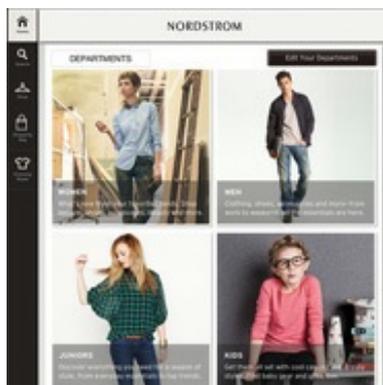


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Nordstrom contemplates dressing room iPads to elevate customer experience

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By ERIN SHEA

Department store chain Nordstrom is contemplating putting iPads in dressing rooms to elevate its customer experience and allow it to be more accessible to digital-savvy customers.

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The iPads would allow customers to easily look up information to see if products are available in another size, color, department or store. Although other retailers make use of smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices in store, it seems that this initiative would put Nordstrom ahead of the pack.

“As we look at the interactions of ‘digital natives’ in department stores, it emerged that these consumers are less interested in having a sales associate interrupt them as they browse on the sales floor since many times they have already done pre-shopping before coming to a store,” said Rick Chavie, vice president of omniconmerce at [hybris](#), Atlanta.

“An in-store service that extends a form of personalized shopper support, such as picking wish list items for trying on offering personal shopper services, could well be the next wave of in-store support to go beyond what web only shopping offers,” he said.

Mr. Chavie is not affiliated with Nordstrom, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Nordstrom did not respond by press deadline.

Mobile personal shopper

Nordstrom is looking into more ways that it can use iPads and mobile technologies in stores, with one of the main ideas being iPads in its dressing rooms, according to [Cite World](#).

The iPads would aid consumers in a number of ways such as seeing if an item is available in a different size, color or a nearby store. The iPads will also sync with customer's selections from home to have products waiting at the dressing room upon arrival and match up new items with other products that the customer has previously purchased.



Nordstrom iPad app's virtual dressing room

Furthermore, these devices could be used by either an individual customer or a sales associate.

Offering a level of service with mobile devices could help a retailer better serve its customer.

“At the point of decision when a customer is choosing among products there are opportunities to provide specific services such as inventory visibility if the desired color is

out-of-stock, or if there are tailoring services that need to be added, or if a customer wants to merge an online order with the in-stock purchase and pay on the spot,” Mr. Chavie said.

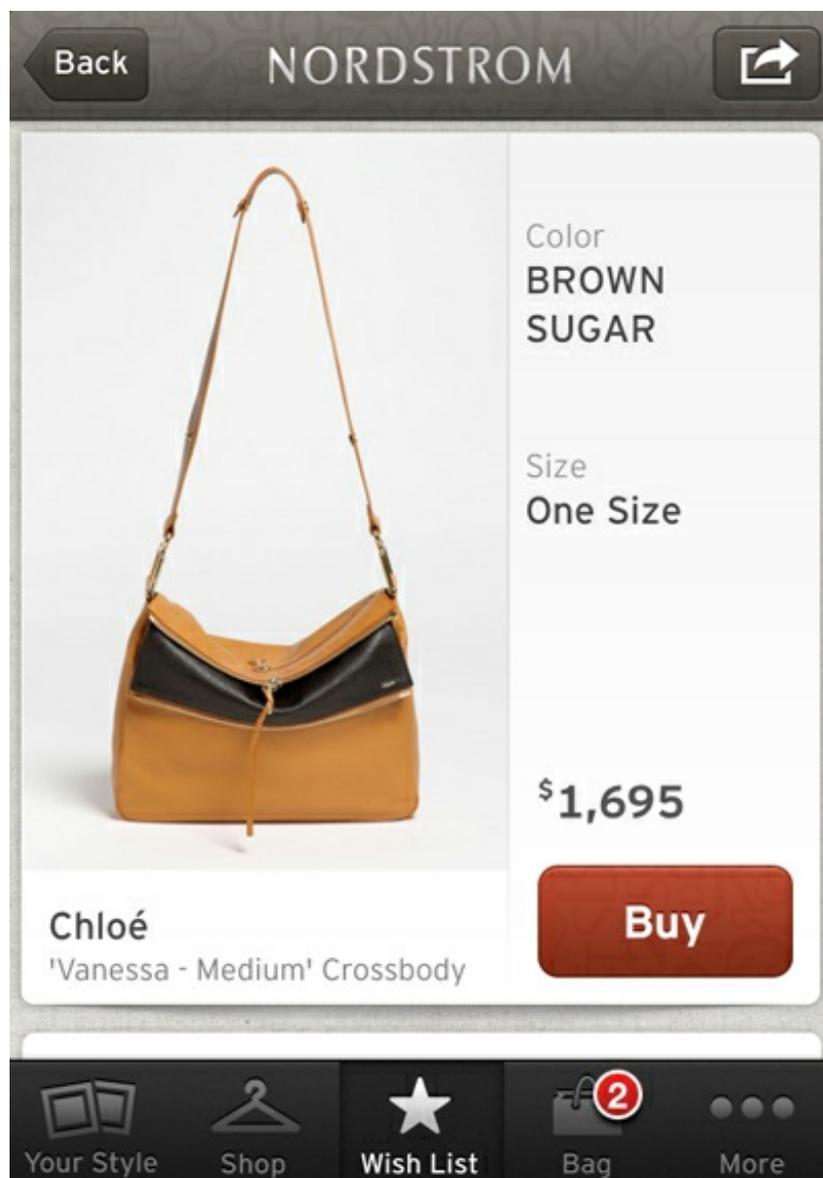
“In other markets, Japan for example, there has long been elite personal shopper services that even extend into bringing garments into the home for selection,” he said.

Mobile mavens

The in-store tablet ideas are building off of Nordstrom's already established, forward-looking mobile applications.

In April, the department store chain enhanced the consumer experience on its iPhone app with updates that included product sharing via SMS and user reviews.

The updated functions of the app help consumers share their opinions on Nordstrom’s products with their friends and fellow shoppers. Also, consumers can send an auto-generated text message to anyone in their contact list about a particular product ([see story](#)).



Nordstrom iPhone app

Also, last year, Nordstrom offered a personalized mobile shopping experience in its iPad app in a move that helped the brand distinguish itself on the platform.

The three main engagement functions of the Nordstrom for iPad app are the virtual dressing room, personalized homepage and social sharing. It is available for free in the App Store ([see story](#)).

As in-store mobile technologies become more and more prevalent, retailers should look to personalize offers to build relationships with customers.

“If a retail chain can provide a new level of personalized service in the store to complement the personalization that customers are accustomed to on the Web, that service will be promoted by customers themselves,” Mr. Chavie said.

“The key to success for any retailer is the service attitude of the sales associates, the operating model of how they engage with customers and the linking technology to other services that improve the customer experience,” he said.

Final take

Erin Shea, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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