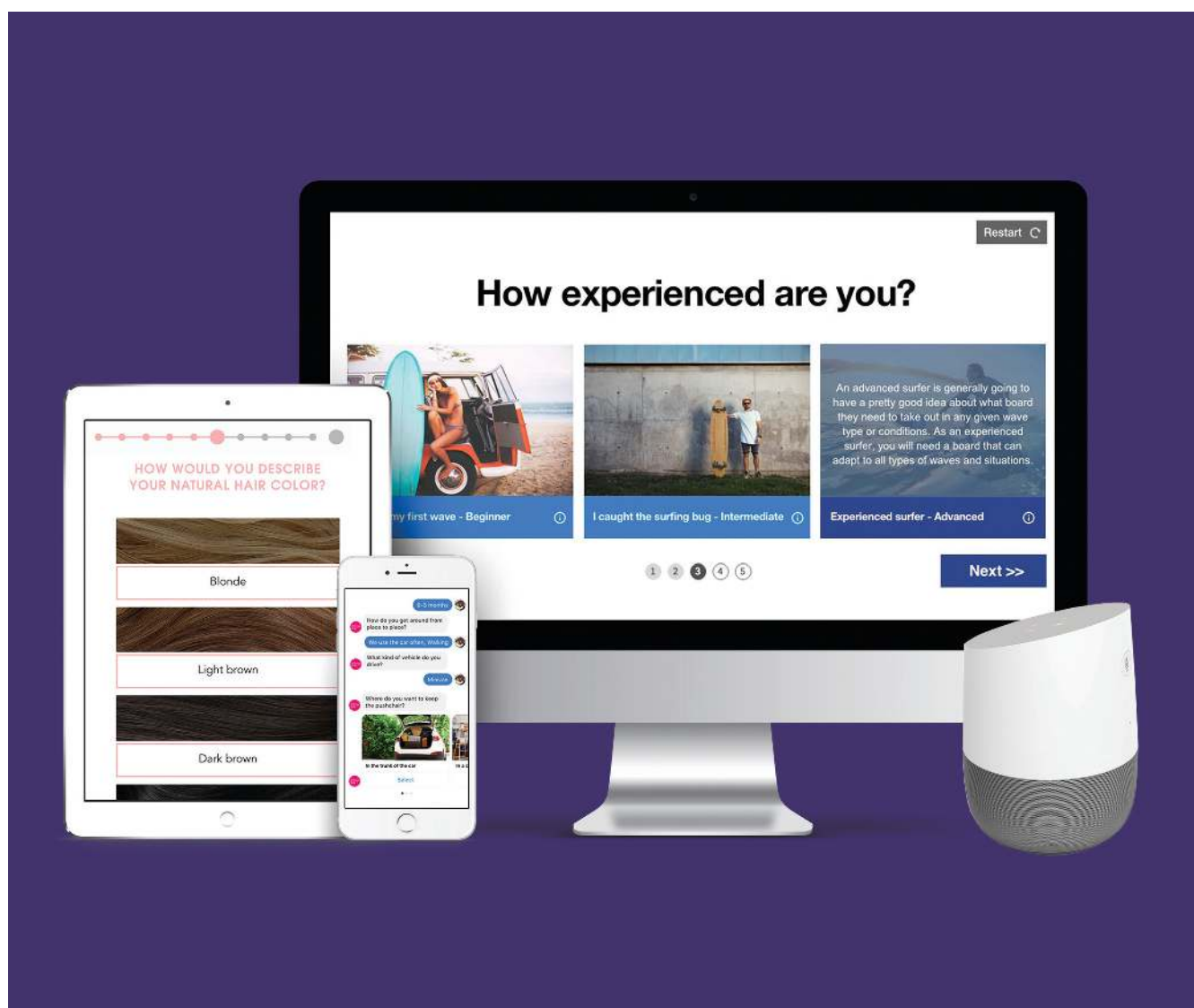


BRINGING THE HUMAN TOUCH TO DIGITAL CHANNELS THROUGH AI

Humanising the digital experience through data-driven conversational marketing



EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION



LIZ MORRELL

Research Editor

Customers today are overwhelmed with choice, with decisions to be made on everything from retailer to product, specs and price. The variants in products can be huge – just think of how many different bicycles there are.

Even when customers are clear on type of product, ranges can be so overwhelming that choice can hamper the shopping experience. This can lead to higher abandonment, buyer's remorse or even potential returns if the customer isn't entirely convinced they have bought the best product for their needs.

