

COLUMNS

Mobile-obsessed consumer demands a store makeover

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Bricks-and-mortar stores are not dead. They just need a makeover.

It is no secret that there are plenty of suburban shopping centers struggling to keep their doors open, but the high-end malls are thriving.

Higher-end has differentiated the consumer experience, therefore, people still want to shop in the physical store.

High-end brands make shopping a true experience, offering instant gratification with luxury service and modern fulfillment.

The future of bricks and mortar is up to each brand and retailer. Everyone needs to keep pushing the envelope.

Here is part 3 of an excerpt from my new book, "[Makeover: How Mobile Flipped the Shopping Cart](#)," about how stores need to evolve to keep up with today's mobile-obsessed consumers.

Some suggest the rise of technology-assisted shopping will hurt stores, but that might be a hasty judgment. Stores, rather than being threatened by technology, will be enhanced by it.

Mobile is not the end of stores, but rather part of the evolution of stores as they transform for the mobile age.

Change is part of retailing

Many things in the United States retail world have been retired to the history books, from the door-to-door salesman to cash on delivery. The store is different.

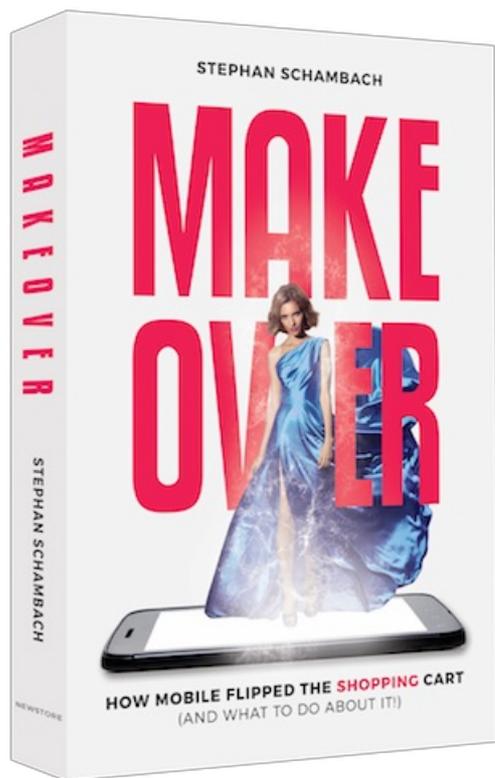
Ever since the early days of the Internet, industry watchers have put the store on death watch. Ecommerce would kill the store, they warned. Not so much.

Not only has the store survived, but smart stores can get in on the new technology and thrive.

We have seen stores venture onto the Web to challenge Amazon, but the opportunity does not end there.

As mobile has flipped the shopping cart, new opportunities for traditional stores have emerged. The store, far from being dead or in the process of dying, might just be getting started.

The trick, smart retailers are noticing, is not to focus the battle on beating ecommerce at its game.



Makeover: How Mobile Flipped the Shopping Cart, by Stephan Schambach

Amazon is a powerful force in the retail world, and shoppers are well trained to its top-notch execution of convenience and low prices.

Smart stores have ecommerce sites but are branching into technology that allows them to score wins, not ties, with pure ecommerce players. In many cases, that technology is mobile.

Mobile offers traditional retailers a unique opportunity to flip the script and battle back particularly against Amazon in the war for the hearts and minds of shoppers.

While Web sites might have made inroads, traditional retail stores have elements they alone can leverage to secure shopper dollars. Often, these are battles stores can win.

Retailers in fashion and elsewhere need to realize that shopping is actually a streaming activity for many of their consumers.

Shoppers want to check inventory levels before venturing out to a store, browse the latest collection, or even place an order to pick up in the store. They might request the items be available for pickup by a certain time, or they might expect a well-versed sales associate to walk alongside them like a personal assistant, setting up the items based on a pre-loaded awareness of their tastes.

It sounds like a daunting experience for retailers to deliver, but it is not. This is what shopping has become streaming retail and it is a good thing.

RETAILERS MUST STOP thinking of their stores as large boxes of merchandise on which shoppers take a chance. They are in-person fulfillment centers that can and should leverage data as a means of maximizing the retail relationship and minimizing inconvenience in a way that has not been done before.

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