



# **Ensuring an Excellent Omnichannel Retail Experience**

**Meeting Customers' Needs, Mobility, Integrating People, Process, Technologies Key**

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## Introduction

Today's customers are not just going online or into stores to shop. They are going omnichannel: ordering online and picking up in-store, as well as having items delivered to their stores. They also are "showrooming" and "webrooming" on their mobile devices. In effect, trends suggest that higher value customers shop both online and in-store spend more than those who shop online or in-store only.

Consequently, there is an omnichannel retail industry convergence going on – with predominantly bricks-and-mortar retailers developing their eCommerce capabilities, while eCommerce retailers are now testing in-person stores. In-person retailers are investing in tools including analytics, beacons, geofencing, clienteling, interactive displays, mobile payments, video, and virtual reality (VR).

While the retail industry has talked about providing excellent omnichannel customer experiences few retailers have executed well, with many others still on that journey. This is understandable, as there continues to be operational, organizational, technology, and personnel hurdles to overcome before retailers can deliver the level of service that customers demand. Yet there is a growing urgency for many retailers, including well-known brands, to move more quickly to deliver on the omnichannel promise. They realize that customers will reward retailers accordingly.



## Omnichannel Retail Trends

There are several key developments and evolving practices impacting the design and delivery of omnichannel retail customer service and sales. Consider the following:

- **Rising customer expectations.** Conditioned by excellent online experiences, notably immediate and personalized service, customers have similar expectations for in-store retail, particularly for high-touch high value goods. In turn, they have declining tolerance for long lines, slow service, and out of stock merchandise. Customers are acutely aware of their value to retailers and are researching shopping online and bricks-and-mortar stores for the best mix of goods, service, and prices. Customers typically go online before they buy, except for commodity immediate-need purchases and for when they feel like going to the malls and stores.
- **Consumer mobility.** Consumers will accelerate their use of mobile devices for retail activities including product and store research, customer service, showrooming, webrooming, and purchases. Frost & Sullivan research forecasts the number of smartphones in the U.S. will climb from 218 million in 2015 to 313 million in 2020.
- **Uneven economic growth.** Retail growth rates have only recovered somewhat from the recent economic downturn. The National Retail Federation (NRF) forecasts a 3.1% retail growth rate in 2016 compared with 5.2% in 2006 and a -3.6% decline in 2009. The NRF cites more employment and lower gas prices, rather than increasing wages, as being behind increased spending, though it sees signs of wage stagnation ending<sup>1</sup>. But income and spending also have yet to recover. The Pew Research Center reports that the U.S. median household income is 8% less in 2014 than in 1999<sup>2</sup>.
- **Spending stratification.** Upper income consumers are gaining more spending power, even though they represent a small percentage of the population. Meanwhile, a Pew paper reports that the middle class shrank in nearly nine of ten key U.S. metropolitan areas<sup>3</sup>. Consequently, mid-to-upper midmarket retailers have had to carefully bifurcate their buying and marketing strategies to attract and retain top drawer buyers without losing profitable next-tier customers, and vice-versa. These strategies include differentially branded off-price stores and sites and premium loyalty programs.

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<sup>1</sup> National Retail Federation, "NRF forecasts retail sales to grow 3.1 percent in 2016", article, February 10, 2016 <https://nrf.com/news/nrf-forecasts-retail-sales-grow-31-percent-2016#sthash.pOV9HwLg.dpuf>

<sup>2</sup> Pew Research Center, "America's Shrinking Middle Class: A Close Look at Changes Within Metropolitan Areas", article, May 11, 2016 <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/05/11/americas-shrinking-middle-class-a-close-look-at-changes-within-metropolitan-areas>

<sup>3</sup> "America's Shrinking Middle Class", *ibid*.

- **Competing spending priorities.** Consumers spent 4% more on nondiscretionary education, health, housing, and insurance in 2015 than they did in 2000, according to Customer Growth Partners, as reported in *The Wall Street Journal*<sup>4</sup>. High student debt loads on young and older Americans also inhibit consumer spending, reports *Crain's Chicago Business*<sup>5</sup>. Meantime, demand for automobiles, restaurants, and travel compete for wallet share.
- **The role of social media.** Social media has intensified the speed by which consumer products and their attributes (features, designers, styles, designs, colors) gain or lose popularity with consumer. Retailers have had to fine-tune their social media skills in order to help generate profitable sales. For example, they can ill-afford to have the wrong amount of inventory, or offer products that customers perceive as outdated.
- **Intensifying online competition.** Bricks-and-mortar and pure play eCommerce retailers are battling each other while at the same time competing against new, more agile, lower-cost and off-price retailers and pop-up stores on short-term leases. Online retail appears to be the big winner, leading to bricks-and-mortar profit declines and store closures. While online has trailed behind bricks-and-mortar in sales volume and shopping basket value, the balance appears to be tipping. More items are being offered online, both expensive complex products (like cars), and basic goods (like sunglasses), driven by preferences specific to groups like Millennials. But the growing population of aging Baby Boomers are also shopping online as they become less willing (and able) to drive to stores. The NRF also reports a 6%-9% non-store sales (online, direct-to-consumer, kiosks) growth rate in 2016<sup>6</sup>.
- **eCommerce retailers going in-store.** When it comes to providing an excellent Customer Experience, online retailers also see the value of opening stores. Prominent examples include Amazon, Blue Nile, and Warby Parker. In-person retail supports webrooming and enables everything from more efficient returns handling, easier fitting of clothes, repairs, and provides valuable “customer touch”.

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<sup>4</sup> Wall Street Journal “Macy’s Reignites Retail Worries”, May 11, 2016 <http://www.wsj.com/articles/macys-pares-its-forecasts-1462969883>

<sup>5</sup> Crain’s Chicago Business “The bigger gut-punch from college debt”, March 26, 2016 <http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20160326/ISSUE01/303269996/the-bigger-gut-punch-from-college-debt>

<sup>6</sup> “NRF forecasts”, *ibid*

- **In-store pickup/returns from online orders.** Enabling and encouraging consumers to buy online and then pick up or return items in stores (ship to store) bolster bricks-and-mortar focused retailers by providing greater convenience. It drives customers into stores where they are more likely to make additional purchases. It also encourages them to shop at adjacent retailers. A UPS study reports that 45% of shoppers have made purchases when picking up items<sup>7</sup>. Not surprisingly, retailers are offering inducements to in-store pickup like lowered free shipping minimum order sizes.
- **Integrating online with brick and mortar business units and pricing.** In 2016, it is generally unacceptable to have different pricing for the same items in store versus online, unsynced inventories, and no cross-channel promotions honoring. These practices have frustrated customers. More retailers realize that customers expect seamless shopping experiences regardless of channel. They are making process changes to keep customers engaged and happy.
- **Same day delivery.** Customers are now expecting same day delivery and more and more retailers are beginning to offer it. Retailers are building local hubs and sortation centers and taking greater control over “last mile/kilometer” shipping.
- **Digitized experience-focused retail design.** Shopping today is, more than ever, about the experience. As a result, more retailers are embracing merchandising with a more experiential approach that integrates digital channels and technologies rather than the antiquated “4 Ps (product, price, place, promotion). Multi-sensory merchandising helps delight customers by telling stories rather than merely presenting items with prices. Whether transactions occur online or offline is immaterial.
- **3D Printing potential.** 3D Printing is used for prototyping, but increasingly for single item and small-run finished goods. It is gradually transforming the supply chain by shrinking costs, time to market, and enabling localization and mass customization. It also potentially enables retailers to respond faster to rapidly changing consumer styles, trends, and preferences. 3D Printing also could shake up retailing directly by enabling retailers and customers to create customized items via kiosks. It also could transform some retailers into additive resellers of designs and hardware.

