

RETAIL

Personalized ecommerce engagement drives in-store sales

March 15, 2017



Image courtesy of Neiman Marcus

By SARAH JONES

Having one-to-one client interactions online can translate directly to bricks-and-mortar spending, according to new data from Salesfloor.

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The retail platform, which counts Stuart Weitzman, Bloomingdale's and Saks Fifth Avenue among its clients, conducted a controlled experiment to attribute in-store conversions to online engagement. Salesfloor found that for every \$100 in online conversions, up to \$68 of sales were driven in-store.

"Retailers are striving to build better relationships to encourage and enhance customer loyalty, but few take the necessary steps to deliver an omnichannel experience that so many customers are looking for," said Oscar Sachs, CEO and co-founder of **Salesfloor**. "Our data shows that by having multiple, personalized touchpoints and thus finding a way to bridge the gap between shopping online and in-store, retailers can achieve measurable growth."

Omnichannel attribution

Salesfloor's technology solutions give retailers' sales associates or individual stores their own version of the brand's ecommerce site. From here, the retailer's sales staff can make product suggestions to clients or connect with consumers via live services such as chat ([see story](#)).



Salesfloor's associate marketing

For three months, Salesfloor monitored the impact of 150 sales associates from different retailers. For the duration of the experiment, those who made a purchase in-store were asked whether they had engaged with any store staff online.

If the customer interacted with frontline staff via digital channels, their bricks-and-mortar purchase was then connected to the online engagement.

Of those transactions linked to online communications, 38 percent of conversions were tied to services such as live chat. Salesfloor's clienteling options, such as product suggestions or brand messaging coming directly from a sales associate, drove 31 percent of in-store sales.

Those who shop both online and in-store spend 50 percent more with a particular brand. However, the ecommerce experience is often lacking the personal touch that luxury buyers are accustomed to receiving.



Image courtesy of Bloomingdale's

Sales associates are an integral part of in-store experiences, with 87 percent of consumers basing purchase decisions off the advice of a retail employee, according to a previous report by Salesfloor.

While in-store interactions are vital to a consumer's purchasing journey, more than half of surveyed consumers say the same personalized synergy is lacking online. Salesfloor's "[2016 Omnichannel Retail Associate](#)" study identifies the service gaps in online and bricks-and-mortar shopping experiences, a chasm that needs to be remedied for retailers to present consumers with seamless, omnichannel retailing ([see story](#)).

Engaging ecommerce

Retailers have taken the in-store consultation online, looking to generate ecommerce sales through a more personalized appeal.

In 2015, department store chain Nordstrom expanded its mobile commerce capabilities with a new feature that enables shopping via text message.

The retailer claimed its TextStyle was the first of its kind for a department store in the United States, allowing for a secure, one-to-one buying experience between a consumer and a sales associate. Consumers are constantly connected to their phones, so this enables Nordstrom to serve them in a personal way no matter where they are ([see story](#)).

While technology can help to deliver a high-touch experience to consumers, data and automation cannot replicate the level of engagement that a salesperson can create with shoppers, according to an executive from Moda Operandi at Luxury Interactive 2015.

Moda Operandi employs stylists, who work with its most valued consumers to provide personalized recommendations and one-to-one communications, but the process being used to deliver this service was tedious. Keeping the same human touch business model, Moda Operandi built a platform to help its stylists deliver more relevant, visually appealing messages to the most important customers ([see story](#)).

"For this audience segment in particular, a personalized experience is pivotal and sales associates are the ones that drive this experience, making them a central point of focus for luxury retailers," Mr. Sachs said.

"Customers making a larger purchase are often going to have more questions and require more time with a sales associate," he said. "And with competition so high, retailers that can provide and allow for that will come out ahead.

"Additionally, if a retail associate can have as many touchpoints as possible with the same customer, across physical and digital channels, they are more likely to build a trusting, loyal relationship.

"This level of trust is built on a highly personal foundation and cannot be achieved without the help of a sales associate. In luxury retail, we find this to be key in creating repeat, loyal customers."