Transform is the consultancy behind exciting and innovative projects like the digital transformation of Argos, the largest beacon deployment in Europe for Hammerson and Public Health England's One You campaign.



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We're all digital now

Emma Robertson, Managing Director, Transform explains why “we're all digital now,” is a common misconception that can lead organisations in the wrong direction strategically, negatively impacting the journey towards digital maturity nirvana.

IN PAST years digital maturity was measured in the number of channels you operate or the volume of transactions you service.

And by those measures most retailers are indeed digitally mature. Yet, at the same time, most retailers are struggling with the realities of operating in the new world, with challenges in supply chain, poor staff engagement and the same old legacy systems still holding them back. In a world where omnichannel is the ambition for customers, silos are still the reality internally.

Embracing digital has the potential to slice through business silos creating an opportunity for individuals and teams to work together in new ways. Ways that will enable them to understand, empathise and respect the differing functions that form the foundations of the business.

There are several other misconceptions associated with digital maturity:

- Digital strategy is dead – it's just strategy now;
- We have a Chief Digital Office (CDO) so we must be digitally mature;
- Digital is our differentiator.

However it's not as easy as developing a single strategy because you think digital is ubiquitous and therefore integral to the corporate strategy. It's not as simple as appointing a CDO – particularly if their role isn't fully integrated

into the rest of the business. And you'd certainly be brave, or more likely foolish, to believe that digital differentiates you in the eyes of the customer.

Kodak is the poster child of digital disruption. A great bedtime story to scare investment boards with on the perils of not investing in digital hard enough, and not spotting the market shift quickly enough. From an eco-system point of view, Kodak let digital exist within the technology sphere but nowhere near the strategy or culture of the organisation. When the tipping point came, it was too late.

Digital maturity isn't just about digital strategy or underlying technology. It's a finely balanced eco-system that brings together these two areas with the channels you operate in, the customers you target and the culture and organisation you operate within. This is the heart of Transform's digital eco-system, and represents the difference between delivering digital capability, and delivering business outcomes. However, it's far from an easy or linear journey.

In fact, for Transform the eco-system did not start as an academic model, but actually found its genus in Chaos theory, recognising both the interconnectivity and the unpredictability of the new world. A butterfly flaps its wings in Nepal and someone gets rained on in Marylebone. The same principle applies in digital business – a digital butterfly has a great idea in customer experience and someone in IT has to put up an umbrella.

This eco-system affects, and is affected by, the whole business but don't be mistaken for thinking it's always about rain. Taking an eco-system approach generates a platform for ideas; it creates possibilities for sparks of innovation that can only come from unusual collaborations and the adoption of different organisational models. But it does require a new way of thinking and a new way of operating.

THE NEW OMNICHANNEL ROCK STARS

Many organisations make the mistake of associating new ways of thinking purely in terms of functional and domain expertise – whether that's CX gurus, data scientists or technical specialists. If you've been trying to recruit these roles recently you will be aware of what a highly sought after commodity these individuals are, and what a premium they attract. However, the reality is that this approach perpetuates rather than breaks down the silos; establishing a culture that treats digital as separate and specialist. ►

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In the eco-system way of looking at the new retail world, digital affects every area of the business and cannot be the preserve of a specialist few. More importantly, as we transition from digital to omnichannel it's the combination of digital expertise with physical retail operations that deliver on the ambition. It's the individuals within your organisation who will deliver omnichannel to your customers, and the ones who can talk both digital and traditional retail who will be the new rock stars; enabled by a corporate culture that enables respect, collaboration and change at every level.

Organising for digital is a much debated issue. Is a multiple hub and spoke model right for your business or are you better suited to a centre of excellence approach? Quite honestly whether your company prefers agile over waterfall, or sits somewhere in between, the most effective digital model is one where cross-functional teams come together for projects and are uncoupled from their reporting lines. In our experience there are several factors that have to be taken into consideration.

1. Shared objectives – collaborative, fast-paced teams can't afford to be pulling in different directions. Alignment around shared customer and organisational objectives is essential.
2. Culture shift at the top – in the majority of organisations the barriers and silos are most firmly reinforced at the top. Fail to change this and your digital teams will find it impossible to work together.
3. Co-location for collaboration – working together in a shared space with the right tools to involve remote workers beats a lab in Shoreditch hands down for innovative digital delivery.

As I mentioned earlier most organisations have invested significant time and money into making sure they have the best customer experience possible. Of course once done it shouldn't be forgotten, it needs constant monitoring and reviewing but how many businesses pay the same consideration to their employees? Integrating the employee experience with the customer experience can deliver multiple benefits for company and individual notably improving internal communications, improving the CX, enhancing productivity, expanding market reach and most significantly opening the door to collaboration and innovation resulting in the launch of new products and services.

Adobe has embraced this philosophy wholeheartedly. Anyone of its employees can



A digital butterfly has a great idea in customer experience and someone in IT has to put up an umbrella

“Is a multiple hub and spoke model right for your business or are you better suited to a centre of excellence approach?”

ask to attend its 2 day innovation course. They receive \$1,000 to prototype an idea which includes instructions and a six-step process. Just think about that; 100 employees can create 100 prototypes for \$100,000. This is what many companies spend on a single prototype which often won't make it to the next level.

Gartner predicts that by 2017, 25% of companies will lose their market position as a result of digital business incompetence and a failure to respond to how employees want to work. The impact of this could be anything from digital experiences that can't be replicated in the physical world creating a gulf between expectation setting and delivery; to efficiency and effectiveness benefits that fail to be realised; or a break in the customer journey because it's no longer important how well designed it is if the teams that form the links in the chains are disempowered, disenfranchised or unable to deliver on the experience.

Digital continues to excite us at Transform. From life-saving behavioural change in healthcare to new markets and revenue streams in business, the impact of digital is profound. Think about your organisation. When the digital butterfly flaps its wings are you ready to exploit the sparks of innovation or preparing to get drenched? It's time to embrace the chaos of digital; to stop trying to change digital to fit the business and instead look at changing the business to accommodate digital. Feel the fear but do it anyway. Your business and your employees will thank you for it. 