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<sup>7</sup> UPS, “Pulse of the Online Shopper”, June 3, 2015, press release <http://bit.ly/1LxSVLP>

- **Internet of Things (IoT) integration.** Frost & Sullivan research has identified IoT-enabled retail-impacting applications. These include (but are not limited to) smart product management to optimize merchandising and automate restocking, and supply chain control to monitor products in transit and storage conditions. They also include intelligent shopping applications to optimize products, displays, and store layouts. The IoT solutions can alert customers of product replacements, enhanced with targeted offers and coupons. Reordering of commodity items (e.g., Amazon Dash) reduces customer effort and enables timely delivery while freeing up space for higher margin and quicker-to-move products. But customers have to be allowed to decide which items are not re-orderable and have the ability to choose and configure choices.
- **Omnichannel program execution.** Retailers are making people, process, and technology investments to integrate in-person and online retail channels and provide a 360-degree view of their customers (e.g., analytics to drive product recommendations). Retailers are creating Chief Experience Officers (CXOs) to be in charge of understanding in-store and online engagements. The CXOs see business from the perspectives of shoppers and grasp what's working and what's broken. They help ensure that every touch point is contextually relevant and delivering in-line with the brand promise.





# Omnichannel Technology Developments

What follows are several key and evolving innovative technologies that impact omnichannel retail customer experiences:

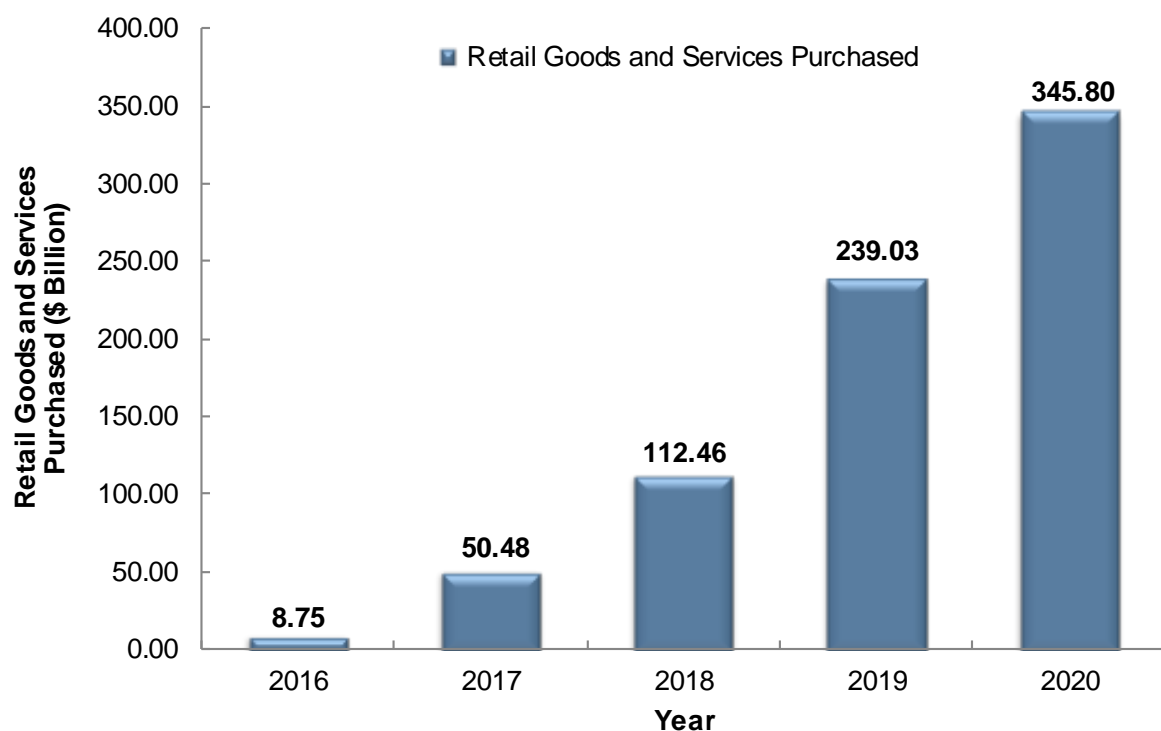
- **Analytics.** Taking a cue from online retailers, bricks-and-mortar retailers are expanding their knowledge sets from products and sales to knowledge of customers. These data sets encompass customer preferences and value, buying patterns, and where and how long customers visit both in-store and online. Retailers are also looking to uncover, understand, and track the impact of customer sentiment on sales and loyalty, including emotions in-store, online, and on social media.
- **Mobile customer engagement.** Retailers have been offering mobile apps and sites to engage customers with product recommendations, informing them which stores have the products they want, and enabling them to prepay or order online. Quick response (QR) codes and image recognition (IR) technology and apps supply product information via wireless devices. Retailers are deploying location-aware beacons and geofencing to deliver targeted messages and offers. These solutions increase customer convenience, loyalty, and sales (including impulse buying), while improving productivity with mutual benefits like shorter lines.
- **Expanded mall and retail Wi-Fi.** Guest Wi-Fi networks are migrating from onsite amenities to providing location-based promotions. Shoppers can defray cellular data plan minutes and sidestep poor connections by accessing powerful Wi-Fi based apps that offer retailer offers, mall directories, and store events information. This technology avoids the need to download apps, permit notifications, and turn on Bluetooth for beacons.
- **Mobilized and technology-assisted omnichannel sales associates.** Customers increasingly expect associates to be equipped with mobile devices. Retailers are following suit with devices connected to sophisticated applications that provide automated personalized assistance (i.e. clienteling). Associates gain access to customers' accounts, past purchases, and preferences, and intelligence-driven targeted offers. Associates can also provide faster and more convenient assistance to customers in fitting rooms through smart screens installed in them. Finally they can fulfill orders on the spot with mobile point of sale (mPOS) systems, without having customers line up at counters.



- **Video-enabled omnichannel interactions.** Retailers are examining video solutions that link online customers to associates fitted with wearable cameras and smartphones and tablets. They tap in-store sales expertise, online customer knowledge, and warm contact with customers to increase sales and customer loyalty and improve productivity. These applications use intelligence from online activity, CRM, and ERP systems to connect customers to those associates who can best help them at stores that have the products sought or which are nearest to the customers. They enable associates to give “warm handshakes” to online customers when they walk into stores.
- **Mobile payments.** Customers will use their smartphones and wearables to conduct contactless proximity online and in-store transactions instead of with their payment cards. Frost & Sullivan research forecasts 12-fold growth in mobile payments between 2015 and 2020 in the United States. Frost & Sullivan also believes it extremely likely that more than 80% of smartphones will support contactless mobile payments by the year 2020 in the United States.

