

Retail Business Technology Expo 2017: How Retailers Deliver a Successful Digital Consumer Experience



- 1) This week, Fung Global Retail & Technology was in London to attend the Retail Business Technology Expo (RBTE) 2017, Europe's largest retail solutions show, which showcased the latest technology solutions and their applications in retail. On the second and final day of the event, we focused on how retailers are improving the digital experience for their customers.
- 2) Executives from leading UK retailers Sainsbury's and George.com (which is part of Asda) shared that delivering an outcome that inspires shoppers and ensuring consistency across channels are the main challenges retailers face in terms of the digital customer experience. Personalization, automation and uniquely identifying the customer shopping across channels are the key internal capabilities needed to ensure a successful digital shopping experience.
- 3) To measure the impact of the digital customer experience on revenue, sales metrics are not enough: retailers need to consider metrics that give a broader picture of the shopping journey, including impressions on social media, user views and speed, and the time and number of steps it takes the customer to move from the first approach to the final purchase.

On May 8–9, the Fung Global Retail & Technology team was in London to attend RBTE 2017, Europe's largest retail solutions show. The event showcased the latest retail technology solutions in areas such as omnichannel, payments, loyalty, supply chain, loss prevention, e-commerce, RFID and analytics.

On the second day of the expo, we focused on how retailers are working to improve the digital customer experience, what challenges they are facing as they do so and how they measure progress on the digital experience front.

How Retailers Improve the Digital Customer Experience

We heard from top industry players about how they are working to improve the digital customer experience, what challenges they are facing, and how they measure progress and return on investment in digital technology. We attended a panel discussion that included Rosalyn Potts, Digital Customer Experience Manager at George.com (part of Asda); Fabrice Khullar, Head of Product—Digital Channels at Sainsbury’s; and Lucy Mansdorf Hiron, Principal Consultant at e-commerce consultancy Practicology. The talk touched on the following points:



Source: Fung Global Retail & Technology

The Most Important Internal Capabilities For Delivering an Excellent Digital Experience

Potts said that, for George.com, personalization and automation are the two key capabilities for delivering a successful digital customer experience. A personal approach is facilitated by technology and is also expected by contemporary consumers who want to be inspired by targeted and relevant messages. Automation reduces the time customers spend in the various steps that lead to purchase, she said, noting that one-click checkout options, for example, make the shopping experience easier and more enjoyable.

For Sainsbury’s, Khullar said that the ability to uniquely identify the customer is important to delivering the digital experience. Consumers shop through different channels, so it is crucial to avoid sending contradictory messages to the same shopper as she or he moves from one channel to another. Synergy and collaboration between internal teams—from digital solutions developers to store associates—is also necessary to deliver a successful digital customer experience, Khullar said.

Key Challenges Retailers Face In Delivering an Exemplary Digital Customer Experience

Khullar said that, for Sainsbury’s, delivering a simple outcome that inspires customers and encourages engagement is the goal when the company develops a digital solution. Potts noted that, at George.com, ensuring a consistent customer experience across the different digital channels is very important. Although the interactions between the retailer and customer, and the types of support the retailer gives to customers, differ between channels, the customer journey across channels is a single one—making it essential to offer a consistent customer experience throughout the shopping journey.

Measure the Value of the Digital Customer Experience

Hirrom, of consultancy Practicology, shared that while many retailers are still stuck in last-click measurement, it is important to have a system of metrics that show performance throughout the customer journey, including impressions on social media. Khullar said that Sainsbury’s still measures performance with separate metrics for each channel, but that an integrated metrics system across channels would allow the company to better measure its return on investment in the digital customer experience. George.com uses traditional metrics such as conversion rates and average order value, Potts said, but it goes beyond sales measurement to include metrics such as user views and speed, which are important for gauging how straightforward the shopping experience is. For instance, measuring speed—the time and steps taken by the shopper from the landing page on the retailer’s website to checkout—helps companies understand the shopper’s journey. Retailers can then use the information to make improvements such as reducing the time or number of steps involved in the transaction.

The discussion concluded with a note on the importance of integration across channels in providing a successful digital customer experience. For instance, inventory transparency across channels is becoming crucial to meet the needs of contemporary shoppers, who, when they see something online, expect to be able to find it in a store. To this end, better inventory coordination between distribution centers, warehouses and stores is becoming increasingly important. This integration is made possible by the application of technologies such as radio frequency identification (RFID) within the supply chain, as we highlighted in our report on [day one](#) of RBTE 2017.



Source: Fung Global Retail & Technology



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Key Takeaways

The main takeaway from our second day at RBTE 2017 is that inspiring the customer and ensuring consistency across channels are the main challenges that retailers face when aiming for a successful digital customer experience. Personalization, automation and uniquely identifying the customer shopping across channels are the key internal capabilities to enable this. Internal collaboration among teams and divisions can help. Finally, to measure the impact of the digital customer experience on revenue, sales metrics are not enough: retailers need to consider metrics that give a broader picture of the shopping journey, including impressions on social media, user views and speed, and the time and number of steps it takes a customer to get from landing page to final purchase.



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