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Time for tracking

The technology already exists to track customers both on – and offline and follow their individual customer journeys – but many retailers currently lack both the relevant technology and the necessary analytical skills. *Penelope Ody* asks whether it's time for a major reassessment of IT capabilities.

ASK CUSTOMERS about the shopping channels they use and the chances are they may mention QVC, Ideal World or perhaps The Jewellery Channel – although they could just as easily tell you that they don't watch any of them. Ask them where they shop and the answer could be on the phone, online or at the local high street. For most customers the concept of moving between channels or making a “customer journey” is probably quite meaningless: they shop with a particular retail brand and the methods they use to do so are immaterial.

“As we move to the internet of things you can't really consider ways of reaching the customer as through ‘channels’ anymore,” says Andrew Fowkes, Head of Retail Centre of Excellence at SAS UK and Ireland. “We're really talking about methods of communication, and that means having the same information and offers everywhere.”

It also means being able to keep up with the progress and changes of a myriad of customer journeys so that if a customer “likes” an item on Facebook or Instagram, then not only does the marketing team send her a promotional offer for that line via e-mail, but as she walks passed the local stockist her phone flashes up a message that it is available now, and the sales assistant knows precisely what she is looking for as soon as she enters the shop.

All very farfetched? Possibly. But it is where big data analytics are headed and much of the necessary technology is already in place. “Retailers must have a central hub of data,” says Fowkes, “and regard however many channels a customer uses as a single experience.”

Online log-ins make it easy to track shoppers but even without personal log-in it is possible to follow activity via an IP address. The same applies in-store, too, as Ankush Mattu, Partner with consultants Kurt Salmon explains: “People tend to leave the wi-fi on

their phones switched on and in the US we're starting to see retailers use this to create a digital signature of the shopper. Combine that with video and they can monitor where the shopper travels to and what they look at; add the transaction data from point-of-sale when they buy and you start to get more information about the journey.”

That information is also no longer purely numeric data. Glassbox Digital, for example, captures a customer's online activity in near real-time so that if a shopper then calls the customer service desk or heads into a local store staff can immediately see what the shopper has looked at, any problems that occurred, or what items have been bought. “It is an open system,” says Audelia Boker, VP Marketing, “so it can integrate with other big data for analytics down to an individual level.”

Currently most users are in the financial sector so keep data for several years, although Boker suggests that retailers would want to store information for rather less time: “As well as resolving disputes and supporting customer service agents, being able to monitor just how a customer travels through your site can help understand the customer journey and increase stickiness,” she says.

John Trowell, Customer Engagement Solutions Manager at IBM, talks of CJA – customer journey analytics – which is all about visualising and analysing the paths customers take, over time and across channels. “It can bring together not only your own data about a customer,” he says, “but also information from third parties, such as social media or the adverts they click through to.” Last autumn IBM launched its “universal business exchange” (UBX) which operates on a “publish and subscribe” basis so that retailers can augment their own information about a shopper with additional data feeds to better identify and respond to customer needs.

Ultimately, as long as an individual customer can be identified, then such records could be used to build up a more detailed picture of their preferences or lifestyle to improve clienteling or guide store staff. In the US, men's wear chain True Religion, is equipping store staff with Apple watches which give a haptic response when iBeacons within the store identify the presence of loyalty card members who have downloaded the company's app. The watches 

“When it comes to analytical capability most retailers are probably about 20 years behind Amazon”

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True Religion store associates are notified and given customer data when a VIP customer enters the store

also provide product imagery of a shopper's past purchases and customers who opt-in can have their social media profile integrated as well. According to John Hazen, Senior VP, Direct to Consumer and Omnichannel at True Religion: "For store associates to be notified via haptic touch on the watch that a customer has entered the store and then be provided with their purchase history in a visual manner is the 'Holy Grail' of insight and personalisation."

At JDA, Anand Medepalli, VP Solutions Strategy, talks of a "leapfrog" in technical capability: "With an app on your phone, the retailer can not only know when you are in the store but can track what you look at, where you go in the store and – with RFID – what you take into the changing room." JDA is already working with Intel on such developments and expects that these systems could be available and implemented within a year.

SHARING

While some may balk at such intimate tracking, the "millennials" – the 18 to 35 age group – are increasingly willing to share personal data with retailers in exchange for better targeted promotions or service advantages. The old concept of loyalty card schemes offering points-for-prizes is long gone, instead schemes, and their rewards, are based on mobile apps. "Apps provide a great opportunity for retailers," says Jamie Merrick, Head of Industry Insights at Demandware,


"they should all have them, and allow you to track shopper's behaviour and monitor where they go in your store." In return schemes offer information rather than rewards – such as House of Fraser's, which gives online access to current stock levels or Ocado's, which offers dietary and nutritional information.

While modern technology is capable of tracking shoppers both on- and off-line and big data analytics can deliver an amazing array of insights in record time, very few retailers have the wherewithal to use either. "All IT bought before 2015 will need to be replaced by 2020," suggests Andrew Fowkes, "as none of it can deliver the required customer centricity. Customer data isn't just for the marketing department, it has to be available to everyone in the business. Many retailers don't even have good stock visibility yet and their 'big data' tends to be transactional or purchasing behaviour to which they will need to add unstructured data from customer service centres, tweets and so on."

Mattu similarly stresses retailing's IT shortfalls: "They're not exploiting the data that they do have and they often lack the analytical skills to use their information to its fullest extent. Certainly, retailers spend money on IT – but it is usually the wrong sort of IT: money spent on old technology or an IT team preoccupied with maintaining ancient AS400s. When it comes to analytical capability most retailers are probably about 20 years behind Amazon."

