

RETAIL

IBM exec: Anticipating purchase intent requires 360-degree view of customers

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Leading retailers are ahead in mobile; image courtesy of Neiman Marcus

By [Alex Samuely of Mobile Commerce Daily](#)

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NEW YORK An IBM executive at Forrester's CXNYC 2016 said that the ability to anticipate consumers' purchasing intent stems from having a 360-degree view of their behavior, which nowadays includes mobile channels, underscoring the need to look at customer engagement as a holistic experience.

During the June 21 session, "Delivering Experiences For Long-Lasting Relationships," the executive highlighted several examples of brands that have figured out how to view customer engagement holistically across all omnichannel platforms, especially mobile. He also stressed the need for marketers to deliver personalization at scale in real time.

"We view customer engagement as a holistic and lifelong experience, and one that requires an integration of marketing and marketing engagement capabilities, digital experience foundations, analytic capabilities, and ecommerce and merchandising technologies for those of you in retail environments," said Ken Bisconti, vice president of [IBM Customer Analytics](#).

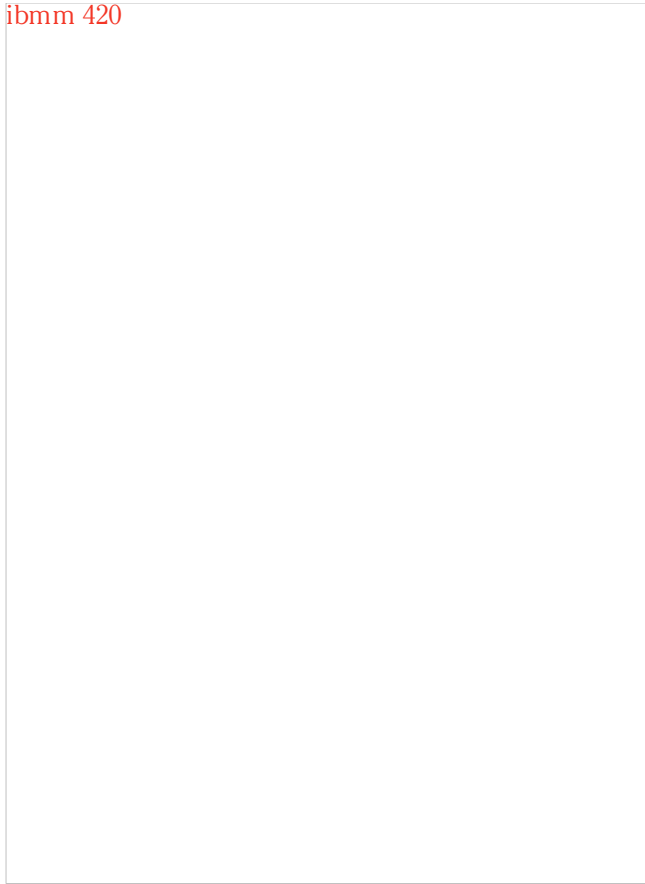
360-degree customer views

Mr. Bisconti named several marketers that are excelling at driving purchase intent among on-the-go consumers. For example, Celcom, the largest mobile carrier in Malaysia, looks at customer usage to cross-sell and upsell services while also considering how to make the customer experience more streamlined.

If a customer uses low amounts of cellular data during the weekends, Celcom may remind that person that weekends are an optimal time to download movies and TV shows onto a smartphone.

Meanwhile, British home improvement provider Homebase connects its mobile, in-store and online channels by offering consumers access to how-to videos, reserve on mobile and pick up in-store options and live chat capabilities.

"Anticipating intent requires the ability to have a 360-degree view of your customers," Mr. Bisconti said. "Today, it's about delivering unified, omnichannel experiences."



The Homebase mobile app

Mr. Bisconti also spoke with a Superior Group executive regarding mobile's influence on the workplace sector. Superior Group is a workforce and outsourcing solution that connects businesses with prospective employees.

Superior Group has become more reliant on mobile platforms after identifying some of the pain points that jobseekers encounter during their application processes. One of the most common complaints is the length of applications, even on companies' mobile-optimized career sites.