Product differences can be subtle and it's often up to the consumer to understand these differences and whether they apply to them or not. Without help, the breadth of choice can become a hindrance rather than a benefit, leading to a choice paralysis where shoppers simply can't work out the best product for them.

Filters and product recommendations have partially solved this problem but sometimes show irrelevant products and may not relate properly to the customer need. This can lead to customer frustration and friction in what should be a seamless customer journey.

Today, shoppers increasingly want and need a more intuitive approach to helping them shop. They want to be guided and assisted in finding the product that best suits their needs, in the same way they would in-store.

In this white paper, produced by InternetRetailing in association with Zoovu, we look at the need for extra help in the buying process. We speak to InternetRetailing readers through a survey and interviews to ask whether retailers feel their products have become more complex and how that has affected customer buying patterns. We look at how well retailers feel they are meeting the need for extra assistance in the digital world and whether more can be done. And we talk to Epson about how they are helping consumers narrow choice, when they have more than 200 products in the home office printer category alone.

We also look at possible solutions and see how data and AI-powered digital assistants can help replicate the in-store experience of a knowledgeable sales assistant in order to make customer interactions on digital channels more human-friendly and profitable.

Finally, we find out how businesses such as Epson that have introduced digital assistants in the customer journey are changing the way customers shop. ■

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SPONSOR'S INTRODUCTION

The reason I decided to commission this piece of research with InternetRetailing was simple - the retail industry needs to address a fundamental issue at the core of the customer experience - retailers are still struggling to provide a frictionless humanized digital experience. This is especially concerning when over 96% of retailers believe that adding a human touch to their digital engagement is vital to success.

This research uncovers the scale of the issue with more than 9/10 of retailers believing assistance would help consumers to purchase and 27% believing they cannot anticipate or understand their customers' needs.

In today's digital era, true competitive advantage lies in a company's ability to accurately understand consumer needs and deliver the products, solutions and experiences they truly want.

By enabling meaningful conversations, typically found only when interacting with in-store reps, retailers can deliver personalized engagement at scale that helps them stand out from the crowd and guide customers to the perfect products.

The benefits of conversational marketing are clear - but the barriers cited for failure to implement conversational AI are: a lack of internal accountability and budget, both showcase an opportunity for marketing and e-commerce leaders to take ownership of the customer experience to gain a competitive edge, gather valuable data - not to mention, increase conversion and sales.

Sit back, enjoy the insights and join in the conversation. ■



SARAH ASSOUS

CMO, zoovu

zoovu is the ultimate AI-conversational marketing platform. We enable companies to deliver human engagement across all channels, helping millions of consumers find the perfect product across 300+ categories. Over 200 brands use zoovu to increase sales, including Amazon, Whirlpool and Canon.

WHY SHOPPERS NEED ASSISTANCE AND GUIDANCE

“ The ideal number of options for a person to choose from is between 8 and 15. ”

Colin Camerer, professor of behavioural economics at Caltech

Shopping in a physical store has obvious advantages for shoppers trying to decide on what to buy. Shoppers can examine products hands-on, assessing aesthetics, quality and features and, perhaps most importantly, they can speak to a sales assistant for advice. Ideally, that assistant will not only know the product's key features and benefits but can also highlight other suitable items and educate shoppers to increase their purchase confidence.

Online shoppers have a much wider range of choice available at the click of a button. They have access to more retailers and products than ever before, making choosing the right products even more challenging. While various tools exist to help them learn more about each item, the human interaction of asking a store assistant for advice is harder to replicate. With such overwhelming choice, it's therefore no surprise that customers are wanting more assistance and guidance in the digital world to help them make the right choice.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF CHOICE OVERLOAD

In October 2018, a study by Colin Camerer, Caltech's professor of behavioural economics, was published in *Nature Human Behaviour*. It showed that choice overload is a very real phenomenon, with testing showing that as the number of options increases, the potential reward also increases. However, it then begins to level off due to the mental effort required to evaluate all options in order to make informed decisions. In the study, he suggested the ideal number of options for a person to choose from is generally between 8 and 15.

At Epson, the company's consumer printers range comprises 249 models, offering choices that are made even more complicated by the fact that differences between some models can be subtle and hard to understand.