While some major retailers – notably John Lewis – have bitten the bullet and embarked on major IT replacement programmes, Mattu argues that thanks to cloud-based technologies and software-as-a-service (SaaS) much new technology can be implemented from the operational budget rather than capital investment. Data analysis can also be outsourced as skilled data scientists are both rare and expensive.

Medepalli agrees: "Retailers must invest in data scientists whether that is in-house or outsourced and we're already working with retailers using cloud technology plus our machine-learning algorithms and analysts to deliver big data insights. Data is the new oil – and it is essential. CIOs should start living up to their title and focus on information not technology."

With the "Internet of things" set to provide many more ways for customers to interact then those data scientists are also going to have much more to analyse than just shopper's activity in store, mobile, social or online. 

Dashing towards the Internet of Things

Amazon launched its wif-fi and Internet of Things-connected Amazon Dash Button in the UK in August but are shoppers ready for it and what are the implications for UK retailers? InternetRetailing investigates.

THE DEVICE, available only to Prime members, enables shoppers to reorder favourite items at the push of a button. Each button is linked to a brand – and placed in a convenient location so that shoppers can order every time they run out of that brand. Thus an Andrex button might be beside the toilet roll holder, or an Ariel button on the washing machine. Each costs £4.99, with the price discounted from the first order.

Shoppers link the button to their wi-fi and then control ordering through an Amazon app. Orders are confirmed via email so can be cancelled if made in error. Meanwhile, a second order will never be placed until the first has arrived.

The button adds to the Amazon Dash scanning and voice ordering device launched in the UK earlier this summer. That enables shoppers to scan a product's barcode or speak its name into the device in order to add it to their basket.

And the technology also moves forward with the Amazon Dash replenishment service, which enables connected devices to automatically reorder items when needed. Thus a connected washing machine might reorder detergent, or a printer might reorder ink. Brands working on integrating this replenishment service include Bosch, Siemens, Whirlpool and Samsung.

"We've all experienced the frustration of running out of something we need – Dash Button and Dash Replenishment Service are designed to make that moment a thing of the past," says Daniel Rausch, Director of Amazon Dash. "Dash Buttons offer the convenience of 1-Click shopping from anywhere in the home – they can be placed near those frequently used items you don't want to run out of, and when you see supplies running low, the Dash Button makes it easier than ever to order more. Just press the button and your item is on its way."

Ecommerce delivery specialist ParcelHero argues that the launch of Amazon's Dash

service could take as much as 20% of UK supermarket online sales. David Jinks, its Head of Consumer Research, says, "Dash is an ultra-convenient device. With the simple push of a button – or even by speaking to the gizmo for some versions – it will reorder your washing powder or your coffee or one of 40 products at launch. It's great news for busy people as it takes care of routine shopping chores automatically; but it's very bad news for supermarkets as it ties consumers into Amazon for even more products."

Amazon Dash buttons are also introducing shoppers to the Internet of Things (IoT) and getting them ready for products that can re-order themselves or related consumables – especially if you consider that in the US Amazon has launched a limited edition Dash button which can be programmed to carry out tasks from ordering pizzas to switching off lights. As Tom McQueen, Managing Director of Futurice says, "Amazon excels at predicting consumers' fast changing needs with Dash being a good example of how it has anticipated demand for on-demand digital services that offer convenience and immediacy. Looking ahead, a key challenge for retailers, including Amazon, is to identify what comes next, once on-demand becomes the norm. Is the premium version of on-demand, a service that is even more effortless than re-ordering at the touch of a button?"

“Is the premium version of on-demand, a service that is even more effortless than re-ordering at the touch of a button?”

CONSUMER THOUGHTS

But will consumers use them? In the past two months, says Amazon, Dash Button orders have increased threefold, and orders are placed at a rate of more than two a minute. Four times as many Dash Button brands are available this year, compared to last year.

"Thus the UK is likely to follow suit," believes Alex MacPherson, Solution Consultant Manager, Manhattan Associates.

Neil Stewart, CEO of Salmon agrees: "Consumers have already wholeheartedly embraced the convenience and time-saving that digital shopping services bring. The UK launch of Amazon Dash is a clear sign that customers are ready to take this further and embrace Internet of Things-enabled purchasing".

He warns though that retailers must move quickly to match Amazon and provide the



services that consumers want.

His comments are backed up by research of 2,000 consumers' attitudes to programmatic commerce – the automatic re-ordering of goods by the items themselves such as a fridge ordering milk or a coffee machine re-ordering the owner's favourite coffee when supplies run low. The shopper simply enters price limits, preferred brands and other options into the system at initial set-up.

The Salmon research found that:

- 57% of UK consumers say they will be ready for this automated purchasing within the next two years, with 13% of those being ready now;
- Consumers would be most comfortable using the system to order household supplies, grocery and beauty products;
- More than half (58%) of shoppers say they're more likely to opt for a smart technology if it would enable this kind of shopping.

MacPherson warns though that “technologies of this nature will work perfectly for everyday consumable items such as toiletries and food, but what about goods that typically need to be researched, viewed, tested or tried on before consumers press the buy button? When there are multiple styles, sizes, colours involved it will inevitably become more difficult to manage.


This is where retailers will need to get one step ahead of the competition in terms of processes, technology and staff expertise. Consumers will not stop at toiletries and food; they will soon

In the past two months Dash Button orders have increased threefold, and orders are placed at a rate of more than two a minute

get a taste for this convenient way of shopping; demanding more than they already do.

As John Pincott, Managing Director, EMEA, Kibo, concludes: “Being a success requires retailers to oil the brakes to the check-out at every step of the shopping experience. Making the mundane as simple as possible so consumers can spend more time doing what they enjoy is a crucial factor in ecommerce. Consumers typically swap between multiple channels before making a final purchase and any experience which decreases this ‘friction’ will grow the chances of a retailer making the sale. Automated purchasing actually takes this pain-point away for retailers in an instance and is a clear area for R&D. Many companies fight a never-ending battle of abandoned shopping carts as customers get cold feet or abort due to frustration with the user experience”.

