



Customer Data is Key to Conveying and Strengthening Retail Brands

Digital technology offers retailers improved systems for collecting information vital to developing strategies and content for stronger brand presence.



If retailers are to optimize their brands in this era of digitally empowered shoppers, they must understand what their customers are doing and why.

Introduction

Digital technology provides consumers with unprecedented access to retail channels and touch points as part of their shopping experience. Mobile devices in hand, they interact with retailers at a breadth and depth never before possible, moving quickly across channels—from web sites to store aisles to mobile apps, one retailer after another—to find product specifications, reviews, availability, and competitive prices.

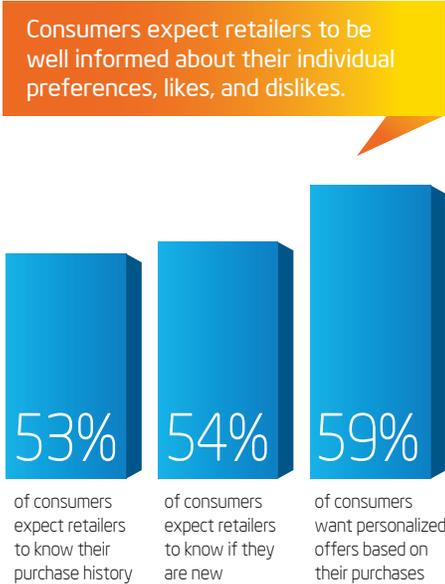
Retailers, meanwhile, struggle to keep up with fast-paced shopper expectations. They're often pressured to deploy additional channels and technology as needed, not necessarily as planned or budgeted. Instead of offering immersive brand experiences, the results are often fragmented and disjointed, leaving their customers less than impressed.

Yet, the same digital technology that has empowered shoppers also offers retailers the ability to collect greater amounts of valuable customer data than ever before. Through an array of new digital retail devices and improved integration of channel infrastructures, retailers are entering an era of increased real-time data collection, measuring, and monitoring—all providing the basis for highly customized, brand-defining, and immersive shopping experiences.

Digital technology provides unprecedented opportunities to convey brand messages in consistent and visually powerful ways. Store signage, web sites, apps, and advertising can display compatible, consistent, and compelling content—all capable of being refreshed simultaneously—across all channels, instantly and cost-effectively.

While consumers may have more influence over brands than in years past, retailers are gaining the ability to proactively deliver the shopping experience that will define and reinforce their brand. And while brand identity may be based on human perception, the brand's underlying soundness in this real-time, multi-channel environment relies on up-to-date technology.

Intel is widely recognized within the retail industry for providing powerful, cost-effective processors and architecture that promote seamless connectivity, security, and manageability throughout the retail enterprise, from the showroom to the back office. With Intel® technology and innovative system integrators, retailers have solutions for optimizing their brand at whatever touch-point shoppers engage with it.



Consumer Expectations

Consumers view a retailer’s store, web site, mobile app, or interactive digital sign as all the same brand.¹ And that brand is strengthened or weakened depending on the quality, effectiveness, and satisfaction of the overall shopping experience.

Empowered by digital technology, consumers have high expectations for their shopping experience. They expect retailers to be well informed about their individual preferences, likes, and dislikes. Retail Info Systems (RIS) News, in a recent survey of 2,500 consumers, found that 53 percent expect retailers to maintain cross-channel histories of their individual purchases; 54 percent expect retailers to know whether they are a new or returning customer; and 59 percent want personalized offers from retailers based on frequently purchased items.²

Plus, consumers want shopping experiences to be productive. They want to query inventories with their mobile devices, locate out-of-stock items, and order them immediately for at-home delivery or to pick up at the store. Brand experiences extend far beyond the point of sale. They encompass the receipt of the item that’s been purchased, any post-sale support related to the purchase, even returning or exchanging an item. Each of these activities involves behaviors that are measurable and quantifiable and, over time, provide retailers with a robust understanding of each customer. And this understanding can be mined and modeled in real time, giving retailers the power to deliver immersive, customized shopping experiences.