Narrowing down product choice quickly and easily for customers is vital, says Ashley Molyneux, e-marketing content manager for Epson Europe. "It's incredibly important to make sure information is portrayed to customers in an easy-to-understand manner," he says. "Our products are quite similar and yet quite diverse at times. So even within our own products, it's difficult for someone to understand what they need and why they might need it."

WHY IT'S VITAL TO ENGAGE CUSTOMERS AND SIMPLIFY THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Engaging with shoppers in the digital environment to better meet their needs is vital to preventing the negative impact of choice overload – especially in their 'I want' moment when purchase intent is most likely.

Often, the confusion comes from the customer not understanding product nuances, meaning that answering queries, educating on products and removing critical pain points that can cause friction are all key. In other words, retailers need to replicate the in-store human assistant to understand what customers actually want and need and what products best fit.

Yet, many fail to do this. "Most retailers only display technical product information," says Sarah Assous, CMO at Zoovu. "However, people buy products because they have a need and may not always know which technical specs will be right for them. By making guidance and assistance readily available, retailers can show that they care about each shopper purchasing the products they truly want and need."

This is something that Epson's Molyneux agrees is needed. "Simplification is



Image: © en.fotolia.com/Anton

one of the things that's often required," he notes. "We go into details of speeds and feeds and resolution and, yes, there are customers that understand this in great detail. But there's plenty that just want a fair comparison of 'this one's better than that one'. Customers need a much more simplistic and quicker way of viewing their products."

THE DANGER OF NOT ASSISTING CUSTOMERS

The process of finding the right products is a vital service experience for customers in its own right. Showing them what may best suit them also helps with conversion, according to Buy Wholefoods Online marketing manager, Aedan Kiernan. "For us, customers want reassurance when they are buying," he says. "Although it is likely they already know what they want to buy, helping them reconfirm why they should buy it is key. With newer products, it's about educating consumers about why they should try something different and what the benefits are."

Rachel Glynn, head of ecommerce at Radley, says the implications of not meeting the speed, convenience and relevance needs of customers are obvious – they will simply go elsewhere. "The danger is always the bounce rate," she says. "Conversion rates are naturally in decline as search and research is now an 'on-the-go' pastime. As it used to be with marketing and the three-second attention capture rule, now there is the same issue with purchase decisions. The window is narrowing to get the customer to commit to a purchase."

When it comes to more complicated products, this window is even tighter, notes Glynn. "Electricals and other technical product types, including financial services and telecoms, have changed the level of technical advice expected online."

Retailers need to move to placing a higher value on customer education and customer experience – especially around product choice. ■

“People buy products because they have a need and may not always know which technical specs will be right for them.”

Sarah Assous, CMO at zoovu

UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY – AND WHY AVERAGE IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH

9 out of 10

respondents say that sales
would improve if their customers
receive more assistance

Our survey results showed that the majority (69%) of respondents believe their products are getting more complex. A similar number (67%) say this is impacting sales, evidenced through bounce rates, returns rates and low conversion within their businesses.

The survey also asked readers whether they thought sales would improve if their customers received more assistance. The response was almost unanimous, with almost nine out of ten (89%) saying they would see a sales uplift if they could better help their customers.

CHOICE COMPLEXITY DOESN'T ONLY IMPACT SALES

It's not only sales that respondents felt would benefit. Indeed, the possibility of increased customer spend – although important at 43% – came second to increased customer satisfaction at 65%, when respondents were asked what they felt the benefits of providing better assistance online would be.

This was followed by fewer calls to contact centres (40%), fewer customer complaints (39%) reduced return rates (36%) and increased Net Promoter Scores (34%).

Clearly, retailers need to react as their customers are looking for more help and education when choosing products. With the increase in expectations and increased competition, there is a greater need than ever to stand out from the crowd, to grab customer attention quickly and to win the sale before customers move on to a rival.

This requires retailers to become customer-centric rather than product-centric, a change many have yet to make, notes Assous. "As customers and their expectations have changed, retailers need to respond as it will impact their bottom-line," she says.