Automated purchasing through connected smart devices is a little way off becoming the norm, but it's clear that the appetite from consumers is there. Technologies such as Amazon Dash's one-click purchasing prove that making the customer journey as simple as possible is crucial in securing the sale and creating a competitive edge.

It's another case of getting the basics right, removing friction and giving customers what they want. Something that Amazon has always been good at showing the rest of the industry how it could be done and educating shoppers before they even know they want the functionality or convenience. 

The following guest article has been written for InternetRetailing by Suptasree Roy, Associate Partner at digital transformation agency TH_NK. The agency works with retailers including Shop Direct, New Look and House of Fraser.

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The omnichannel store of the future

Suptasree Roy, Associate Partner at digital transformation agency TH_NK shares her thoughts on the steps omnichannel retailers could be taking to improve the physical store experience.

DONE WELL, an omnichannel shopping experience can deliver far greater pleasure than its lonely, single channel colleagues. We all know that customers don't see channels, they see a brand. However, businesses are still operating in channel siloes, reflecting the hastened addition of ecommerce to the retail operating model in an effort to keep up with customer demands, and expecting customers to bridge the gaps generated by this mode of growth. The physical store of old is losing custom to its faster, newer, more convenient online counterpart. So what could bricks and clicks retailers be doing to make their physical store offering more attractive?

On its own, online offers the convenience of shopping on the go, discreetly at your desk, or in the comfort of your own pyjamas. It offers the breadth of the retailer's product catalogue at your fingertips, an endless stream of scrolling discovery. It saves you from having to tell well-meaning staff that you don't need help, that you want to be left alone to wander through the aisles. Shopping online means you're only a click away from finding out what other customers are saying about it and whether there's a better option available. Online access enables anyone with an internet connection to shop till they drop, on their terms. So why would anyone bother to visit a store?

Easy. Because shopping in store gives you an entirely different experience – an experience that, if done well, will keep

customers coming back. Stores can be loud, sociable, hectic, vibrant and unpredictable – but many of us still love that aspect and it can't be experienced online. Conversely, it can be tranquil and calming and provide a haven from the onslaught of daily life; an escape on a Wednesday lunchtime. Shopping in store satisfies the impulse buyer who wants to try on or test and take home their purchase there and then, without having to pay for the privilege of having it delivered. Some of us value expert advice before buying, and don't want to part with our hard earned cash until we know exactly what we're getting. Shopping in store can be a social activity, a chance to dress up and preen with friends and fellow shoppers. Shopping in store can be a fun and rewarding experience. So then why are visitors to physical stores in decline?

Because shopping in-store doesn't do what online does; and even though online doesn't always do what the physical store does, people are learning to forgive online for its weaknesses.

CREATING SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN BRICK AND CLICKS

So, physical store, why not let your guard down and let online in? Talk to one another. Find out what the other one knows that you can benefit from, lean on each other, collaborate and combine your strengths to build a super-channel customer experience where the sum is greater than its parts.

Physical shopping is a multi-sensory experience: give customers a reason to visit your store by giving them an experience they can't get online. Give your customers the freedom to play, test and enjoy your products and services in an environment that excites and befits your brand. The new Sonos store in New York is kitted out not like a traditional retail store but with kitchen and living room spaces and furniture, all designed to mimic the type of environment you might actually listen to Sonos speakers in. An even simpler example, Dixons Carphone has installed mirrors on its walls so that customers can actually see what headphones look like whilst they're wearing them.

Make it easy for your customers to shop with you: for every brand this will be different, and amongst your customers this will also differ, but the journey of searching, comparing and selecting can happen via multiple channels, mediums and at different times, so the easier you make this for your customers, the easier it is for them to buy. The key is to start small and iterate from there. Smaller

change is easier to implement and easier for your customers to adopt. New Look is a great example of a traditional store retailer understanding the shopping behaviour of their time-poor customers and successfully introducing multichannel change iteratively. They were early to mobile ecommerce, swiftly following up with click and collect and have since gradually expanded their convenience offering with collect from convenience stores, from Duddle stores at train stations, evening home deliveries and most recently one-hour delivery slots.

Elevate the role of your in-store team: they are your product experts and brand ambassadors so showcase their talents and connect them to your customers wherever they are. Your store staff are your front line, often bearing the brunt of issues that have arisen elsewhere in the chain so training them to think and act omnichannel is incredibly important, even if your systems and processes aren't. With the right amount of knowledge of the ecosystem they operate in, your staff can deliver exceptional service without needing to know your customers' inside leg measurements. Majestic Wine keeps customers informed of store wine testing events and showcases both local stores and staff profiles on its website. John Lewis' omnichannel customer case management allows its Partners, whether in stores, contact centres or distribution centres, to easily collaborate on resolving customer queries whilst retaining full visibility of the progress of each case and therefore the ability to keep the customer informed throughout.

Don't forget to learn from what your customers do: we comfortably analyse what customers do when they shop online, measuring and optimising conversion to within an inch of its life, but we don't always do the same in-store; partly due to the challenges of measuring physical behaviour without being intrusive. However, the value of seeing your customers shop and interact with your product is huge and can all be achieved through simple observation. Use insights gleaned from online to test out products in stores and vice versa.

But respect your customers' boundaries: not everyone wants to be recognised and acknowledged whenever they shop. Sometimes you want something irrelevant, random and unpredictable. Sometimes you just want to be left alone. And sometimes when we leave shoppers to make their own




Four candles or fork 'andles – do you know what your customers really want?

“With the right amount of knowledge of the ecosystem they operate in, your staff can deliver exceptional service without needing to know your customers' inside leg measurements”

decisions, they make the right ones. So, in this age of hyper targeting and personalisation, where every move is tracked in the pursuit of an ever more relevant experience, remember that anonymity is still treasured by some and should therefore form part of your customer experience strategy.