Exhibit 1 shows the estimated value of retail goods and services purchased via proximity mobile payments in the United States from 2015 to 2020.

**Exhibit 1: Estimated Value of Retail Goods and Services Purchased Via Proximity Mobile Payments, United States, 2015-2020**



Source: Frost & Sullivan

These solutions, which rely on near-field communications (NFC) and authorization mechanisms (such as fingerprint scanning) shorten transaction times and enable easier purchase tracking while customers do not have to carry vulnerable payment cards. But they are a few years away from being universally adopted by merchants, while customers run the risk of lost devices and dead batteries. Consumers will continue to carry separate cards until these issues fade.

- **Kiosk evolution.** Retailers are expanding payment kiosks in the face of web and mobile pay options. They are using them to present offers and printable coupons, help customers find and buy products, issue loyalty cards, contracts, hotel keys, and vehicle passes and tags, and charge wireless devices (which attracts and keeps customers in-store). Interactive digital mirrors enable retailers to engage consumers as they try on different looks, styles, and colors virtually. Touchscreen displays represent an outgrowth of kiosks, but without their bulky enclosures. They enable more in-store locations and functions, and customer-appealing visual and tactile experiences at less cost.
- **Online product matching.** Retailers also are encouraging consumers to interact with them through images. Interactive tables enable customers to browse product selection, including those that are not available in those particular stores, and to create purchase wish lists. Image sharing technology allows customers to capture and send images of most any object to retailers, which will match them with the same or similar products in their catalogs.
- **Virtual fitting and dressing rooms.** These technologies include augmented reality (AR), 3D fitting rooms, simulations, customer models, and memory mirrors that scan customers and allow them to try out and compare different outfits virtually. These solutions reduce the time and effort of trying on apparel, and in making the right choices. They promise to increase sales while reducing the time, staff, and floor space devoted to changing rooms and limit losses from damaged or stolen merchandise. They can result in future online sales if retailers scan customers' body types, and with customers' permission, retain the information to present perfectly sized options online.
- **Increased social listening.** Retailers are realizing the value of closely listening to customers' conversations. Case in point: a leading consumer packaged goods company launched a new beauty and cosmetics product line. But six months later the product had not met expectations and was soon to lose distribution. Then a shopping insights manager looked into the social data dashboard supplied by social media solutions vendor Simply Measured and found it was the marketing that focused on lifestyle, which missed the mark. Those customers, particularly Millennials who tried the product, liked it: 15% more so than the closest competitor. The company and its retailer partner relaunched the product at the Millennial market and saw sales growth as a result.

- **Social walls.** Retailers can view customers' social sentiment through retailer-moderated social walls. For example, optical retailer Vision Source recently rolled out a moderated social wall depicting Instagram posts from delighted customers showing off their new, fashionable eyewear. The effect this has on shoppers inside the store is subtle, yet highly influential. By seeing others "who are like me" bragging about their purchase and showing off their style, validates that the shopper made the right choice by visiting Vision Source.
- **Smart delivery lockers.** These lockers provide pick-up convenience while eliminating doorstep delivery theft risks. For retailers they reduce package handling costs and drive additional purchases.
- **Virtual Reality wearables.** Retailers are experimenting with VR to enable customers to visualize and design large experiential purchases like home improvement and using outdoor recreational equipment. For example, Lowe's has been rolling out its "Holeroom" for bath and kitchen design in 19 U.S. cities. Customers can then turn the designs into YouTube360 videos for customers to enjoy and share. To date there have not yet been widespread compelling use cases and value propositions with VR.
- **B2B consumerization.** Business customers and users expect customer experiences on par with consumer applications and services. As a result, more B2B companies are adopting mobile solutions leveraging enterprise-grade barcode scanning for mPOS, order entry, and clienteling. They are also deploying high quality eCommerce sites.
- **Service-enabled solutions use.** These solutions connect systems and enable business logic to run anywhere regardless of the device, hardware or sales channel, and customer touch points. For example, using the same Promotions engine across channels will provide consistent offers to customers.
- **Solutions buying.** Solutions' buying is being driven by the heightened strategic imperative of meeting consumers' needs, coupled with new powerful and user-intuitive applications, hosted flexibly and affordably in the cloud. Technology is then becoming less of an obstacle in providing omnichannel customer experiences.



## Omnichannel Retail Challenges

What follows are several obstacles in the way of retailers becoming truly omnichannel:

- **Learning curve.** Facing stiff competition, traditional retailers have had to quickly figure out how to provide attractive integrated online omnichannel sales. They have had to look at and refine product mix, deliveries, and customer policies. Unlike pure-play eCommerce vendors they also have to devise ways to keep the brand experience, meeting (and exceeding) customers' expectations consistently across all channels. They also have to map out how best to optimize their space for ship-to-shore and returns handling.
- **Security concerns.** Customers are worried about the safety of online (including mobile) shopping as a result of endemic ID theft and banking and credit card fraud. The U.S. National Telecommunications and Information Administration reports that 45% of online households said these concerns stopped them from buying goods or services and conducting financial transactions online, along with posting on social networks, or expressing opinions on controversial or political issues. Moreover, 30% of them refrained from at least two of these activities<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> National Telecommunications and Information Administration "Lack of Trust in Internet Privacy and Security May Deter Economic and Other Online Activities", blog, Rafi Goldberg, May 13, 2016  
<https://www.ntia.doc.gov/blog/2016/lack-trust-internet-privacy-and-security-may-deter-economic-and-other-online-activities>

- **Lack of readiness.** Retailers may have rigid channel and departmental silos, lack cohesive digital and in-store technologies, and have difficulty integrating back-end technologies across touchpoints. Many stores have outdated legacy hardware and software systems that cannot support new applications; they even may lack adequate power and Internet connection points. Retailer management and staff may not have been trained on the new philosophy and tools.
- **Data fragmentation.** An omnichannel environment requires retailers to ensure a central version of truth. But fragmented data forces retailers to keep track of separate inventory and other data for each channel and location. Many retailers do not have the ability to assemble store and online data into manageable searchable files and to translate that data into actionable insights. They may have difficulty sharing customer data and analytics across channels and locations.
- **Silos.** Many retailers continue to maintain walls between online and in-store channels, buttressed by inertia and by in-store executives and managers fearing competition from online ordering, regardless of the impacts on customers, total sales, and market share. To illustrate, some retailers still balk at in-store pickup and returns of online ordering.
- **High costs.** Omnichannel investments can cost upwards of millions of dollars and take considerable time to execute enterprise-wide. Midsized to large retailers have large sunk hardware and software investments across many stores that would be costly to replace. The sheer size and scope of their operations make adding new supplemental mobile, digital display, beacons, and wearable AR and VR technologies expensive to scale.
- **Tracking in-store customer activity.** Retailers have long tracked customers' online activities. But they have been challenged in accurately, affordably, and unobtrusively uncovering, tracking, and analyzing customers' in-store activities. There is rough point-of-sale data that can be obtained based on which racks or shelves customers have taken items, but not where customers have looked elsewhere in stores. The options have typically included cameras, sales staff, and beacons. But there are new technologies using opt-in mobile customer apps that are being piloted and deployed.
- **Execution.** Failures in execution include being unable to provide customer-pleasing options like the ability to order out-of-stock items from the store or being able to look up transactions and process returns without receipts. Mobile options may discourage customers to complete transactions, as do sites that offer prices and promotions that don't match in-store prices.