"Having a career experience that works on mobile is critical," said Frank Gullo, director of digital and mobile strategy at **Superior Group**. "What you're seeing these days is a lot more integrations with [sites such as] Monster and LinkedIn that easily allow people to apply."

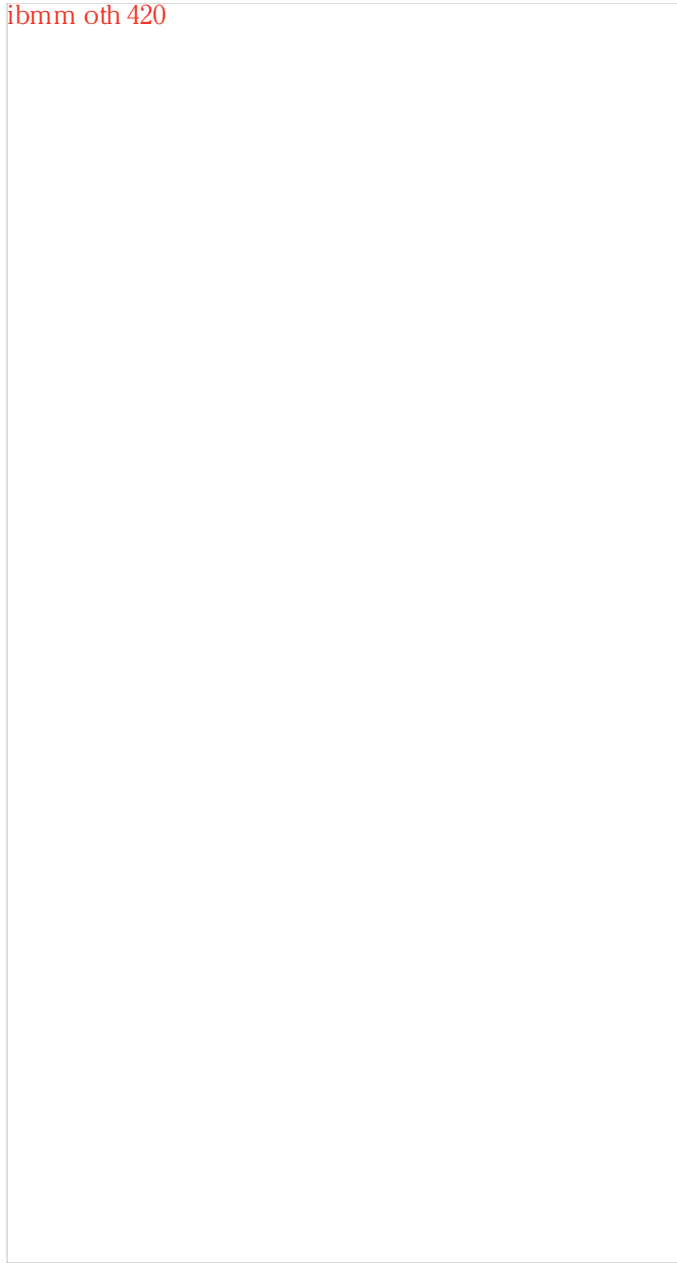
American Express is one of the brands working diligently to offer a slew of mobile features for anyone applying for an open position, including the ability to refer a friend via LinkedIn, to conduct an interview with prewritten questions on mobile and the use of gamification modules for some interviews ([see story](#)).

Jobseekers on mobile

Social media is also a must-have channel for companies wanting to bolster their pools of potential candidates.

"For us, social is a key area of customer and candidate experience, especially on our B2C channels," Mr. Gullo said. "A lot of jobseekers will go there."

Even if a career site is mobile-optimized, an individual will often times message Superior Group on Facebook for help with completing an application.



American Express' mobile job applications

Additionally, many consumers turn to mobile during the job-selection process on weekends and evenings.

Brands that do not offer career resources on their mobile-optimized Web sites or social media channels may find themselves at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting fresh new talent.

"Mobile is so important now," Mr. Gullo said. "Over half of our visitors on our career site are now [from] mobile.

"We're not seeing signs of that slowing."