The rise of conversational commerce: just when you think you're as omni as you can be, with a seamless experience across your brand, along comes another channel. The rise of conversational commerce will take more power away from brands and place it firmly with the artificial intelligence of chatbots. The consumer states what they want via a messaging interface and gets a response moments later from a chatbot that has learned about that user through the natural language of dialogue. It's short, direct and personal and satisfies in the instant. It's close to the human conversation you might have in store, and brands need to start preparing for it.

The time for siloed channels and ways of working is over. Retailers need to offer experiences that reflect what their customers are doing now, and also what they want to be doing in the future. Old formats no longer serve new needs, new needs demand new thinking, and new thinking demands change.

Prioritise the questions that are important to your business, before jumping on a latest bandwagon that may never materialise. Narrow your focus on the key changes that need to be made now vs what's needed in the future. Too much choice can result in indecision and inertia. Digital moves at a rapid pace, and it's easy to get lost in the trends. But crucially, we need to remember that at the heart of all of this is the age old pastime of, well, shopping. 

Delivering omnichoice

The introduction of click and collect gave shoppers an alternative to waiting in all day for a parcel to be delivered, but is the service merely patching up an underlying fault with ecommerce fulfilment? *Emma Herrod* investigates.



Doddle runners made lots of deliveries to pubs in the run up to Christmas 2015

EARLIER THIS year, Richard Locke, Ocado's Head of Merchandising and Analytics, said: "Click and collect is solving a problem of delivering to someone when they're not in. The real solution is to deliver where they are, when they are."

This is the norm for takeaway deliveries: pizza at your desk, dinner from your favourite restaurant at home. In fact, I know someone who, before the days of online ordering and takeaway services which don't deliver outside of urban areas, would send a taxi to collect their takeaway from their local Indian restaurant. Having young children, living in a rural area and even the peculiar food-related urges common during pregnancy drive all sorts of innovation.

Nowadays, phoning in your choice has been superseded by mobile ordering and ecommerce. At Domino's Pizza, for example, more than 62% of orders are placed by mobile, with that figure rising to 81% when online orders are factored in.

GROCCERS

So why shouldn't the same be true for your grocery delivery? Local convenience stores have made a living out of 'I need x now' or 'I'll pick it up on the way home', and it looks like their larger counterparts are starting to home in on the convenience factor. If the tests of same-day delivery are scaled up to nationwide services, then it could be just the little things that convenience stores are used for.

Amazon Fresh launched in the UK in June and the big supermarket chains are already taking the fight to the retail giant. Tesco, for example, has launched a same-day click and collect grocery service at nearly 300 of its stores which allows customers to place a grocery order before 1pm and collect it after 4pm.

Sainsbury's, meanwhile, is running a trial of same-day grocery deliveries from three of its supermarkets in Surrey and London. The three taking part are the Streatham Common, Richmond and Brookwood stores. Customers who order by 12pm can collect their shopping from 4pm or have it delivered after 6pm. Assuming the trials are successful, same-day online grocery delivery will be available in 30 stores by Christmas.

It's also doubling the number of click and collect grocery sites in its store car parks over the next 12 months, as it expands its multichannel proposition to make shopping easier. The service, which was launched in

“Click and collect is solving a problem of delivering to someone when they're not in – the real solution is to deliver where they are, when they are”

March 2015, offers customers a hassle-free 'drive-thru' option which has proved very popular at the first 100 sites.

NOT JUST GROCERIES

Does this desire for fast deliveries apply to food and groceries only? It would appear not. Argos's launch of Fast Track delivery last year makes same-day delivery the standard normal delivery option for its customers. These can't all be distress purchases needed the day they are ordered, so is the desire for convenience in our ultra-mobile lives the driver since shoppers know where they will be for the rest of the day?

You just need to look at Duddle Runner, which delivers parcels to a customer where they are, to realise that people want this level of convenience. The service is growing by 20% each month, according to Paddy Earnshaw, Chief Customer Officer, Duddle. He says: "What's struck us is that once people have used it, you've ticked their lazy box. People can use it when they are in real need; they then use it to return items, and it's as if it has flipped a switch on common pains." The service made lots of deliveries to pubs in particular in the run up to Christmas last year.

Mark Denton, Head of Retail Propositions, BT Expedite, believes that delivery nirvana lies in sharing your location with a retailer, and the retailer then delivering to you as a person rather than an address. "We'll come to that fairly soon," he says, explaining how he knows that he's in London today between 9am and 5pm, so someone could deliver to him when he knows his precise location for a certain length of time. It's a case of shoppers becoming an 'open book'. "My phone is always saying where I am and I'm happy to share that information," he says. "As a consumer, that's the ultimate experience, and delivery is just part of your life and you can get on with it without having to wait around for a delivery."

CONVENIENCE VS SPEED OVER PRICE

Earnshaw believes that delivering to customers 'where they are, when they are' makes absolute sense if you evaluate demand. He says that shoppers want their purchase "when they want, in a place that's super convenient. The challenge is making that happen."

When it comes to delivery, customers want omnichoice to match their omnichannel ►

purchasing. The decision as to how each purchase is delivered comes down to the speed vs convenience over price equation, in which convenience is 'where they are' and speed and agility are factored with 'when they are'. "Fundamentally, you can't forget that price drives many of the decisions," Earnshaw adds.

For example, click and collect is the fulfilment method chosen for the majority of orders placed via johnlewis.com. "That's in my view predominantly driven by price," he says. "The number that are collected in Waitrose is driven by convenience." He explains that supermarkets work brilliantly for some people but it ultimately comes down to a choice for each type of person. "They look at the price perspective and then convenience and speed."

If you look at Amazon, it has size and scale as well as investing in making the delivery choice for customers really easy. It gives customer what they want, when they want it, and it continues to try and find ways of doing that – gaining market share in the process. Asos, with its ethos of delivering to customers when and where they are, has accomplished this, too, in the realm of fashion.

Other examples include River Island, which in 2015 ran a trail of click and don't collect whereby customers could use the Shutl service to collect their order from their local RI store rather than having to pick it up themselves.