- **IT integration.** Omnichannel retail solutions are rapidly evolving. But connecting them across channels often present architectural and implementation challenges. Solutions must be scalable, handle many different data points and systems, and work seamlessly across many different mobile and fixed customer and retailer devices.
- **High associate turnover.** Retail sales associate turnover may worsen as store closures loom, even as the economy improves, resulting in more, higher paying, and steadier alternative employment. Sometimes the Customer Experience can suffer from newly hired and inexperienced staff and demoralized existing employees. High turnover may then make it difficult to justify equipping and training associates on new omnichannel technologies. While technologies like mobile payments may potentially reduce the number of employees, they will not eliminate them.

## Summary and Recommendations

Retailing is at a crossroads where eCommerce, rather than bricks-and-mortar stores, are setting the pace, setting customers' expectations, and shaping the Customer Experience. But all retailers regardless of channel are facing pressures in the form of macroeconomic and social changes that impact sales prospects.

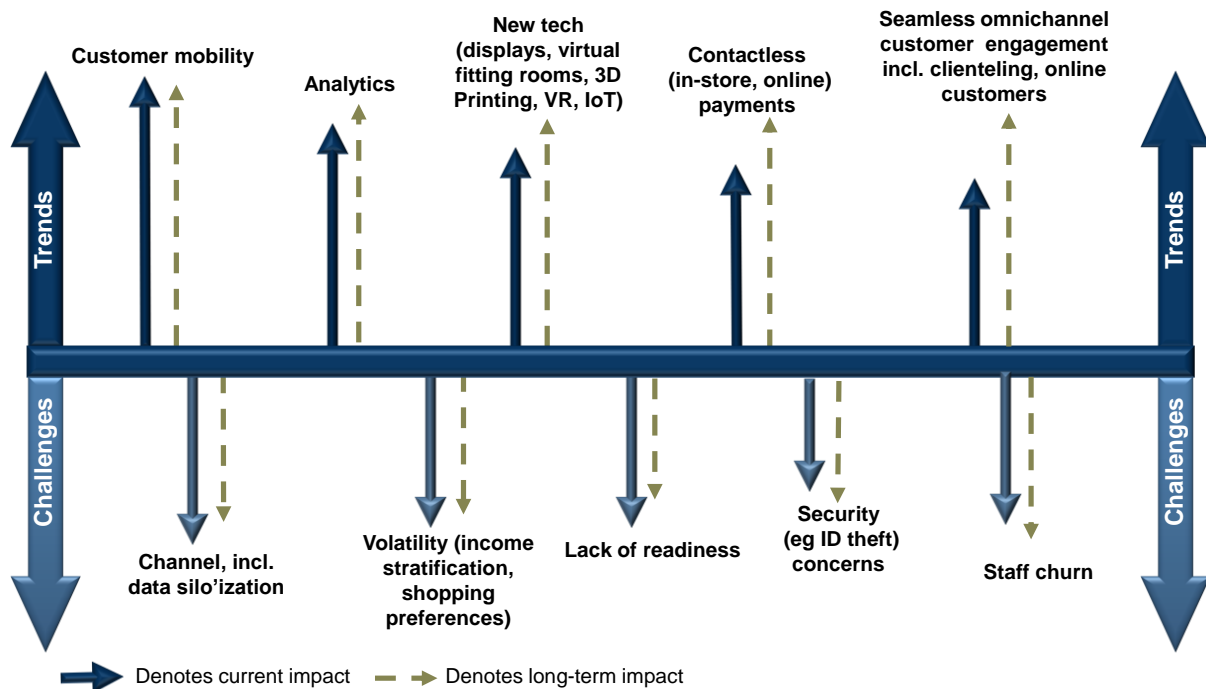
Ironically it may be omnichannel retailing that saves bricks-and-mortar stores. Their local presence for receiving and returns and service, brings customers. The data-driven customer knowledge and online ease of purchase that are the hallmarks of eCommerce bolster the ability of sales associates to swift personalized service, blending in their ability to show and help customers try on products. New technologies also connect online customers with associates. For these reasons in-store associates can provide a higher level of customer service than eCommerce contact center agents. Retailers also are beginning to use their space for 3D Printing, which could draw more sales through the ability of technologies to create customized products on demand.

As a result, retailers may have to adjust, turning their stores into attractive showcases for online purchases while still enabling customers to buy and take products home. The leased space also can be repositioned for close-to-customer local delivery, which could reduce delivery times and warehousing costs.

Exhibit 2 shows the key North American omnichannel retail trends from 2015 to 2021.

### Exhibit 2: Omnichannel Retail Key Trends and Challenges, North America 2015-2021

**Key Takeaway: Trend 5 is the most important factor in formulating future strategies.**



Source: Frost & Sullivan

Frost & Sullivan offers several specific recommendations:

- **Ensure strong brands.** Omnichannel retail strategies and solutions can only work with customer-supporting brands with excellent reputations. Retailers can ill-afford missteps in today's competitive marketplace. Lack of differentiated marketplace positions, outdated products and brand selections, poor service, recalls and scandals, all pose threats to retailers and limit omnichannel program success.
- **Reinvent the shopping experience.** Retailers must create appealing, customer and product knowledge based environments, as well as consistent online omnichannel and in-store environments. They should embrace mobility and incorporate interactive displays to enable customers to conduct their own research. They should enable customers to explicitly indicate preferences throughout their shopping journeys to create more customer-centric shopping environments and provide customer data-driven personalized searches.



- **Link all data sources for personalization and insights.** This includes offline point of sale (POS), CRM, third party data sources, and social feeds, and customer behavior and purchases for 360 degree views of customers. Retailers should demand platforms that take in all data types and enable decisions resulting in personalized upsell/cross sell, content, offers, and advanced merchandising. These solutions should integrate with retailers' back-end systems for accounting, personalization, product availability, order and returns status, and provide insights that allow them to keep pace with evolving consumer needs.
- **Seek smart and short-term wins.** Retailers should carefully evaluate and determine which omnichannel tools provide the strongest ROI. They also should invest in pilot projects or at niche chains to gain experience, knowledge, and immediate gains to build business cases for larger implementations. This strategy will build buy-in from senior management and investors.
- **Build targeted and engaging apps.** Retailers should consider push notifications for in-store offers, the ability to create shopping lists, price comparison, in-store self-checkout, and retail store locators. They should focus first on existing and preferred customers as they are more likely to frequently use the apps, and be more receptive to offers. Retailers also should create mobile-written sites and or employ responsive design to attract new customers who can then be driven to mobile apps. They also should consider pre-built apps with retail-specific business processes, saving money on development costs and speed time to deployment.
- **Don't abuse mobile.** Customers will generally accept single, targeted opt-in notifications in stores on their mobile devices. These can be much more effective than traditional non-location-relevant push messages according to inMarket. But customers will not tolerate being bombarded with additional messages and may decrease their mobile app usage as a result<sup>9</sup>.
- **Leverage existing assets.** To lower costs and increase ROI, retailers should use already designed applications (apps or responsive websites) or those with minor modifications. Representing the same assets and having consistent conversations, regardless of the channel, connects the selling approaches and, in many cases, drives additional online sales once the customer leaves the store. This tactic also keeps the Customer Experience consistent across channels.

