

COLUMNS

Press ahead with digital transformation as pandemic births connected customer

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Calvin Carter is CEO of Bottle Rocket

By **Calvin Carter**

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The COVID-19 coronavirus is wreaking havoc on many businesses as it forces the cancellation of trips, nights out and mass gatherings.

Consumers still need products and services, but while it is true that what they need has changed, how they want to shop and receive them has changed dramatically.

Interestingly this trend started well before COVID-19, but the pandemic has greatly accelerated this transformation of consumer behavior to be what we call the "connected customer."

Channeling right

For those businesses that have focused on building digital customer experiences, this period of digital transformation could provide a lifeline as they provide consumers with the purchasing channels they need.

Brands that choose digital experiences first and foremost with their attention and investment are better positioned to weather this current crisis as they can maintain an ongoing relationship with their customers through their digital ecosystem. Yet they will need to do much more now to build deeper connections.

All businesses need to immediately invest in quick digital wins and leverage this situation to learn quickly versus pull back and wait.

If you need to pull back, do it someplace else in your business, but not on your digital, as this will be your lifeline through the crisis and is still a good and relevant investment after this crisis passes.

Mobile commerce has been on a staggering global growth curve over the last few years, doubling in growth since 2016. This will continue to surge this year as the rise in mobile commerce becomes the new norm and more brands adopt this type of customer engagement.

However, changing customer expectations and behavior will require brands to find new ways to interact with customers through mobile ordering experiences.

Food for thought

The connected customer, a type of customer who expects immediacy, connectivity and enjoyable experiences on digital platforms, has pushed for this digital movement and demanded for brands to keep up with their needs.

Brands will need to go above and beyond for their customers and show them that they are there for them, no matter what.

Brands must increase their efforts to ensure the best customer service and experience is delivered.

For instance, if a customer orders food to be delivered from your restaurant, why not include a little something extra that might add more value to both the transaction and the customer relationship.

And in a time where you fear customer visits will decrease due to fear around COVID-19, make delivery free to the customer and offer family dining package deals that are easy for a customer to say yes.

EVERY PROBLEM is solvable. And to solve problems around connected customers, you have to first truly understand the unique and powerful behavior of those customers, which takes true empathy and experience.

This is how you can safeguard your brand during this time of uncertainty.

It is not a time to pull back on digital. It is a time to lean forward.

*Calvin Carter is CEO of **Bottle Rocket**, Dallas, TX.*

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