In the US, logistics company Doorman is helping retailers "compete with Amazon in an urban environment" by holding stock of online retailers' most popular items and delivering them to customers within a one-hour time slot until midnight, 7 days a week. The company also acts as a holding point for consumers' parcels which the main carriers have delivered throughout the day. It then makes the delivery at a time convenient to the shopper. The service operates in New York, San Francisco and Chicago.

THE FUTURE

Nowadays, that equation of speed, convenience and price could be delivered anywhere through a combination of long-distance carrier hubs such as DPD, in-city hubs such as Doodle or retailers' stores, and final delivery by bike at a time of the customer's choosing.

Would all customers choose delivery at the same time, though, such as in the

evening once they have returned home from work? Tim Jones, Director of Marketing, DPD, believes not. "Clearly the industry has moved into delivering past 6pm but there is not much demand for post-8pm," he says. "The spike is around the lunchtime period, 11am – 1pm or 2pm, more so than demand in the evening."

Referring to Richard Locke's comment, Jones believes that it's about convenience and choice. "I wouldn't want my groceries delivered anywhere but home," he says, so the choice aspect comes in choosing when the order will be delivered.

The customer being in control is key to delivery. The equation is set but the weighting on each of the parameters of speed, convenience and price is totally in the hands of the customer and determines how each of their orders is delivered. Nappies, for example, are either something that can be ordered online for delivery in 2 or 3 days or are needed right now. "If you know there's a place to get them immediately then you'll pay for that," says Jason Tavarria, COO, Shutl.

Choice is still key as many purchase decisions are made on the basis of the delivery methods available; 25% of shoppers chose a retailer that offered click and collect over one that didn't during the last quarter of 2015. Now it's all about one-hour or quick delivery, believes Tavarria, and that's where larger retailers have the advantage since they can offer a multitude of delivery methods. "There is choice and the customer knows what they get when they go there, and that drives loyalty," he says.

Patrick Gallagher, CEO, on the dot, agrees. "You have to offer convenience to get loyalty and convenience beats speed," he says. He believes that delivery has to be scheduled around a person's life rather than the other way round.

Ultimately, retailers need to deliver what customers want and the carrier industry must continue to innovate to enable this. If they don't, the retailers will do it for themselves; just look at Amazon. Will we get to a time when delivery drivers/runners/cyclists will use GPS to find the customer by the location of their mobile phone, maybe as a premium service, although most people know where they will be for one hour of their day to enable the delivery to take place. Either way, it's the shoppers who win; as omnichannel is the way to sell to them, so omnichoice is how they should be served. 🌈



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Rise of the machines

Paul Skeldon worries that mobilising your shop floor staff isn't omnichannel nirvana that meets a growing customer demand, but is the end of society as we know it.

JUST BEFORE Christmas last year I took my other half shopping to get some boots. In Dune she found a pair of knee length, black suede beauties that did the trick. As we took them to the check out to pay, the sales assistant complimented my good lady on her choice of boots, adding: "They also come in grey". She then whipped out an iPad from under the counter, got up the Dune home page and found them.

My girl was smitten and ker-ching they were ordered online there and then. That canny shop assistant – and her iPad – doubled the value of me as a (hapless) customer. I had seen the future of in store retail in action.

To date, this is the only time this has happened to me and I am surprised. The idea of arming your staff with mobile devices seems a no brainer. In fact, most of them already have their own mobile devices, so it's not even that costly.

Yet the mobilisation of shop assistants is something that very few retailers have embraced to date – and perhaps, as we shall see, with good reason.

One company that has done it with alacrity is Boots. Its Sales Assist app enables staff to answer customer questions about the range, from reviews and ratings through to location, and make recommendations powered by analytics that tap into the product databases on boots.com. If a product is not in stock in store, the member of staff can use the app to find where the item is held, whether that's in another nearby store, or order it to collect as soon as the next day.

The app, developed in partnership with IBM MobileFirst and Apple, is now running on 3,700 in-store iPads across Boots' 2,510 strong store estate.

"The unique tool allows our colleagues to quickly show product information, ratings and reviews, look up inventory online and make recommendations based on online analytics, all from the shop floor," says Robin Phillips, Director of Omnichannel and Development at Boots UK. "It will help even our smallest stores feel like a flagship

shop, with access to the entire Boots range at their fingertips."

Interestingly, the app was also developed using a team of actual Boots shop floor colleagues to make sure that it actually works for the staff. Boots customer assistant Vickie Ward was one of the team invited to help design and develop the app based on her in-store experience. She said: "We worked hard to design the Sales Assist app around the needs of Boots colleagues, and using it gives us the confidence to provide our customers with the most up-to-date advice on products and offers on the spot. It helps us to give customers an even better and more personal experience, so that no one goes home disappointed."

Halfords meanwhile is attempting to use Smart Watches to enhance click and collect at one of its stores and has seen collection rates improve, cut paperwork and get the staff excited about technology.

Working with retail technology specialist Red Ant and Samsung, Halfords has trialled a range of in-store tablets for customer use as well as phones and smart watches to help staff pick click and collect orders.

Currently, more than 90% of Halfords online orders are for click and collect and the new technology offered to smooth customer experience. Using the tech, staff are automatically notified of incoming customers and their orders on the screens and watches. They can then use their phone or smart watch to generate a pick list, allowing them to put new orders together while they walk around the store.

Customers check in on a touchscreen kiosk at the front of the store and confirm their order, are shown any relevant upsell products and are told where to go to collect their order. Customers can also use the kiosk to ask for help, which pages a staff member on their phone or watch.

Overall, the trial at the Halfords store in Leamington Spa improved collection rates by 1% and cut paperwork from three sheets per click and collect order to one. Use of the latest mobile devices made staff feel valued and part of the process of innovation.