WHY TOOLS SUCH AS RECOMMENDATIONS AND FILTERS ONLY GO SO FAR

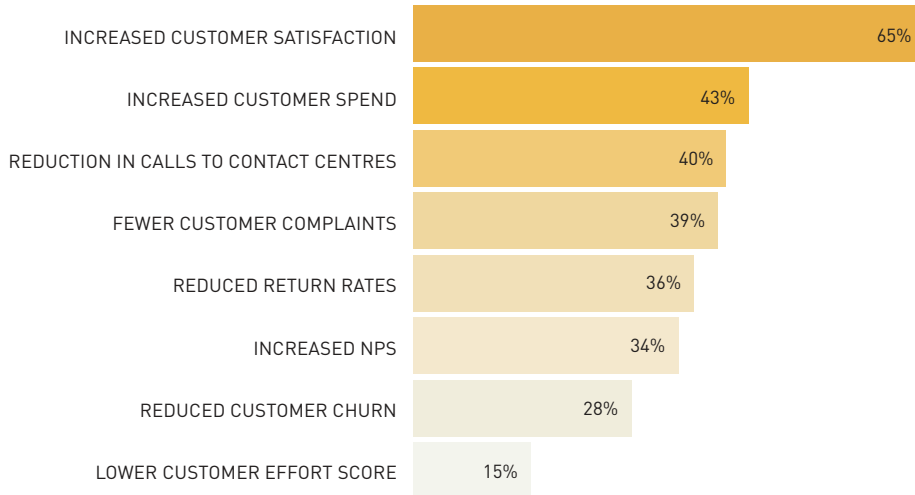
Couple the increased complexity of product with wider range choice and it's no surprise that navigating online has become a challenge. "On sites with tens of thousands of SKUs, it can be really daunting to hit a product listing page and see so many options," says Amy Montague, digital marketing and ecommerce director (consultant) "Too much choice actually panics the brain and can cause doubt and paralysis."

Gareth Manning, marketing manager at Wood Finishes Direct.com, says that shoppers look for ease of use when shopping online or they will go elsewhere. "Customers want easy buying options and slick but concise design," he says, adding that knowing what other customers have bought can also help. "Customer-generated ratings and clear, Which?-style onsite ratings can help customers with choice overload."

Product recommendations are a useful tool to help shoppers overcome choice complexity but, once again, relevance is key. "While it's great for a customer to see all the products you have on offer, these shouldn't be forced on someone who isn't interested, as this can put them off," says Kiernan. "When you go to the supermarket for some milk, you don't want to be pushed to buy other items. By offering a clear way to the product of choice, you enable the customer to quickly find what they want."

He cites his own experience of trying to buy vape liquids online. "The site had what felt like hundreds of different brands and flavours," he recalls. "This was frustrating as there was no clear way to find what I wanted. If there had been filtering options, I

WHAT SURVEY RESPONDENTS SAW AS THE BENEFITS OF PROVIDING BETTER ASSISTANCE ONLINE



would have loved the range but as it was, just a mass of product with no organisation was frustrating.”

While filters can help to manage the chaos that choice overload creates, the efficiency of these varies hugely. Usability testing of product lists and filters by UX specialists Baymard Institute suggests that filters can “turn an overwhelming and unmanageable product list into one more focused on products relevant to the consumer.” This is even more important when viewing products on mobile.

However, in a recent benchmarking of filtering interfaces, Baymard Institute said that 91% of sites that show jargon-heavy, industry-specific filters don’t do enough to explain them to the users. This can leave users confused about their meaning and relevance – such as when season ratings on a sleeping bag or diamond ratings on jewellery are shown but not explained to the customer.

“Our benchmarking reveals that most sites must simply assume users have a certain amount of domain knowledge for a particular product type. Even users who have a decent understanding will often benefit from a more exact definition,” says the company. The company found that the result is that filters are then applied incorrectly or ignored completely, leading both directly and indirectly to abandonments.

“Too much choice actually panics the brain and can cause doubt and paralysis.”

Amy Montague, digital marketing and ecommerce director (consultant)

THE NEED FOR MORE POWERFUL PERSONALISATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Where there is little difference in functionality between products, filters may also not work effectively. “We try, like many manufacturers and retailers, to work on three or four bullet points that just highlight the key elements of a product,” says Molyneux. “The challenge is when you get many similar products. That information is blurred because they all say the same thing, which is always the challenge. Taking myself as a consumer, you want the top line information, so you want to keep it simple. But it’s very easy to realise that the information across three or four products says the same thing and you need to start digging deeper.”

Molyneux believes that changing trends, as well as consumer sentiment, mean the time is ripe for new thinking about assistance online. “People have got used to an assistant in other elements, whether they are using Siri, Alexa or Google Assistant. I think they are quite into the idea of getting answers given to them, which is why these assistants have come into their own. People have got used to relying on tech to give them the answer and are more comfortable in doing so.” ■

HOW TO BECOME MORE THAN 'JUST AVERAGE' AND INCREASE PURCHASE CONFIDENCE

“If people see any easy way to help them make a decision they will take it.”