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<sup>9</sup> InMarket "inMarket: Beacons Done Right Increase Interactions by 5x; Beacons Done Wrong Lead to App Deletion", press release, September 22, 2014

- **Measure everything.** Companies should ensure their KPIs and benchmarks cover proven in-store and eCommerce metrics. But they should measure and analyze emotional engagement, dwell time, engagement and the Customer Experience (i.e., Net Promoter Score). Some customer experiences, as when using interactive mirrors, may not immediately result in sales but they may increase brand engagement, resulting in future customer and social customer-referred sales.
- **Streamline inventory management for order pickup, fulfillment, and returns.** This is one of the most critical factors in determining an excellent omnichannel Customer Experience as customers rightfully expect their purchases and returns to be handled seamlessly. Retailers need to establish a solid process for employees to pull and ship inventory from the store and reincorporate returned inventory to maximize efficiency and inventory turnover. Retailers that have a high rate of online exclusive merchandise returns in-store should provide pre-paid return shipping labels with the products when shipped in order to minimize excess inventory.
- **Plan for global customers.** Omnichannel carries with it a localized component and retailers should be able to easily replicate omnichannel operations as they sell to customers in other countries and expand across borders. Retailers will need the same granular visibility in new markets to centrally manage company performance. But they also will need to adapt to currencies, cultural, market, product, and service preferences, measurements, and legal and regulatory factors in these markets whether their customers are online and in-person.
- **Recruit and train omnichannel-ready associates.** Retailers will require a higher skilled workforce that can serve more demanding customers, understand and focus on a brand's value proposition rather than channels, and that can be trained on new technologies. New assisted selling solutions, such as retail tablet apps, can help customers learn more about products while training employees on offers, product selection, features, and benefits. To attract and retain omnichannel associates, retailers must offer higher pay, more predictable hours, and meaningful career paths and rewards. To obtain optimum performance, retailers also should recruit and promote savvy supervisors and managers.

## Vendors at a Glance

### **Adobe**

Adobe, through the Adobe Marketing Cloud, offers a wide range of integrated omnichannel experience management solutions, including online and offline, in-person interactions and touchpoints. Adobe utilizes various technologies of the Marketing Cloud to provide personalized, contextually relevant, and engaging push messages to customers' mobile devices while in-store.

Adobe Campaign can be used to deliver mobile wallet coupons and personalized follow-up emails based on recent store visits. Adobe Experience Manager's "shoppable" video allows retailers to intelligently map product imagery and buy buttons to products featured in a video at scale, and deliver it to any screen, including smart screens, kiosks, and on customers' and sales associates' devices. Adobe Experience Manager Screens permits customers to have seamless, personalized and relevant experiences, as they move from device to device, and interact with in-location screens and displays. Finally, Adobe Experience Manager enables retailers to create and update information, messaging, and offers consistently across all platforms and channels.

### **Catalyst**

Catalyst offers innovative customizable, end-to-end RFID retail solutions that encompass inventory management, security, and the Customer Experience. Catalyst's modular suite of solutions will help to increase both operating efficiencies and sales while transforming retail from a transactional to an experiential event.

### **Coursa Retail (by InvenSense)**

Coursa Retail is a shopper location analytics service for bricks and mortar retailers that uses motion sensors inside customers' smartphones to deliver unique insights about individual and aggregated shopper behaviors, without requiring new store infrastructure or equipment. Coursa Retail's SDK and server solution integrates with retailers' existing mobile loyalty apps and operates as a background service. Coursa Retail then accurately delivers step-by-step individual shoppers' paths, locations, and dwell point histories.

Coursa Retail's algorithms then formulate raw data into actionable insights. They help retailers identify missed conversions, determine shopper dwell times by store, department, and aisle, and understand in-store traffic patterns, shopping sessions, and purchase sequences. The offering also enables omnichannel retargeting from online and in-store traffic. Coursa Retail also identifies how long each customer spends in the checkout line, helping improve staffing decisions during common lull and rush periods. Retailers can use its data to determine whether to invest in automated checkout and mPOS in order to cut costs and improve the Customer Experience.

## **Elo**

Elo is a pioneer in touchscreen solutions, including POS systems and interactive displays from 10 to 70 inches. The interactive displays can be used for a variety of applications to enrich the in-store Customer Experience, including POS systems, self-service kiosks, endless aisle, connected dressing rooms, store-within-a-store, and larger-than-life brand displays. The touchscreens are coupled with the unique and simple EloView cloud-based content delivery and device management software platform. Its solutions are designed for the demanding requirements of diverse markets and applications across the globe and meet international and in-country standards.

## **GolnStore**

GolnStore has created a pioneering first-person shopping experience for online customers, delivered using mobile technology (either a smartphone or smart or AR/VR glasses) to stream live from the viewpoints of store associates directly to website visitors. By facilitating a live, one-way video stream and two-way audio connection between website visitors and in-store staff, they are empowering retailers to deliver a new way to shop online. This in-store experience pushes the boundaries of the Customer Experience, conversion rates and average order value.

To optimize the experience, the “GolnStore” button can be configured to appear only on the website under predefined conditions; for example, when there is an available sales person, the product of interest is located in the store, or if the shop itself is actually open. The service is supported by GolnStore’s server infrastructure and artificial intelligence-driven Assignment Engine. It can analyze session behavior to ensure that the online customer is connected to the most relevant store associate, aiming to deliver the highest possibility of customer satisfaction and conversion.

## **IFS**

IFS delivers agile, component-based ERP software: giving retail and wholesale customers full visibility throughout the supply chain and providing them with the right tools for a complete omnichannel experience.

IFS Applications supplies this experience by managing existing and new assortments, markets, and eCommerce (including assisted online and contact center selling), mobile, and bricks-and-mortar stores in a flexible and controlled manner.

IFS Applications also offers assured quality control, along with embedded CRM functionality that allows for trackable loyalty programs closer to the flow of goods. Managers can set and reach performance goals for sales, inventory and other financial metrics while tracking actual results-to-goals, including planning product inventory, costing and pricing, and store and online distribution. It also handles timely replenishment, claims and returns across channels. With IFS Applications managers can better ensure customers receive the products they want, when they want them, and through the appropriate channel.

## **Kinetic Commerce**

Kinetic Commerce enables and supports online customer and associate-enabled sales and service. Its mobile commerce solution enables retailers to create apps. It has location-based and triggered notifications with instant and social messaging and email. It offers secure mobile payment integrated with major payment gateways, plus Apple Pay and Google Wallet. There is order management systems(OMS) integration with multiple delivery options, including in-store pickup, reservation, order status tracking, and return processing.

Kinetic's connected store solution enables and supports in-store mobile, digital storefronts, tablets and kiosks, digital mirrors and walls, endless shelves, find, try, and buy, and click and collect. Customers and associates can connect with merchandise to view extended information on their mobile devices.

