

COLUMNS

Who really owns the buying experience?

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Experiences are the new common currency of shopping.

So when department store chain Barneys New York allows its customers to get up-close and personal with stars such as Drew Barrymore through their native mobile application, they are just doing what they have been doing well for a long time turning shopping into an experience that goes beyond the mere purchase of an item.

Check it out

Consumers are demanding something more than just a sales transaction. They expect retailers to take the convenience and fulfillment capabilities of Amazon, the omnichannel approach of Apple, the me-to-me world of Uber and the visual social interaction of Instagram, and blend them into a consistently pleasing experience.

A few retailers are getting this message and are delivering it back to their customers successfully.

Rebecca Minkoff is trying out instant pay self-checkouts in place of traditional cash register terminals

The app from Lush allows customers to specify what mood they are in, and receive the attention that matches it

Starbucks is now capable of sending out 400,000 variations of its promotional email, essentially guaranteeing a message that fits the particular individual to whom it is sent

These types of activities are the new beating heart of mobile retailing because technology enables more personalized customer attention than ever before.

Shop talk

The experience of shopping, buying and owning has become a real-time social event, but only a few retailers have stepped up to take full advantage.

Sixty-two percent of the retailers still do not offer publicly accessible Wi-Fi

Seventy-eight percent of brands did not have a shoppable app

Most retailers operated within a siloed management system, with the digital Web office not connected to retail

operations

These are new days for retailers. They have many chances to connect with shoppers through new technologies and across the plane of time, interacting with them long before and after the occurrence of the purchase itself.

THE ULTIMATE question is this: In this new era of technology-enabled mobile commerce, who really owns and ultimately controls the buying experience?

The clear answer is: the customer does.

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