Ashley Molyneux, e-marketing content manager at Epson

Our introduction and state of play piece show that there is a clear need for change. In our survey, we asked what type of assistance respondents believed would be most effective to support consumer decision-making. Personalised advice came top for 68% of respondents. This was followed by greater information online for more than half (54%) and product videos for 46%. Chatbots were cited by 43%, with additional staff – such as call centre agents – cited by 25%.

“Comparison tools can help, along with good filters and simplified layouts,” says Glynn. “In terms of more tangible help, live chat and concierge services have a role to play in higher value purchases, as do a robust returns process and peer input in the form of reviews and social proofing. Clear signposting is important on all pages. There might be a lot of products but each one needs to be made clear as to why it is in the range.”

Montague says that while it's okay to have depth in options on sites, retailers need to also have powerful personalisation and recommendations to get customers to what they want to see quicker. “This should transition regardless of the channel – email, site or display. Customers want to believe that a brand really knows them and cares about them,” she says.

Product recommendations based on browsing patterns can perhaps provide some clues to popular products but don't do anything to assess the individual needs of shoppers. Instead, customers need a solution that guides them through the decision process, allowing them to overcome jargon and find products best suited to their needs.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF DIGITAL ASSISTANTS

It is here that digital product assistants can help. Through an integrated, behavioural, AI-powered approach, such assistants can connect the appropriate and persuasive aspects of products with the relevant aspects of customers' needs, attitudes and behaviours. This can be done through apparent one-on-one conversations with customers, where brands and retailers can ask a set of tailored questions that will filter their vast choice to a curated range of products that better suit the needs of shoppers.

It's after a solution that has been adopted by Epson's Molyneux, who says such digital assistants definitely help customers to make a more informed choice.

Many retailers consider building such digital assistants themselves but care has to be taken. “Digital assistants are very pertinent if done correctly but in the real world, the vast majority lack the AI to be more than transparent selling tools,” says Wood Finishes Direct's Manning.

Molyneux says Epson attempted the self-build path before choosing Zoovu's digital assistant. “We tried to build a number of tools and the main reason was to solve the issue of choice. We have a lot of products, especially in the consumer environment, that are very similar and customers need to understand the difference. It's someone that's not just reading shelf edges. It's someone that can ask a few questions,” he says.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS, CHOOSING THE MOST RELEVANT PRODUCTS AND GETTING THE IMAGE SPOT-ON

Establishing the correct tone of questions can be essential to the experience, with retailers having to ensure they take their customers' level of knowledge into account. Many brands will involve their product experts in writing questions for

the website but it's easy to assume a knowledge level that more novice customers simply may not have.

Pitching the questions at the right level and speaking the language of the customer are both key, ensuring that questions are worded in ways that are accessible and relevant to novice customers as well as those familiar with the products. However, AI also ensures that questions can be honed if they don't initially work as they should.

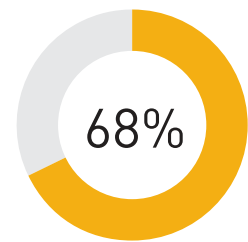
This was a stumbling block for Trek Bicycle when it introduced a Bike Finder on its US and UK website using Zoovu's technology, in order to lead customers through a choice of more than 300 bikes.

One of its initial questions for customers looking at mountain bikes was "How rad do you want to get?" While the question was perfectly pitched for an experienced mountain biker, the company realised the wording could easily turn novice customers off completely. Instead, Trek refined the question so that it asked, "How do you want to ride on trails?" – a question that riders of any level could understand, then answer.

For those who choose the digital assistant route, it may seem like common sense to target digital assistants firstly at the most expensive product ranges, since this would seem to be where the most money can be made. However, given that the role of digital assistance should be about helping improve the customer experience, it's better to focus on areas where customers are having the most challenges. That may not be at the most expensive end of the product range.

So when T-Mobile looked to introduce digital assistants, the company looked first at its accessories category, knowing that it was here that customers were having problems. The company launched a general-purpose accessories finder, as well as a gift finder which could be used for seasonal campaigns such as Christmas and Mother's Day.

