How to Survive and Thrive in the New Age of Retail

Paving the Way for Success Through Connected Marketing, Sales, and Service

ACUMEN solutions

EXPERIENCE DELIVERS SUCCESS.™

Do your customers enjoy a unified service experience? In today's retail landscape, a cohesive and seamless customer service experience across multiple channels and devices is not an option, it's an expectation.

Customers want to have the same experience and get the same information whether they are in a brick-and-mortar store or shopping online, and whether they choose to interact over social media or dial in to a call center. This means that retailers need a suite of tools that bridges the entire enterprise — from marketing and sales, to operations and customer service.

The retail industry has been going through a transformation for years. With market share steadily shifting from brick-and-mortar to online sales and businesses increasingly producing razor thin margins, retailers need to stay on top of the latest developments in their industry in order to remain competitive. However, a lot of retail businesses remain behind on their infrastructure improvements. Yesterday's technology, working with multiple incompatible systems, delivers slow, incomplete data.

Old infrastructure can result in poor customer service. This is a cost that retailers cannot afford.

7 Trends Retailers Should Already Be Aware Of

1 Although shoppers will never wholly abandon brick-and-mortar stores, they expect retailers to offer a convenient online alternative.

2 Lower price points alone is no longer enough. Retailers must offer value in the form of greater service and convenience.

3 Brick-and-mortar retailers need to use an increasingly complex combination of branding, service, and pricing to convince shoppers to get dressed, get in their cars, and drive to pick up merchandise.

4 More and more retailers now utilize technology in-stores to help provide better customer service.

5 Chatbots are no longer optional and instead are becoming a preferred communication channel.

6 Retailers are investing in ways to seamlessly move customers from social channel to checkout.

7 Retail APIs will continue to develop in order to meet customer preferences and demand.

Four Elements that Define Retail Success

Retailers need more than a CRM system; they need a unified platform for customer engagement. For businesses looking to achieve this transformation, four questions can serve as a litmus test for success:

1. Can you deliver a connected unified experience across sales, marketing, and service, regardless of the channel your customers are interacting through?
2. Are you empowered to tailor experiences to your customer's preferences based on where they are in the buyer journey?
3. Can you respond in real-time to provide customers what they need immediately, through their preferred channel?
4. Are you able to stay ahead of the game and deliver data-based recommendations that simultaneously make your customers happy and your employees more productive?

The answers to these questions will have a tremendous impact on growth and revenue as the industry forges forward.

Engage Your Customers Across Channels

An omni-channel strategy is the only way to provide customers with a unified experience. Today's consumers expect to engage with the brands they like across multiple channels, including web, mobile, social media, and phone; they want the "Amazon experience." If a customer asks a question via a branded web channel and wants an update via mobile, the retailer must be able to continue the conversation. Regardless of how they started the conversation, the customer expects the history and context of that conversation to carry forward into future interactions.

Unfortunately, 55% of today's shoppers say their retail experience is disconnected from channel to channel, and 63% don't feel like retailers understand who they are (Source: Salesforce). Customer information should be comprehensive and accurate, and if a retailer cannot meet those needs, they risk losing that customer. Even worse, 54% of dissatisfied customers will tell five or more people about their experience, further impacting brand image and loyalty.

However, fulfilling all of these requirements can be a tall order for retailers, particularly for those that have different teams and different systems for each channel. With key customer information spread across dozens of specialized systems, retailers often struggle

with modernizing their customer service across all channels. Replacing all the systems is not feasible as the process would take years, be too costly, and disrupt sales.

Client Success: Denim and Apparel Retailer Engages Customers with Optimized Digital Marketing

Acumen Solutions enabled a global retailer to increase customer loyalty, sales, and conversion by optimizing the retailer's Salesforce Marketing Cloud platform across all of their brands and channels. As a result, the retailer was able to personalize and segment their digital marketing strategy.