Kinetic's associate mobility solution provides associates with customer knowledge, enables them to set up and manage accounts, provide personalized recommendations with product knowledge, instant cross- upselling, and alternative product suggestions, and launch service requests. Associates can check out customers anywhere in the store with mPOS, OMS, and major payment platforms.

## **KIOSK**

KIOSK Information Systems (KIOSK) provides self-service solution expertise in design engineering; application development, manufacturing and integration, field support, and managed services for even the most sophisticated kiosk platforms. KIOSK's modular solution design approach affords efficient hardware and software customization capability.

KIOSK developers and IT professionals provide professional managed services to ensure total solution payment security and compliance with stringent EMV and PCI DSS 3.0 standards. Field Services include contracted remote management, preventative maintenance, warranty and spare parts management, field technician dispatch, preventative maintenance, and disposal. Every solution is ISO9001:2008 quality certification and ISO14001 environmental standards on every solution.

KIOSK's retail solutions are widely deployed with leading retailers for bill payment and money transfer services, customer loyalty, endless aisle, rentals, and automated locker and delivery initiatives.

## **Mad Mobile**

Mad Mobile offers SDKs to create or it can build HTML5, hybrid, and native mobile retailing customer and sales associate apps. It has mobile backend as a service (MBaaS) plugins for push notifications, geo-location, reviews, analytics, and payment, and native plugins for cameras, scanners, and touch payments. Retailers can create business rules for data access, personalization, and engagement and enable offline access, data synchronization, and communication. They can use it to author, publish, schedule, and manage mobile content.

Mad Mobile also offers the Concierge clienteling app. Concierge combines customer data with eCommerce data, and provides customer service and POS capabilities for sales associates. Sales associates also can use Concierge to schedule appointments, inform customers of events and promotions, and to send targeted emails to customers.

## **MaxMedia**

MaxMedia crafts digital retail experiences to help retailers strengthen their connection with shoppers wherever they are at: flagship stores, boutiques, shopping malls, and at airports, museums, and sports venues. It creates compelling digital experiences including apps, online and social media content and series, in-store signage, and websites.

MaxMedia understands that in order to be successful omnichannel retailers must foster true emotional connections with customers. The company helps retailers deliver memorable and engaging in-store experiences that capture the imaginations of always-connected shoppers. Its solutions help drive customers back, turning shoppers into buyers, and buyers into brand ambassadors.

MaxMedia's retail experts build strategies and customer experience solutions that transform brands inside of bricks and mortar. Through the use of leading-edge technology, research, and behavioral analysis, the company determines and understands shopper motivations. Its team crafts intuitive, multi-sensory experiences that blend rich content and interactivity into stunning work with meaningful results.

## **Mi9 Retail**

Mi9 Retail offers the Mi9 Mosaic Suite, a database and device agnostic mobile omnichannel platform. Mi9 Mosaic POS provides extensive cross-platform mPOS functionality and real-time reporting on product, customer, and other omnichannel information. Combined with Mi9 Mosaic Inventory Management, store associates can easily locate customer's desired products and save sales.

Mi9 Mosaic Clienteling supplies visibility into customers' omnichannel activities, wish lists, preferences, past purchases, and contact details. Bolstered by Mi9's CRM solution, associates can browse through online product galleries with, and make recommendations to customers on their mobile devices. It enables assisted selling with tasks, templates, queries, reminders, and campaigns. Associates can use it to send thank you emails or letters, confirm deliveries and follow up on replenishment items.

Mi9 Mosaic OMS allows associates to use mobile devices to fulfill online orders from store inventory, place orders to be fulfilled from other stores, manage layaways, pre-orders, and product reservations. All orders processed at the POS terminals are fed into the OMS for a complete view of them across all channels.

## **NewStore**

NewStore is a new mobile solution aimed at creating closer, more meaningful, and profitable omnichannel relationships between brands and consumers by breaking the boundaries of online and offline. The NewStore Mobile Retail Platform adds mobile capabilities to retailers' existing eCommerce platforms for omnichannel online and in-store shopping.

NewStore offers a white label consumer mobile app for retail brands. It also offers in-store clienteling apps for sales associates and managers, serving as mobile point of sales with the ability to fulfill customers' orders from the stores. The NewStore Cloud enables order fulfillment (and customer satisfaction) by knowing where inventory is available and by dispatching the orders to the nearest store, with the best selection, and with the fastest delivery method. The NewStore HQ solution orchestrates omnichannel operations companywide, with business process configuration and automation, payment flow, and extensive real-time reporting.



## **Oracle**

Oracle offers a wide range of omnichannel retail solutions. Oracle Retail Open Commerce Platform Cloud Service platform enables and supports B2C across all touchpoints: desktops, tablets, and mobile devices, with streamlined checkout experiences. The Oracle Retail Customer Engagement Cloud Service provides single views of consumers across multiple touchpoints and the ability to manage omnichannel loyalty and stored value programs. The Oracle Retail Order Broker Cloud Service provides inventory visibility and order brokering across channels. It enables customer “order anywhere/fulfill anywhere” with endless aisle including the flexibility to drop ship an order to customers directly from suppliers instead of from the retailers’ existing inventories.

The Oracle Retail Order Management System handles order management, fulfillment, and customer service. A common database provides real-time visibility into inventory and customer activity throughout the transaction lifecycles.

The Oracle Retail Xstore Point of Service enables in-store clienteling, loyalty and promotions. Associates also have visibility into online inventory for additional product sourcing options. It also calculates deal pricing automatically.

## **PCMS**

The PCMS global software and services brand has been built around the needs of its retail clients with collaborative relationships, and leading edge technology. The flexible architecture of its VISION Commerce Suite of solutions is scalable, adaptable as businesses changes over time regardless of whether there are 80 or 8,000 stores.

The VISION BeanStore and VISION OnDemand, a globally-proven, omnichannel point-of-service solution and a portfolio of rich applications, data and services that can be exposed to other vendor solutions (eg Promotions engine can be used in store, at the POS, with mobile and by eCommerce). The VISION Channel Manager is a comprehensive multi-channel orchestration hub that simplifies integration and which orchestrates complex data routing and gateways, providing a dependable central source of truth.

The VISION Commerce Suite allows retailers to have a single-view of the customer and to create a true omnichannel experience. It also enables global retailers to control costs by using the same technology and system worldwide across multiple sectors, geographies, currencies, tax scenarios, and languages.

## **Retail Pro**

Retail Pro is a highly customizable retail management software that serves the needs of specialty retailers of all sizes worldwide. Retail Pro provides native retail functions for critical POS, eCommerce, customer engagement, store stock management, and replenishment needs. It builds upon the omnichannel concept to give retailers a platform for expansion and a holistic view of your enterprise across channels. The same feature-rich functionality is available regardless of the deployment model: back office PCs, the POS at cash wrap (sales counters), endless aisle kiosks, or any Apple, Android, or Windows mobile device for a modern, personalized retail experience.

Retail Pro's flexibility enables retail and IT teams to customize every part of the software to fit brand and business needs, and increase productivity by building workflows into the touchscreen-ready user interface. As a platform-based application, Retail Pro is designed to interface and connect with the applications and systems retailers require to round out their reach and engagement of the consumer, including omnichannel loyalty and business intelligence.