While the primary purpose of digital assistants is in asking the right questions, retailers and brands can also help customers visually. Pictures can be used not only to enhance the overall branding of such tools but also to show additional information such as product size and close-ups on features that may not be visible in standard product illustrations. ■

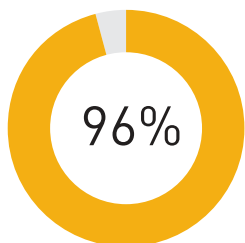


68% of those surveyed say that personalised advice is the most effective tool to support consumer decision-making

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- Move beyond filters to create more engaging, personal experiences based on a shopper's needs
- Bring existing sales best practice from offline to digital (i.e. adaptive selling) engaging shoppers and asking them the right products to guide them to the right products
- Make websites more interactive and humanised
- Leverage AI to understand user behaviour and interactions and act upon this

UNDERSTANDING THE EVIDENCE THAT WILL HELP YOU MAKE THE BUSINESS CASE



96% of respondents say it is important to simplify the purchase decision-making process for customers

While we have examined the tools to help customers mitigate choice paralysis, how do you actually quantify the benefits of tools such as digital assistants to help you make the business case to the board?

In our survey, nearly all respondents (96%) said that it was important to simplify the purchase decision-making process for customers. Yet, despite the near unanimous appreciation of the importance of journey simplification, respondents cited a number of barriers holding them back from making progress in this area. A lack of budget was the top barrier, cited by 39%. This was followed by a lack of internal ownership or accountability (26%) and a lack of technology and tools (26%). 14% blamed a lack of understanding and 12% a lack of senior buy-in.

There are many advantages to the concept of digital assistance. One of the biggest advantages is that with the intelligence behind the digital assistants, expert sales and customer support is available 24/7 on all digital channels including chatbot and voice – reducing the potential of lost customers and of calls or emails to retailer contact centres.

But there is a number of other tangible KPIs that can help convince the board of the case to invest too, including conversion rate, dwell time, uptake and average order values. How quickly retailers will see a return on their investment varies but Assous claims that most retailers see an ROI within a few months to a year of integrating digital assistants.

Swisscom even saw an ROI after 6 weeks after integrating digital assistants that help B2B clients select the right set of products and services.

BUILDING CUSTOMER LOYALTY

As we saw earlier, customer satisfaction was the number-one priority for survey respondents looking to better assist their customers. This shouldn't be a surprise since customer satisfaction drives customer loyalty, which then helps to influence future purchasing decisions. Get it right and customers will engage further – and most likely spend more too.

"Customer experience and customer engagement is critical to compete," says Assous. "Customers have many options and will self-select the retailer that understands them and offers the best personalised experience."

Improving that customer experience can be evidenced through take-up of such tools. At Trek Bicycle, 4% of all site traffic uses the digital assistant. At Canon Europe, 13% of the company's total web traffic is using the digital assistants, with 50% completing them to the last page, 67% of visitors clicking through to a product detail page and 70% accessing a vendor page.

Such digital assistants can also increase dwell time on a page. At Epson, Molyneux says that customers were spending around 15 to 20 seconds looking at the top line information on a page, yet after using a digital assistant, customers are now spending around three to four minutes on a product page. The same is true at Trek Bicycle, where dwell time increased to three and a half minutes on average. "It gives customers that focus that 'This is the right product for me and I'm going to spend some time investigating that now,'" says Molyneux.

BOOSTING CONVERSION RATES AND AVERAGE ORDER VALUE

Of course, the measure the board is most likely to be interested in is the impact of digital assistants upon conversion rates. At Trek, the adoption of digital assistants

has had impressive results, with a doubling of conversion rates for those customers who use the Bike Finder.

At T-Mobile, the company replaced its static product search with Zoovu digital assistants and saw 500% higher conversion rate as a result. Assous says that Zoovu customers typically see increased conversions by more than 107% on average.

While it's easy to assume that customers are generally guided by price – and indeed price is a common filter for customers when searching – a key advantage many brands have also found from using digital assistants is that they are able to better prove the value of a product and increase average order value as a result. Assous says that Zoovu clients see an AOV increase of 9-11%.

At Trek Bicycle, the company chose to add the price questions at the end of the process, believing that if the customer was shown the value of the product only after they'd seen how it best fitted their needs, they might be willing to pay more than they had initially intended.