“An issue with mobilising staff that very few retailers focus on is the impact on the staff themselves”

Boots' clienteling app has been rolled out to 2,500 stores



Katrina Jamieson, Digital Director at Halfords, explains: “We’re always looking for new ways to enhance the shopping experience for our customers, whether it is in store or online. Our store innovation programme has been set up to allow us to trial innovative ideas and test them in a real-world environment, so that we can see in a very practical way how they could benefit both customers and colleagues. The click and collect pilot in our Leamington Spa store is a world first, and an innovative step towards providing a fully-connected retail experience for our customers.”

Such mobilisation projects are few and far between. What mobile tech can offer should go way further for retailers and should be part of the everyday. According to Eva Pascoe, founder of world’s first internet café, Cyberia, and now at The Retail Practice, an analyst firm hired by big brands to deep dive into the future: “Mobile is the answer to retail’s prayers in terms of customer engagement and loyalty, and helps retailers achieve what I call

the “minimum viable utopia” for shoppers. With innovations such as Apple Pay, what happens on an EPOS can happen on a mobile device. Every employee is a cashier and every point in the shop is a money taking point. This solves the biggest customer satisfaction issue, long queues. This is a fundamental change in our retail behaviour of the past 100 years.”

THE PERILS OF TECHNOLOGY

There are some very good reasons why many retailers aren’t looking to mobilise their staff any time soon. The first stumbling block many retailers face is the ‘BYOD dilemma’. Boots and Halfords have opted to supply the hardware to the staff, but many firms may well be reluctant to do so. So what do you do?

“BYOD is both an opportunity and a threat for retailers,” warns Peter Wake, CEO and Founder at StorIQ. “Let’s split the ‘BYO’ and the ‘D’. With the ‘D’, the device, the opportunities are rife when you compare smartphone or tablet devices with ▶

till-point PCs. Employees have a wealth of options with hand held devices when helping consumers, with cameras, internet capabilities and geolocation. They are also efficient with touchscreen and the always-on nature of mobile.”

Wake continues: “However, on the ‘BYO’ side, there are numerous threats presented when encouraging employees to BYOD. Firstly, retailers do not hold the right to mandate, or even ask, staff to use their own devices within the workplace. It is also very difficult to differentiate between workers using their own device for work, and those that are using the tech for play. This isn’t helped further with the gap between junior level digital-natives and more senior staff, who typically aren’t as tech savvy as their successors, which can cause issues during BYOD technology management”.

Warns Wake: “In my opinion, the retail industry isn’t ready for BYOD, but technology is a feature that consumers are not only wanting to see in-store, but are also expecting. Store staff need the support of technology but retailers must maintain control by providing this through company procured apps on store-owned devices that drive forward the business as a whole.”

WHERE THE STAFF HAVE NO NAME

Another issue with mobilising staff is one that very few retailers focus on: the impact on the staff themselves. According to Lee Biggins, Founder and Managing Director of retail job site CV-Library: “As digital technology continues to evolve, many employers across the board have voiced their concerns over the use of smart devices in the workplace. For retail workers in particular, who often spend vast amounts of time in customer-facing roles, using tablets and smartphones for personal use during working hours is deemed inappropriate and could ultimately

damage the brand’s reputation. However, there are instances where this technology can be used to better service customers, and to make the process smoother and more efficient for consumers on the shop floor; in this case, the use of tablets and smartphones in retail workplaces could be beneficial.”

Biggins also believes that there are yet to be unearthed dangers with arming store staff with other mobile tech.

“Some retail workers have voiced concerns that using this technology in their day to day work could lead to stricter workplace rules and even micromanagement, providing employers with increased access to employee tasks and activities throughout the day. Much like businesses who provide their staff with wearable technology having access to data such as step counts and hours of sleep, retail employers should seek a balance where staff can use digital technology to improve customer satisfaction, without feeling like they are being micromanaged or policed.”

These concerns among staff could make them resistant to the introduction of mobility policies among retailers and this, along with technology issues and costs may well put retailers off.

This could all be small fry compared to the long term impact mobilisation could have. Car-hire company Uber is often held up as an exemplar of technological disruption and its latest move to introduce autonomous, driverless taxis in a partnership with a tech firm called Otto, which already runs autonomous long-distance haulage solutions could herald what we all fear most: the replacement of people with technology.

Driverless taxis may be several years away and staff-less shops yet further into the future, but initial moves to mobilise could well be the first steps to a monumental change not only in retail, but in society in general. 🇬🇧



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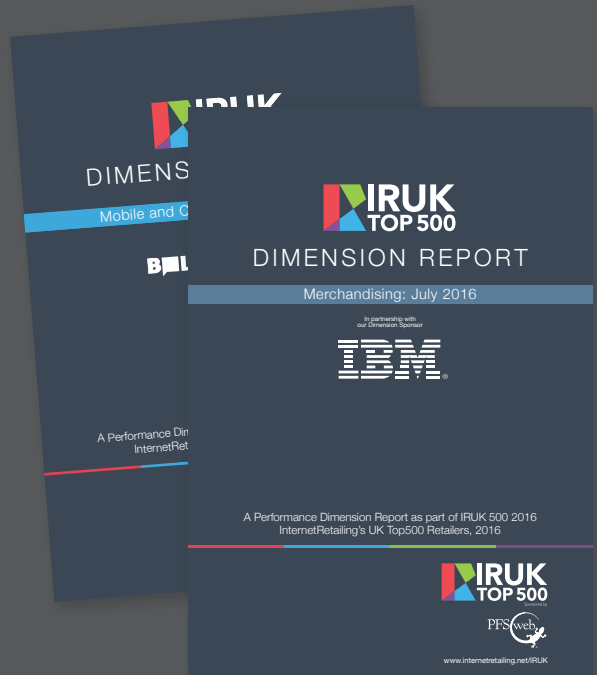
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Insight around the world



RICK KIRK, SALES DIRECTOR, B2C EUROPE

Research conducted by B2C Europe among 2,442 consumers across eight European countries has found that returns are a huge consideration for customers during their international online shopping journey. The returns process can even determine whether the purchase is completed or not. Some 54% of respondents stated that they consider returning online purchases before even completing the payment.