## **RichRelevance**

RichRelevance provides omnichannel personalization solutions to help retailers deliver the most relevant customer experiences across web, mobile, email, contact centers and store, in real time regardless of geography.

The RichRelevance Relevance Cloud™ personalization platform features more than 150 retail strategies leveraging complex algorithmic techniques. This allows the platform to make real-time decisions by leveraging omnichannel information (web, mobile, POS, CRM, product catalogs, and inventory), including data that came into the platform less than a second earlier.

The RichRelevance Relevance Cloud delivers personalized, content, product recommendations, search and browse, and promotions incentives across every channel. It maps individual shopper behavior against advanced targeting and audience segmentation tools. It collects data and uses a powerful machine-learning engine to select the most relevant output for each interaction.

As an open, independent platform, the Relevance Cloud integrates with many leading eCommerce technologies. For developers within retail brands, the platform provides instant access to API-based personalization tools to manage and route data from any source and integrate personalization into any application.

## **Scandit**

Scandit specializes in enterprise-grade mobile barcode scanning solutions. Through its software technologies and cloud services, Scandit enables organizations to rapidly build, deploy and manage mobile data capture applications for smartphones, tablets, and wearable devices. The resulting solutions offer a lower total cost of ownership than traditional, dedicated devices.

Scandit's solutions portfolio includes patented, software-based optical data capture technology, an ergonomic iPhone Scan Case, and rapidly deployable enterprise mobile apps. Its cloud-based mobility solutions are built on its 'Flow' Mobile Application Development Platform (MADP) for Data Capture. Scandit supports many North American and also global consumer retailers and B2B sellers.

## **SES-imagotag**

SES-imagotag offers a complete electronic shelf label (ESL) hardware and software solution. The SES-imagotag ESL solution enables and supports contactless marketing services such as self-scan to pay, geolocation, customer identification, and targeted offers. It permits enables automated dynamic pricing and stock and inventory management. The Jeegy S price management software operationalizes the use of data related to product locations, purchase history, customer loyalty, stock levels, and conversion rates.

## **Shelfbucks**

Shelfbucks offers an in-store beacon promotion and Smart Display platform that allows shoppers to interact with products, displays and store shelves from their smartphones. Using retailers' mobile apps, shoppers easily opt-in to receive coupons, product reviews, and other content to create an interactive and measurable experience. In turn Shelfbucks delivers detailed execution data while providing a real time view of shopper behavior including traffic, dwell time and conversion rates by campaign, store and other key metrics.

## **StepsAway**

StepsAway is a market-first, in-mall mobile retail solution. The company's patent-pending, cloud-based proprietary technology platform, SAConnect™, allows nationally based retailers to create and deliver promotions to shoppers' smartphones across multiple mall owners and targeted locations. Consumers access the StepsAway solution: SAMobile™ via a mobile app upon signing onto a mall's Wi-Fi network. As a result StepsAway empowers mall owners to increase sales per square foot and gives retailers an innovative way to reach and influence on-property consumer purchase decisions.

## **T1V**

T1V offers interactive table and wall displays and digital signage. Its OneShop endless aisle software allows customers to shop and make purchases the entire store from the displays and from their mobile devices. The OneShop Mobile companion app, integrated with the other products, enables sales associates to find products, receive in-store alerts, and it provides access to all active or complete in-store carts. It can also tie into retailers' CRM systems to access customer profiles and shopping histories for personalized offers and service.

## **Verifone**

The Verifone Commerce Platform is an open, cloud-based and secure platform enabling retailers and partners to quickly customize applications and services. These engage consumers with loyalty and points programs, display promotional media and coupons, leverage beacons for store analytics, and invite customers to redeem personalized offers in real time.

The Verifone platform supports Verifone's MX and VX products and its line of next generation devices that are currently or will be available by the end of 2016. The Verifone E Series supports all smartphone and tablet form factors and major OS options. It provides a single EMV and NFC-enabled mPOS device that purports to outlive smart device upgrades and integrates with legacy systems to connect online and offline sales channels.

The Verifone Carbon features high-resolution retailer and consumer-facing screens with a flexible integrated POS device requiring minimal counter space and offering portability for mPOS activities. It integrates into a stand with a built-in high-speed printer and optional cash drawer. The Verifone Engage is a family of interactive handheld and countertop devices supporting all payment types.

# **Frost & Sullivan's Top Omnichannel Retail Picks**

**GoinStore.** GoinStore redefines and enables truly omnichannel customer service by integrating online and in-person customer contact by equipping sales associates with innovative mobile and AR/VR technologies. These tools tap their unmatched ability to deliver expert hands-on service by enabling them to literally show customers the products' features.

**Mi9 Retail.** Mi9 Retail provides a comprehensive and retail-focused set of solutions. They cover analytics, clienteling, merchandising, inventory management, and store operations. They are mobile-enabled for management access and to empower sales associates to help customers. Mi9 also offers a retail-focused CRM solution that bolstered sales and service.

**RichRelevance.** RichRelevance offers an analytics-based omnichannel personalization solution using complex algorithms that works equally powerfully for when serving in-store and online customers. The solution has proven to be adaptable and flexible to retailers' requirements with the ability to reliably manage spikes.

## Omnichannel Retail Use Cases

### Barneys New York

Barneys New York is a leading luxury specialty retailer that takes considerable pride at being on the vanguard of design and fashion. Barneys customers expect to discover what is new and exciting that they cannot find anywhere else.

Barneys New York operates two flagship stores in New York City, where it is headquartered, and additional flagship stores in Beverly Hills and San Francisco, California, Chicago, Illinois, Boston, Massachusetts, Las Vegas, Nevada, and Seattle, Washington. It has 18 other stores and outlets across the United States. Barneys also operates luxury online store, Barneys.com and luxury content site, The Window.

#### The Situation

Barneys prides itself on customer-focused personalization. It is an integral part of its brand as expressed through impeccable customer service provided by knowledgeable highly trained sales associates who take the time to understand the customers and their preferences. When a new customer purchases from Barneys they are assigned to the associate who first engaged with them. When the customer returns to the store or contacts Barneys online, Barneys tries to ensure that the same associate, if available, engages the customer.

To increase sales and solidify customer loyalty, Barneys wanted to build on that personalization foundation to more closely connect its digital and offline channels in order to provide a superior omnichannel customer experience. This included merging online and offline behaviors and preferences, as well as product catalogs and inventory data, to help shoppers more easily find products and content that would meet their needs and desires, in keeping with how they see themselves. Additionally Barneys wanted to provide more complete customer information to its sales associates and to deliver the most engaging mobile experience to shoppers at home and in the store. Barneys found that customers who shopped both online and in-store spend three times more than single channel customers.

“Our most important customers do not distinguish between channels,” said Matthew Woolsey, Executive Vice President, Digital, Barneys New York. “And they expect us to know them on all channels.”

### **The Response**

In early 2013 Barneys searched for a personalization solution that would deepen the relationships between the customers and its brand. The luxury retailer also wanted to a solution that would convey its strong brand value proposition. It wanted to move far beyond standard “if you like this then you might like that” outputs. Instead it wanted a platform that would merge customer and product data with personalized editorial content (eg videos, look books, designer interviews, and factory tours) to elevate in-store and online customer experiences.