A shopper’s experience is molded by any and all contact with the brand and how well the retailer performs in each and every interaction. Digital technology is surely driving shopper expectations, but it also is the retailer’s strongest ally in meeting those expectations.

Retail Innovations

Expectations that seem simple to shoppers can, for retailers, require sophisticated systems to accomplish them. To optimize their brands, retailers must focus on providing customers with cross-channel experiences and interactions that are synchronized and consistent, and that sustain memorable, personalized relationships between the retailer and customer.

Such systems are possible using Intel solutions that enable a cross-channel retail enterprise—what the retail industry refers to as an omni-channel—to perform multiple functions as well as to collect consumer and product-related data for effectively tracking customers’ shopping behaviors. Achieving omni-channel capabilities can include:

- Intel® Core™ vPro™ processor family to deliver the power to run complex computing tasks, play HD video, and perform other brand-enhancing tasks while reducing energy requirements and cutting costs.
- Intel® Xeon® processor family to increase retailers’ ability to store, process, and protect consumer data with the power, agility, and security to efficiently scale to meet changing needs.
- Intel® Intelligent Systems Framework (Intel® ISF) for interoperable solutions designed to address connecting, managing, and securing devices and data in a consistent and scalable manner. These are the standards that bring together the hardware, operating systems, tools, and software required for true omni-channel functionality.

Retailers today rely on Intel technologies to target customers with more effective, measurable results. They capture cost savings through improved power efficiency and remote management, and provide customers with the opportunity of moving to cloud-ready platforms that allow them to connect and integrate operations in intelligent and secure ways.

Proactive Brand Enhancement

Just as the omni-channel helps meet customer expectations by providing a unified shopping experience across retail channels, it can also provide retailers with valuable new insights into customer behaviors, attitudes, and shopping history. With this more comprehensive view, retailers can refine marketing strategies, develop more compelling promotions, and strengthen their brands with more resonant messaging.

Successful brand presence is enhanced through compelling messages that are displayed to shoppers on digital media such as interactive signage and kiosks, as well as on web sites and mobile apps.

In-store devices can utilize Intel Core processors with enhanced media capabilities to deliver this rich visual and interactive content to provide customers with a more personal and satisfying shopping experience. And satisfying shopping experiences can lead to more customer loyalty, repeat visits, larger shopping baskets, and increased revenue—all optimizing the retailer's brand.

Intel offers retail solutions that are helpful to building and maintaining strong brands:

- **Intel® Audience Impression Metrics Suite (Intel® AIM Suite)** uses anonymous viewer analytics to determine gender and age group of approaching customers. With this data, retailers can adapt sign messages to engage various target audiences. Even the viewer's attention span can be measured, adding insight into shopper behavior.
- **Intel® Active Management Technology (Intel® AMT)** offers remote management of digital displays. With it, retailers can switch out marketing campaigns and promotions across entire networks of devices. This brand-strengthening ability complements other remote-management features such as the power to diagnose, repair, and manage inventory from a single remote location.

Equipping in-store environments with new technologies helps Intel to deliver personalized and satisfying customer experiences, while giving retailers the data intelligence and capabilities for building and maintaining strong brands.

Conclusion

If retailers are to optimize their brands in this era of digitally empowered shoppers, they must understand what their customers are doing and why. Using Intel technology, they can deploy systems that surpass customer expectations and create immersive shopping experiences, all the while gathering valuable customer-related data for personalized marketing.

The retail industry views the omni-channel as a powerful solution, but to be effective, the omni-channel requires communications, compatibility and security standards as found in the Intel ISF, plus it requires the power and cost-effectiveness of Intel® processors. Inside stores, Intel is a technology leader in interactive digital signage, kiosks, point-of-sale (POS) terminals, and other immersive visual media essential to communicating brand attributes.

Intel technology efficiently manages inventory, helps shoppers find what they're looking for, and weaves together online and in-store operations. This can make a significant impact on customer loyalty, which is the strongest brand attribute of all.

For more information on Intel® retail innovations, please visit:
www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/retail/retail-innovations

¹ IBM: Smarter Commerce for Retail, 2012.

² 2011 Shopper Experience Study; RIS News; 2011.

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