

Strategic omnichannel makeover for winning over Millennials

Millennials are the world's largest living generation, with their income forecast to outpace Baby Boomers by 2018. Having communicated, socialised and shopped via technology for nearly their entire lives, Millennials' habits mean retailers are at a critical crossroads, having to reconcile this demographic shift with the technology used to create an engaging and seamless shopping experience. Retailers must meet Millennials' demand for technology that drives convenience and immediate fulfilment, without sacrificing the engagement that's integral to Baby Boomers' customer service needs.

The store's point of sale (PoS) system is the natural hub of cross-channel interaction, delivering full PoS capabilities to any device for a seamless experience and uninterrupted engagement that enables:

- Purchase, return and service
- Promotions, adjustments and discounts
- Any form of payment (cash, credit cards and gift cards, etc.)
- One view of all real-time data (products, pricing and promotions)

- Store assistant engagement tailored by device (mobile phone, tablet and wearables).

Integrating PoS and order management for demand forecasting

To honour the Millennial mantra "I want it where I want it and when I want it", retailers must expand their inventory management capabilities from simply reacting to changing product demand with allocation and replenishment, to truly mastering product demand. Achieving this precise, broader level of product availability requires more accurate demand forecasting – not only knowing what products are bought, but also how they are purchased – to determine:

- Where each shopper's journey will begin and end
- What product needs to be where and for what purpose, for example, on the shelf or ready for Click and Collect
- Product availability for either immediate delivery or in-store pickup.

Truly understanding how and when inventory is consumed requires a global

view of real-time (near real-time is no longer good enough) inventory movement across the entire supply chain. This expansive, detailed view feeds a customer-driven distributed order management (DOM) system that continuously reconfigures and allocates inventory based on real-time customer behaviour rather than historical allocation.

Mastering Millennial motivators

Millennials care a great deal about price, and price drives many of their purchase decisions in several categories, including specialty retail, appliances, electronics and department stores. In fact, more than half of this tech-savvy group compare prices using their mobile phone while in the store.

Social media

The biggest influence on the path to a Millennial purchase is social networking – reviews, recommendations and ratings. As many as 71 per cent of all consumers are more likely to make a purchase based on a positive review, according to Hubspot. This gives brands that embrace social media an inside track.

Multiple forms of information

As far as information is concerned for Millennials, overload is not part of their vocabulary. The more, the better. In addition to written narratives, retailers should take advantage of this group's penchant for visuals (infographics, videos and slide shows, etc.) that convey product information (testimonials, applications, instructions and troubleshooting, etc.).

Innovation and experimentation

Having used technology practically since birth, Millennials are comfortable with change and adaptation. As a result, they embrace technological innovation, equate it with progress, and jump at the chance to simplify and streamline any and every part of their life. Therefore, they are predisposed to brands and retailers that offer them new paths to a more convenient shopping experience.

Moulding a Millennial-friendly retail enterprise

Fast-moving Millennials are pushing retailers to reshape their enterprise and deliver a satisfying shopping experience worthy of their loyalty.

Channel unification

Unified commerce is the name of the omnichannel game for winning over Millennials, because this group of shoppers, more than any other, expects it. Their technological prowess enables them to nimbly move from device to device and from channel to channel at any given point on their shopping journey, and nothing less than an experience that keeps up with them will keep them coming back. It's a tall order that retailers must fill with real-time and historical information shared among all channels. Those who maintain channel siloes cannot provide a seamless shopping experience and are therefore failing to earn Millennial loyalty.

Agile change adoption

The speed at which technological innovations are being thrust at retailers is so staggering that it's no wonder many are confused (and often skeptical) about which ones will endure and truly pay off on the bottom line. Technology providers must assist them in both deciphering the landscape and ensuring that solutions are well suited for achieving their clients' strategic



objectives. They must also help them create agile environments that can iteratively embrace the right technologies as they replace antiquated ones.

In summary

To invest in change that will garner their share of the Millennial wallet, retailers should consider these areas:

- Mobile commerce services/functions
- Social media functions/analytics
- Channel unification/seamless experience
- Innovation and experimentation
- Agile, adaptive enterprise
- Cutting-edge technology