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## Mobile commerce becomes key player in omnichannel strategy

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The retail world is evolving, and so are its marketing tactics. Today's modern consumer is becoming more technologically savvy and retailers are finding that a progression towards omnichannel retailing is becoming more prevalent. The benefits of integrating a clear and concise message for consumers are substantial to your ROI.

For this reason, omnichannel strategies have become an essential part of retail success. Omnichannel strategies allow retailers to engage fully with a consumer through all channels, enhancing the consumer experience while creating brand awareness and improving consumer loyalty.

According to Deloitte & Touche, 78 percent of shoppers use two or more channels to research and purchase an item, and multichannel shoppers are worth up to 208 percent more than single-channel shoppers.

Yet perhaps the most common channel in the omnichannel approach and the anchor of the entire strategy is mobile device communication.

Mobile channels provide a unique opportunity for retailers to capitalize on consumers due to the high penetration rate of mobile devices worldwide.

From tablets to smartphones, mobile is slowly taking over the world. The United Nations estimates that the number of mobile phones worldwide is around 6 billion.

Retailers who are early adopters in the development of mobile marketing strategies can take advantage of executing successful campaigns that are quite literally at a consumer's fingertips.

Studies show that more than 90 percent of retailers use the mobile medium to advertise to consumers while only 48 percent actively engage with their consumer via mobile.

We are seeing a more aggressive movement towards mobile marketing platforms due to its integral part in a brand's presence in this economy. Not only does targeting mobile for commerce build brand awareness and enhance the customer experience, but it also significantly increases the bottom line for early adopters.

Innovative mobile traffic tactics

Mobile marketing is not just useful in that it targets consumers where they spend most of their time. It also opens the door to a wide variety of potential innovative new tactics:

- Mobile marketing can be used to improve footfall traffic in bricks-and-mortar stores through the use of geo-targeting. The principle of geo-targeting is to engage with the consumer so they realize the benefit of shopping locally.

Consumers can provide a location based on basic ZIP code information or through the use of Wi-Fi and GPS triangulation. Once a location is established, retailers are able to send out promotional alerts, sales and other benefits that draw the consumer away from competitors.

- Mobile marketing can also be used to drive in-store traffic by offering coupons specifically related to in-store purchases.

Progressive changes to smartphone and tablet capabilities as well as mobile application updates available to consumers allow retailers to offer coupons that can be redeemed in-store only.

Coupons have become a consumer trend and retailers can now take advantage of this strategy through mobile means.

Retailers can also capitalize on those consumers concerned with the environment since mobile coupons provide the added benefit of being paperless. Promotions and coupons that can be accessed through mobile channels offer the consumer convenience and versatility.

- Mobile marketing has also improved the way retailers engage consumers through loyalty programs.

Consumers are now able to take advantage of digitized loyalty cards by downloading apps onto their smartphones or other mobile devices. Consumers can then access these cards much like traditional loyalty cards with the added convenience of having the

number saved directly to the mobile device.

- Last but not least, retailers are able to enhance the consumer experience by providing a well-organized delivery system which, in turn, increases consumer loyalty.

Mobile marketing is improving inventory management for retailers. Mobile inventory management allows for faster delivery of products and a more efficient tracking system which gives these retailers a competitive advantage.

Mobile popularity is increasing

The mobile marketing wave has been a long time coming.

Retailers have seen a shift in digitized marketing strategies that are gaining momentum with the advancement of mobile devices. Mobile-driven retail activity is increasing as consumers use their devices in everyday purchases.

Advances in mobile technology allow retailers to gather much more data than ever before. Simultaneously through the mobile medium they are able to send out a seamless message to consumers with access to mobile devices.

During the developmental stage of mobile technology retailers were able to provide SMS updates to consumers on a limited basis. As technology and smartphones evolved so did the way retailers were able to engage with consumers.

With the integration of data plans, retailers are now able to tailor campaigns to target individual consumers based on location and spending patterns.

Mobile technology is encouraging consumers to become more technologically advanced. Consumers in different age brackets are now able to use a mobile device with more features more easily than in past years.

Features that were once foreign and intimidating are now second nature to the modern consumer.

With the creation of apps consumers can download specific programs that can help them easily navigate the retail world. Consumers are also teaching their children how to use mobile devices, training from an early age the consumers of the future.

Future of mobile

Studies suggest that in the impending years almost 50 billion devices will be connected to the Internet.

Augmented reality (AR) is the future of mobile, allowing consumers to experience their own reality based on personal inclinations. AR programs enhance retail gamification tactics by providing consumers with interactive games.

Consumers will be able to use mobile devices to scan items and try them on in a virtual dressing room before making purchases all while telling them how much an item is, where to purchase and the closest physical location of the item in question.

Along with augmented reality, mobile devices will soon be able to facilitate consumer

shopping experiences. How so? Through a more advanced version of geo-targeting with exclusivity for which consumers are looking.

What this means for consumers is that they will be able to download even more apps that will be able to let them unlock exclusive deals or shopping events designed specifically related to location.

Retailers will be able to enhance the consumer experience by bringing deals directly to a consumer as opposed to a consumer having to search them out. Convenience for consumers means a bigger basket for retailers.

Simply put, strategic mobile marketing strategies can help retailers enhance the consumer experience and facilitate a seamless omnichannel experience.

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