Over the past decade, the rise of smartphones and always-on experiences have fundamentally changed how consumers use technology to communicate, share, travel and transact. Over the same period, new retail innovations from check-ins and digital loyalty to beaconing and Apple Pay, are allowing businesses and consumers to interact within and beyond the store. We’ve all watched and experienced the onslaught of new consumer technology.

We surveyed over 1,000 consumers and over 500 retailers in the U.S. to find out the pace at which retail technology is being adopted and used, and whether retailers are meeting the growing demand from consumers for a more high-tech experience.

What we found is that retailers are largely lagging behind when it comes to keeping pace with the consumer appetite for in-store tech. In fact, we found that 67 percent of retailers have no plans to adopt any new technology in their stores.

Specifically, consumers want retailers to offer tablet-based checkouts, loyalty programs and store-branded smartphone apps. But our research found that despite nearly half of consumers saying they want to see tablets in stores for payments, only 22 percent of retailers think that customers want in-store tablets.
We found that the adoption of consumer technology is having an uneven impact on consumers’ expectations and experiences at retail with increasing consumer assumptions around improved efficiency and customer experience.

Nearly half (44%) of consumers surveyed want retailers to use tablet-based checkouts. It is hard to imagine that the Apple iPad I was launched in April 2010 - a little under five years ago.

We also found that not only do consumers want the convenience of in-store technology, but in-store technology adoption affects the way consumers view businesses. Specifically, consumers see retail stores or restaurants that use tablets, as more up-to-date, more efficient, and more customer-focused.

The Impact of Tablets on Brand Reputation

Consumers think stores or restaurants who use tablets are more:

- 73% up-to-date
- 60% efficient
- 40% customer-focused
Consumers also increasingly expect a mobile optimized experience from local businesses, with 46 percent saying they want retailers to have a store-branded app for smartphones. They’re also moving away from the traditional retail experience and opting for convenience. When asked about receipts, over a third of consumers now prefer to receive emailed receipts over printed receipts.

In addition to a more advanced technology experience in stores, consumers are also seeking a more personalized and rewarding experience. The top thing that consumers want retailers to adopt are loyalty programs, with most consumers wanting stores to have a customer loyalty program that will offer them incentives to come back to the business.

87% of consumers want stores to have a customer loyalty program
Consumers want a more streamlined, customized and advanced experience from retailers. But are independent retailers taking notice and adopting the technology that’s needed to keep pace with the consumer demand?

Our research showed that retailers have failed to take notice and are still largely lagging far behind when it comes to adopting new technology. There’s a noticeable disconnect between consumers and retailers when it comes to in-store technology.

› The Checkout Counter Disconnect

Despite nearly half of consumers saying they want them (44%), only 22% of retailers think that customers want them to have tablets in store for payments.
We see a similar disconnect on loyalty programs where retailers are still failing to adapt to meet the consumer demand.

Despite 87% of consumers wanting a customer loyalty program, only 11% of retailers plan to adopt one.

Despite 46% of consumers wanting a store-branded smartphone app, only 7% plan to use one.

These examples are indicative of retailers attitudes towards the adoption of technology. Our research also shows that when asked, 67 percent of retailers said that they have no plans to adopt any new technology in their stores.

67% of retailers do not have plans to adopt any new technology in their stores.
It’s important to consider where trends are going in the next adoption cycle. Much has been made of the millennial generation’s embrace of technology, but the truth is that this young and emerging generation already makes up a significant portion of the U.S. consumer base. Millennials, will for some time, continue to be the consumers that retailers need to connect with and engage in order to drive sales.

The consumer trends that we’ve identified are largely driven by this younger generation of consumers.
Our research points to a widening chasm between the attitudes of consumers and retailers. Consumers with a growing appetite for technology are making it clear that they expect retailers to keep pace with that demand. However, most retailers haven’t yet taken notice and are largely sticking to the status quo when it comes to the adoption of technology.

The retailers that step out ahead and adopt the technology that consumers want are going to win with customers. They are the stores and restaurants that will be seen as more trustworthy, up-to-date and customer-focused, and ultimately, they’re the ones who are going to win business. They are the ones “skating to where the puck is going.”
About talech & Our Methodology

About talech
talech is a Palo Alto, California based software company developing a tablet-based point of sale platform that gives customers tools that help them run their businesses better. The talech product provides reports and insights that help customers grow their revenues, manage their costs and grow and retain their client base. The talech team is passionate about building easy to use products that businesses love.

Methodology
talech surveyed over 1,000 consumers and 500 retail managers and owners in February 2015 through an online survey. Responses were collected from both male and female respondents, ages 18 and up, in the United States. Responses were random, voluntary and anonymous. The surveys consisted of approximately 10 questions, using multiple option questions with one or more answers.

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