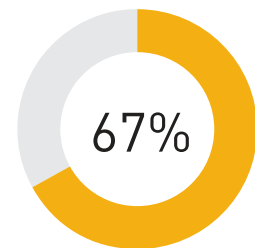
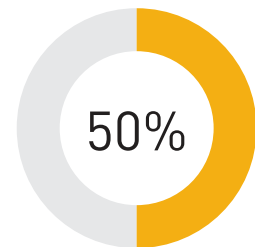
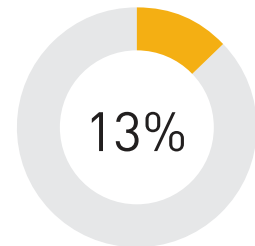
At Epson, Molyneux says that the average basket value for those customers who have gone through the company Printer Finder process is around €150, so the Zoovu tool easily pays for itself. "People aren't just going for the cheapest printers," he notes.

REDUCING RETURNS AND IMPROVING LEARNING

Although the most obvious benefit of digital assistants is choosing the product and making the sale, the impact of a more informed decision on returns can't be underestimated, especially since the negative impact of getting a purchase wrong can also impact future customer sentiment. "By educating, guiding and assisting, retailers can make sure that customers purchase the right products in the first place, that they don't feel buyer's remorse and hence return less," says Assous who suggests returns rates can be reduced by around 10%.

Retailers and brands can also use the digital assistants to provide data and insights into what their customers are looking for in their products, as well as ensuring they are targeting the correct market. Trek, for example, knew from the answers selected and price ranges focused on that it was mainly novice riders using the solution – the exact market it had been targeting.

The AI power behind such digital assistants can also help retailers and brands better use analytics data and learning algorithms to draw actionable-insights, such as interaction patterns, persona types and need profiles. These allow them to better compete and create the human voice that customers are happiest with, regardless of whether they are actually interacting with a machine or not. ■



At Canon 13% of web traffic uses the digital assistants with 50% completing to the last page, 67% click through to a product detail page and 70% accessing a vendor page

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN INTRODUCING A DIGITAL ASSISTANT

- Ensure questions 'sound human' and target the market you are aiming for
- Make questions short and sharp to increase engagement
- Use visuals either to replace or support questions
- Keep an eye on drop-offs and refine the process where necessary

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For Epson, finding a better way to help customers narrow down their product choice to what they need has been a key focus. For example, even just within the company's consumer printer range, customers have a choice of 249 printers. "It's about how do you cut through that," says Epson's e-marketing content manager Ashley Molyneux. "The answer in our mind is with our Printer Finder."

Epson launched its first digital assistant in 2018, having previously considered building such a tool itself. The Epson Printer Finder has now been used in a number of different markets, with greatest adoption in the UK and Germany.

Through a selection of eight questions, the solution takes customers through some of their basic requirements to provide a curated list from which they can browse. The end results includes a top recommendation, as well as other suggested products that may be relevant.

The assistant has enhanced the simple comparison tables the company previously offered customers. "We had a tabular comparison table which relied on people spotting the differences and understanding if that's what they need or not," says Molyneux.

Bullet points also helped guide customers through the buying process but once again, these relied on the customer knowing what they wanted. "We also had filters for product types, such as whether it's a photo printer or includes a scanner. But once again that's quite a manual process and you are expecting the user to make those choices."

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NEXT

Increasing dwell time, average order value and satisfaction

Conversion rates are hard to judge since the fact that the company sells at RRP onsite means it's not the most price competitive. Yet, Molyneux says that there is no doubt that dwell times, customer satisfaction and average order values are improving as a result.

He says that from those starting the digital assistant process, around a third are going all the way through the full list of questions. For many, their needs are even being met at a much earlier stage.

The assistant's success means it is to be rolled out within the business, launching first across the company's business printer range and then for projectors.

"It's well received and I've also convinced everyone internally to put it on our emails," says Molyneux. "We have a whole lifecycle set of emails, so I wouldn't bombard someone who has a printer and is happy using it. But after two years, we do ask existing customers what their intention is and whether they are still happy using their printer. At that point, we currently suggest a replacement product for them but we will also now add in this tool and ask them to have a look for themselves and see if this is still relevant for you, or whether you can choose something else yourself."

Molyneux says the questions are constantly reviewed to ensure they still meet the needs of the business and its customers, as well as ensure it is maximising learning from the tool. "We have regular reviews of questions in a call with Zoovu every couple of weeks. They are looking at the journeys and the dropouts for us. There are a number of times where they have made suggestions such as 'this questions appears to be slowing down the process' or moving some elements into extra tick boxes at the end, so with their help we have fine-tuned a number of the questions."