Also critical to Barneys solution and vendor decision was that the solution had to customizable so it can acknowledge that while some online product searches and inquiries result in online sales, others do not. The solution also needed to be real time to accommodate shoppers who demanded a seamless experience when rapidly switching from web to mobile to store.

Matthew used the example of jewelry which is often researched online, but is most often purchased in-store. A winning personalization solution would need to include both components. A shopper would need to: check out content on jewelry, return to their mobile device, head to the store to complete their purchase (with the help of a sales associate who has details on recent arrivals), and receive product recommendations based on past purchases and behavior.

“We think holistically,” said Matthew. “We want to make sure we could measure success by engagement and eventual conversions regardless of channel. “

Barneys had in-depth conversations with six vendors. After assessing them it selected RichRelevance’s Relevance Cloud™ platform and product suite. The Relevance Cloud collects, analyzes, and connects in-store data with online purchase and behavioral data, as well as product catalogs and inventory systems. It then creates and sustains personal connection with customers.

“RichRelevance’s personalization solution had the strongest set of editorial options,” said Matthew. “This was critical to us as we believe, based on our data, that it will lead to longer-term success with the customer and to a greater lifetime value. Its platform would allow us to create stronger near-real time almost CRM type of experiences, taking care of customer data and being able to use it in new and interesting ways.”

Barneys signed the contract with RichRelevance in spring 2013 and the Relevance Cloud began rolling out in June 2013. This occurred in phases: launching product recommendations at the bottom of product pages, followed by building editorial content on each of the pages and connecting it to Relevance Cloud, and finally connecting the Relevance Cloud to in-store applications.

RichRelevance's custom merchandising rules ensured that Barneys could incorporate the intelligence and taste-making savvy of its associates and merchants. Barneys also had RichRelevance carefully place competing product brands, as some suppliers would become offended if they were situated next to their arch-rivals, following how the brands are placed in-store.

Barneys laid the groundwork for these initiatives with its eCommerce site reflecting the brand as in its stores. It also integrated the supply chain, with unified in-store and online buying, and product distribution and stocking based on projected demand.

"We want every customer to have an experience that they felt was tailored to them, in a natural flow," said Matthew. "Because the best personalization is what you don't notice."

### **The Results**

Barneys realized strong and swift gains from expanded omnichannel personalization with the RichRelevance Relevance Cloud. The privately-held specialty retailer ascribed a 40% revenue boost to the solution between 2013 and 2014, which exceeded Matthew's optimistic expectations. Helping the solution deliver its results were its ease of use and its very high reliability with no downtime, even during Barneys' famous twice yearly sales that leads to huge demand spikes.

"What we are doing runs counter to the traditional eCommerce thinking of when a customer is on a product page, on the edge of the buying funnel, and they are one click from purchasing you *don't* give them something that will bounce them out to a higher funnel position. Like 'if I've about to buy a jacket don't give me a beachwear story'," said Matthew. "Instead we found that putting editorial on product pages led our customers to spend more money with us, which is behavior that we want to encourage."

Barneys and RichRelevance continue to refine the solution and installation. It added personalized search and curated the pages based on what products it thinks should go together.

Barneys New York data shows that a customer who shops both online and in the store visits the Barneys New York site 15x more often than an online-only customer. In February 2016, Barneys New York teamed with RichRelevance to power a first-in-kind digital customer experience at its new flagship store in downtown Manhattan. The new store offers a unique and timeless luxury shopping experience, with an emphasis on bringing digital aspects into the store with state-of-the-art technology.

With the new flagship, Barneys New York has become the first luxury retailer to integrate iBeacon technology with the Relevance Cloud personalization platform to deliver personalized editorial content to store shoppers who agreed to accept them through the Bluetooth on their smartphones. If the iBeacons are successful then it may spread deployments to other stores.



The new Barneys New York store is also using RichRelevance to power a clienteling system that uses customer-centric personalization to empower sales associates to better serve their clients. The clienteling app is available on associates' iPads, which are also used as mPOS devices with Apple Pay.

Through the Relevance Cloud personalization platform, the new clienteling app connects consumer, product and inventory data to deliver personalized product and content recommendations based on each shopper's unique history with Barneys New York. The app also provides 'endless aisle' capabilities: associates can access inventory across all Barneys New York stores and, from the store floor, key an order to be fulfilled immediately.

Barneys and RichRelevance continue to refine the solution and installation. It added personalized search and curated the pages based on what products it thinks should go together. Later in 2016 Barneys will roll out the RichRelevance Engage solution on the company's newly platformed site, which maps individual shopper behavior against advanced targeting and audience segmentation tools from the Relevance Cloud.

"We now have a better understanding of customers' preferences, their interests, recognizing patterns, with which we can create personalized recommendations to customers on the web site and to customers through our sales associates," said Matthew.

## **Imperial Supplies**

Imperial Supplies, a W.W. Grainger company, is a distributor of quality maintenance products aimed at the trucking industry. Imperial services its customers through a nationwide network of regional distribution centers. Its customers include the top nine common carriers and the top four leasing companies in the United States.

### **The Situation**

Imperial always looks for means to improve the customer experience while reducing costs and keeping its products competitive. Seeing its customers were increasingly relying on their mobile devices the company decided in 2012-2013 that it needed a mobile order entry app. The goal was to provide them with a way to place orders in real-time when they spotted low in-stock or out of stock items while walking through their maintenance shops. Imperial Supplies envisioned a user-friendly, branded app that would put the entire product catalog at their customers' fingertips for easy ordering.

But since Imperial's customers had traditionally relied on barcode scanners the company also needed the mobile app to incorporate scanning functionality in order to add items to orders. Customers frequently scan a variety of barcodes that appear on product labels, on product bins, and on EZ-Order, Imperial's online catalog and electronic purchasing resource. Customers could then easily create and submit orders in minutes.

At the same time the scanning would have to take place in poorly lit areas. This meant that the barcode scanning solution would have to perform accurately across various lighting scenarios.

### **The Response**

In August 2014 Imperial Supplies decided to seek a new scanning solution for the app, which it developed internally with an SDK. After reviewing several vendors the company chose Scandit. Imperial chose Scandit's Barcode Scanner SDK after other SDKs did not provide the performance necessary to encourage customer adoption.

Imperial was impressed by the ability of Scandit to scan poorly lit, damaged, and blurry barcodes and by its support for more than 4,000 scanning devices. The app's scanning feature complemented product searches, browsing lists, and quick add order features in the app, thereby enabling customers to find products in the way that works best for them.

### **The Results**

The Scandit solution went live in March 2015. Imperial's experience exceeded its expectations. The Scandit solution saves its customers time, while improving their stock inventory management. These results translated into greater customer satisfaction and led to a nearly 85% growth in mobile purchasing, from 2014 to 2015. Imperial Supplies attributes much of this growth to the ease in which customers are now able to place orders quickly utilizing the Scandit Barcode Scanner.

"Thanks to Scandit, we can offer customers a fast, reliable and easy-to-use integrated barcode scanner in our mobile app," says Imperial Supplies' eCommerce manager Nicole Alboushi. "This makes customers' lives a lot easier by allowing them to create their orders on the go whenever they have a minute."

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