Sell More by Bringing the Data Together

What is the alternative? A solution that brings all of the data together and facilitates information-rich customer interactions without the need to replace all of the underlying systems. Such a solution replaces single channel interaction systems with a robust customer-centric, multi-channel interaction management system that supports email, web, phone, and chat channels.

This type of customer service system allows sales agents to view all customer data in one consolidated platform that is able to pull real-time information from multiple systems. It empowers sales agents to take the customer experience to the next level by giving them the predictive tools for cross-sell and up-sell opportunities.

Your organization can realize the benefits of a modern technology environment without the hassle and cost of replacing each and every system.

A real-time interface showcasing User-to-Product and Product-to-Product recommendations gave the retailer the ability to engage in real-time up-selling and cross-selling based on the order history of their customers.

Tap Into Endless Possibilities for the Customer Experience

A 360-degree view of customer preferences and behaviors allows retailers to tailor a shopping experience and make the most of any interaction with a customer, in-person or virtually. For example, customer service representatives can leverage CRM technology, which tracks all customer interactions, to facilitate meaningful conversations with customers that increase loyalty, brand awareness, sales, and conversion. As a result, retailers can solve problems quickly and seamlessly across all channels.

A single service console across all channels not only increases employee productivity, but also enhances the customer experience by capturing key metrics that promote better performance. This kind of connected customer service solution also lets service representatives offer personalized recommendations based on a customer's order history and preferences. This new revenue channel can enhance a customer's overall experience, increase loyalty, and produce significant revenue.

Retailers spend millions on advertising to help build brand awareness. However, it is just as important for retailers to invest in infrastructure and technology to help make their business more productive. Providing customers with a unified experience that is tailored to their history and needs is the best way to truly connect with them.

Client Success: B&H Photo Video Consolidates Sales and Service Data to Improve the Customer Experience

"B&H Photo Video chose to implement Salesforce Service Cloud as their Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform in order to provide a 360-degree view of the customer to their service agents. Acumen Solutions brought extensive contact center expertise in addition to Salesforce cloud implementation experience. This solution allowed customers to interact with service agents via various channels of communication - email, phone, and chat for B&H Photo Video contact centers.

"Acumen Solutions helped B&H Photo Video go through a very successful implementation and has been a great partner to work with."
-Gaurav Hemdev, VP of IS Applications, B&H Photo

About Acumen Solutions

Acumen Solutions enables retailers to ramp up their omni-channel strategy, foster in-store engagement, streamline store audits, and dramatically improve employee retention. Our solutions help retailers:

- Unify the customer experience across all points of commerce, marketing, and service.
- Provide a 1-to-1 shopping experience with built-in predictive intelligence
- Deliver a 360-degree view of the customer
- Integrate legacy systems for real-time inventory
- Increase order capabilities
- Improve agent efficiency by up to 25% with faster ramp-up times
- Increase conversion by personalizing connections throughout the customer journey

- Provide a cohesive customer experience across email, mobile, social and commerce with marketing automation
- Provide field service, sales, and store associates with the mobile, cloud-based tools they need to optimize sales, brand performance, and inventory management for a seamless in-store shopping experience

Are you looking to improve the service experience for your customers? Contact Acumen Solutions to learn more about our retail solutions, such as Connected Customer Service, Smart Information Filtering Tool (SIFT™), SmartStore, and more.

SOURCES:

1. https://www.wsj.com/articles/shoppers-are-fleeing-physical-stores-1407281362

2. https://www.zendesk.com/resources/customer-service-and-lifetime-customer-value/

3. https://www.cio.com/article/3155507/retail/8-retail-technology-predictions-for-2017

Contact Us To Learn More

Clients choose Acumen Solutions for one simple reason: our experience delivers success. Joining forces with our clients, our teams of strategists, subject matter experts, and engineers solve problems that can't be fixed by technology alone. As a Salesforce Global Strategic Partner, Fortune 500 companies and government agencies trust us to build solutions that grow revenue and strengthen customer relationships.

Engage with us at www.acumensolutions.com or follow us on Twitter @AcumenSolutions.