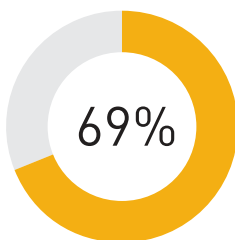
Such learnings also helps the rest of the business. "Because you have the information on where people are clicking through and what they are doing next, you can understand where they are dropping off and where you have a problem to try to deal with. That's probably a distinct advantage from just your website. You can then use the information to enhance the rest of the pages."

SURVEY RESULTS

HOW INCREASED COMPLEXITY IS DRIVING THE NEED FOR CHANGE

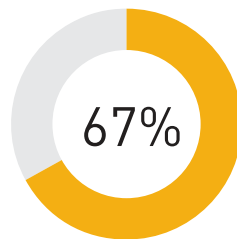
In a survey of InternetRetailing readers, we asked how retailers felt about the complexities of products, impact of customer indecision and what would make their sites more productive.

COMPLEXITY IS RIFE



of retailers say their products are getting more complex

SALES ARE BEING IMPACTED



say uncertainty and indecision are impacting sales

RETAILERS BELIEVE MORE ASSISTANCE WOULD HELP

9 out of 10

respondents believe that sales would improve if customers had more assistance

TOP 3 BENEFITS OF GREATER ASSISTANCE ONLINE



Increased customer satisfaction

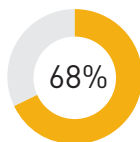


Increased customer spend

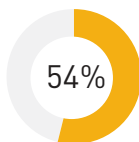


Fewer calls to the contact centre

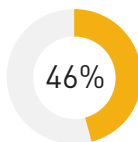
TOP 3 WAYS TO SUPPORT CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING



Personalised advice

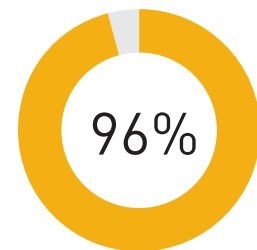


Greater information online



Product videos

SIMPLIFICATION OF THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY AND PURCHASE DECISION MAKING IS VITAL



of respondents rated it important

TOP 3 BARRIERS TO JOURNEY SIMPLIFICATION



Lack of budget

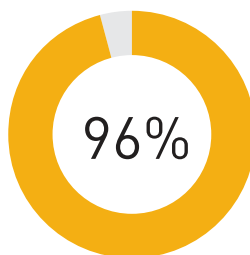


Lack of internal ownership and accountability



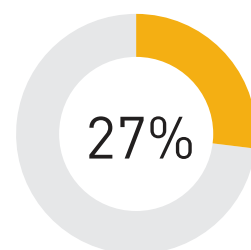
Lack of technology and tools

A HUMAN TOUCH IS VITAL



say it's important that customer interactions feel human

RETAILERS LACK CONVICTION THAT THEY UNDERSTAND AND ANTICIPATE THEIR CUSTOMERS' NEEDS



say they don't understand and anticipate customer needs well

CONCLUSION

Our white paper research, interviews and survey show that retailers understand how complexity of choice and choice overload are very real problems. They know that products are getting more complicated, they can see that customers are struggling and they are aware that there are both sales and customer satisfaction benefits to be had from concentrating on this part of their business.

Their challenges are how to meet the customer's need for increased assistance and how to provide the human-like guidance that will help their customers make that all-important buying decision. Then, when they have made that choice, how do they convince the board and what are the KPIs they can concentrate on to see how well this approach is working?

We hope that this white paper has answered some of those questions. In a world where customer satisfaction is so vital to winning sales, the need for greater help online is a challenge that retailers simply can't afford to ignore. AI-powered digital assistants can provide the more humanised voice that customers are looking for. They can ensure that a customer's shopping journey is guided, getting them over the challenge of choice overload helping them find their feet online. ■



KEY LEARNINGS

- Choice overload is real
- Products are getting more complex
- Retailers want to better help their customers navigate choice
- Traditional options are not working as well as they have
- Customers are looking for a human-like voice amid the chaos of choice
- Digital assistants can help better guide customers through choice
- The customer need has to be considered at all time, so talk to them as though you are speaking to them in-store



www.internetretailing.net

Download at: <http://etail.li/bringing-the-human-touch-digital-channels-thro>

With thanks to



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