With returns already at the forefront of consumers' minds, retailers must therefore ensure that it's a key factor in the shopping process.

With 23% of respondents stating that they would not purchase from an international website if the returns policy was unclear, it is obvious that retailers need to take returns more seriously. What is more, 36% of consumers said they would be more likely to shop on international websites if they could be certain about the returns policies. This means that retailers have a big opportunity to attract international shoppers – they just need to communicate clear and simple information throughout the customer's online journey.

Being upfront about policies – and pricing – can reassure consumers who may be reluctant about making international purchases. Although 27% of respondents said they would not purchase from a foreign online store if the cost of returns is high, it's better to make this clear at the outset rather than deliver a nasty surprise later.

There is a huge European opportunity that awaits online retailers, regardless of Brexit negotiations, and getting the returns process right will be an important step to success in this growing and exciting market.



STEVEN KRAMER, CEO, WORKJAM

Walmart is making some major adjustments to its staffing strategy. Over the next few months, the retail giant will cut roughly 7,000 in-store administrative jobs to pull workers out of the backrooms and onto the selling floors. This move comes as part of an ongoing effort to place emphasis on the in-store customer experience as online retailers like Amazon close in on Walmart's lead.

For each individual store, Walmart will give two to three behind-the-scenes employees in accounting and invoicing positions the option to transfer to customer-facing roles. With an influx of back-office workers moving to the selling floor for the first time, there's potential for a significant skills gap. Here are three ways Walmart and retailers in similar positions can manage the transition and get workers up to speed quickly and effectively:

Embrace technology: Employee engagement platforms allow managers to distribute training materials via desktop or mobile devices. This quickly onboards employees shifting positions and makes information simple and readily accessible. On top of that, managers save time they would've spent individually training each new employee – giving them more time on the sales floor, too.

Ensure consistency: Each retailer has their own company culture and, as a result, their own preferred customer service model. There are many ways to approach customer service and employee engagement platforms allow managers to specify requirements to their unique needs. With about 7,000 Walmart employees taking on customer service roles, management will want to make sure that training is unified across the board to align with the company's voice.

Offer feedback and recognition: Going from punching numbers in the backroom to communicating with customers on the front lines is a major shift. Employee engagement applications allow employers to provide feedback and motivation to make sure the transition runs smoothly.

In the face of unavoidable pressure from ecommerce competitors, brick-and-mortar retailers must give customers a reason to seek out the in-store experience. By ensuring that training is quickly deployed, service is consistent, and top achievers are recognized, Walmart will be able to navigate this transition with agility.



**RALF OHLHAUSEN,
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, PPRO GROUP**

Ecommerce in Asia is flourishing – with \$770bn in transactions annually, the Asia-Pacific region leads the world. An expanding middle class, growing internet penetration and an improving infrastructure means the region will continue to drive global online retail over the next five years.

Access to financial services is a key stimulus for ecommerce. A lack of banking infrastructure in many countries in the region is exacerbated by barriers caused by geographical and physical access to banking services. Increased internet penetration will aid in removing these barriers, but with some areas having an account penetration of as low as 2%, many countries will continue to rely on cash as the main method of payment for some time to come. While, on average, 51% of the region's population has access to an account with a financial institution, the extremely low income level of a significant proportion of the population results in a high overall percentage of unbanked people. In spite of its growing middle class, China's traditional rural economy and vast territory results in the country accounting for more than 12% of the world's unbanked population.

The expanding middle class is making a significant contribution to the growth of ecommerce across the Asia region. This group is expected to reach 1.7 billion by the year 2020, with China, India and Indonesia experiencing the greatest growth. With the increase in the number of options that ecommerce brings, consumers are also showing marked personal preferences. This, in turn, is leading to increased competition, with traditional retailers moving to having an online presence (either individually, or by using an online marketplace), and local businesses experiencing pressure from regional and global brands which want a share of the growing sector's profits. Again, China is a leading force in both the regional and global economy.



CHLOE RIGBY, EDITOR, INTERNETRETAILING.NET

Czech retailer Alza is targeting the UK market through a new website and online marketing campaigns.

The retailer, which wins a place in the IREU Top500 research, was founded in 1994 and is well-known in its Czech Republic domestic market. It has a range of more than 50,000 products, from PCs, laptops and smartphones to appliances and health and beauty products. It has recently launched a UK site, at alza.co.uk. It says the UK is a particularly attractive market for it thanks to high levels of consumer spending. In particular it cites figures suggesting that 91% of UK millennials own a smartphone.

Jiri Maly, Head of International Marketing, says: "The UK is a very important part of our international operations. We have invested significantly in providing an alternative source for consumers who are looking for the right products at the right price, and a quality of service to back up that with an established name that they can trust."

The retailer promises UK delivery in between one and three days, through a partnership with Skynet Worldwide Express as it looks to compete with existing market leaders such as Amazon and Argos.

Maly adds: "We like to try and make things as simple as possible for our customers, especially if they need to make a warranty claim by offering a free home collection service or the option to return via post to our collection points."

At the same time as targeting the UK, Alza is also focusing on Germany through its alza.de website.

Alza is a Top150 company in the IREU research. It also wins a place in the Top50 in the Customer dimension, which reflects standards of customer service, Merchandising dimension and the Mobile and cross-channel dimension.

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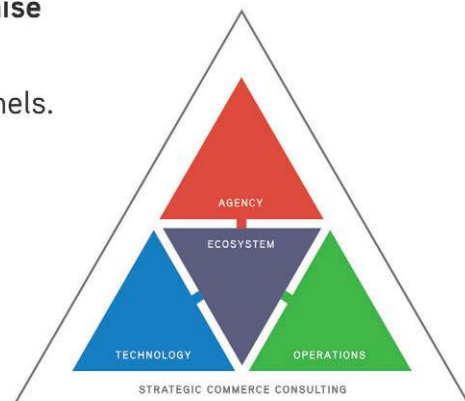
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