OMNICHANNEL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Today's shoppers have become comfortable blending digital and in-store interactions for their favourite brands. They want consistent and exceptional customer service wherever they choose to engage.

In fact, according to Forrester Research, consumers are willing to pay 4.5 times more for excellent versus poor experiences. And, they rank customer service number two on their top drivers of customer experience, behind only actual product or service quality.[1]

Service consistency also plays a big part in shopper satisfaction. In a 2018 shopper survey, nearly two-thirds of US shoppers said getting a consistent level of service regardless of where they are engaging with a retailer is most important to them.[2]

According to Deloitte, the emergence of digital native complicates business even more: "Empowered by technology that allows them to connect and share information with anyone, anywhere in the world, at any time, today's digital consumers expect businesses to react to all of their needs and wants instantly."[3]

Providing consistent positive shopping experiences across channels becomes more difficult as the sheer number of ways in which consumers interact with brands expand. Traditional approaches, like seeking in-person support or calling the contact centre, are now mixed with social media, texting, chatting, email, and virtual assistants. For retailers, being able to centrally manage and respond to these ever-increasing channels can be daunting.

The design of a retail ecosystem often presumes a "sunny day" scenario; reality proves otherwise. Merchants know well that every day brings new customer issues and challenges that require prompt resolution. Slow or improper responses mean a company risks damaging the customer shopping experience and, ultimately, customer loyalty.

Price Waterhouse Coopers notes that a customer experience disconnect exists: "Give customers a great experience and they'll buy more, be more loyal, and share their experience with friends...Yet, so many consumers seem disappointed. Call it an experience disconnect: companies tout the latest technology or snappy design but haven't focused on—or invested in—the most meaningful aspects of [the] customer experience."[4]

To remain relevant, retailers and merchants need to rethink their approach to delivering customer experiences and quickly evolve their customer service model into a cost-effective omnichannel customer engagement model that is consistent and engaging anywhere and everywhere they interact with their customers.

Two-thirds of shoppers say service consistency across channels is very important to them.

Successful omnichannel engagement strategies carefully consider how store and contact centre associates are enabled to deliver the services consumers expect.

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