A Clicks-to-Bricks Playbook:
5 Ways to Transform Digital Shoppers Into Loyal, High-Value Store Traffic
The New Digital + Brick-and-Mortar Opportunity

Digital’s influence on the retail landscape is evolving — and growing. Data points to an anticipated 276.9% increase in worldwide e-Commerce sales. While many consumers have made e-Commerce a staple in their shopping toolkits, the reality is that online purchases still only account for approximately 11% of total retail sales.

The most profound way that digital is impacting retail is its influence on brick-and-mortar shopping behaviors and, ultimately, overall store performance. In fact, research has found that there is a 58% chance that consumers know what they’re going to buy before they even walk through the door of a physical store. Smartphones and digital channels are becoming a natural extension of consumers’ brains, helping to inspire, inform and empower them. Up to 91% of brick-and-mortar retailers recognize this power — and are harnessing it to increase engagement and loyalty for their stores.

Although the number of store closures this year already far surpasses 2018’s total, many brands are taking the opportunity to open new locations (or revamp existing ones) that are digitally infused and focused on cultivating enthusiastic shopper communities.

This eBook will reveal five digital tools and tactics retailers can implement to generate more in-store traffic.
Experiential Marketing

Your store may have the glitziest tech on the market, but if your overarching brand experience doesn’t resonate with consumers on a deeper level, it’s not going to make an impact. This is where experiential marketing can be an extremely powerful strategy, as it blends the best of technology and traditional marketing tactics to forge stronger connections with consumers.

Whether in the form of product launch events, charity events, product demonstrations or exclusive “drops” for loyalty and rewards members, experiential marketing gives consumers the opportunity to not only immerse themselves in the retail brand and its products, but also connect with like-minded individuals who are active parts of the brand community.

However, because experiential marketing is still relatively new, retailers are taking a variety of approaches to determine which approach resonates with their target customers. Results so far have been extremely promising: Research from TimeTrade and Retail TouchPoints indicated that retailers investing in experiential marketing of any kind were able to meet their core awareness, engagement and conversion-focused objectives, and a majority of respondents (56%) indicated they will invest even more in these tactics over the next 24 months. These findings prove that, when done successfully, events, classes, pop-ups and other hands-on experiences help add extra value to the store and make “being there” critical to the omnichannel brand experience.
RETAILER SPOTLIGHT

Sephora

Sephora takes a diverse approach to experiential marketing, but its overarching strategy remains the same: to engage and inform its community of beauty lovers and to ultimately fuel their passion for makeup. Holding a variety of themed classes and events focused on new product launches, the beauty retailer has been able to drive highly engaged foot traffic and boost bottom-line results. Within a three-month period, Sephora acquired more than 44,000 event registrations and saw a significant boost in average spend per visit.
Thanks to Amazon and the “Prime Phenomenon,” shoppers’ expectations of the delivery and fulfillment experience have never been greater. When they complete an online purchase, they want gratification (and their goods) as quickly as possible — they don’t care if it must come by truck, car or airplane. That’s why “buy online, pick up in-store” (BOPIS) has become the backbone of a stellar omnichannel strategy.

With BOPIS, customers can get their products faster, easier and without shipping fees. Meanwhile, retailers can benefit from eliminating excess store inventory and maximize the value of new in-store traffic. When customers visit a location to pick up their online orders, there is a greater chance they’ll walk around and browse the aisles. As a result, they will have a seamless and satisfactory fulfillment experience, and they also will likely purchase another item after they get a chance to shop around.
RETAILER SPOTLIGHT

Express

Express offers omnichannel fulfillment in multiple markets and continues to test different approaches to gauge consumer behaviors and preferences. Although the fashion retailer is still in the midst of this process, the team has learned that BOPIS requirements and best practices will not only vary by customer attributes, but also by the store format as well as the shopping mall/center where the store is located. For example, certain store formats will be prime real estate for pick-up lockers, while other locations will be better suited for more traditional pick-up points at the cash wrap.
BOLIS is becoming table stakes for retailers across categories. However, retailers successfully differentiating in the marketplace are embracing buy online, learn in-store (BOLIS).

Rather than focus solely on the speed and convenience of BOPIS, progressive retailers are empowering associates with information and tools that allow them to further educate and engage shoppers who decide to venture to a store. These conversations help enrich the fulfillment process and ultimately help customers get the most value from their purchase.

BOLIS’ emergence reaffirms the importance of workforce education, empowerment and technology. By arming employees with mobile devices and other technologies, employees can guide shoppers seamlessly through the post-purchase process — whether it’s through setup, using or configuring a product. They can also look at browsing and purchase histories, as well as personal preferences, to offer more valuable advice and recommendations.

Intimate, one-to-one conversations with brand professionals help shoppers feel empowered and, in some cases, even help unlock new selling opportunities.

79% of consumers said personalized service from a sales associate is an important factor in determining at which store they choose to shop.
RETAILER SPOTLIGHT

Best Buy

Best Buy is a leader in the BOLIS revolution. The Geek Squad was established nearly 15 years ago and since then, the retailer has made additional services, installation and classes core to its in-store experience. Offering customers deep, personal connections with employees has helped Best Buy:

- Upsell lower-margin, online purchases to in-store, high-margin products
- Drive repeat visits
- Instill shopper confidence in their purchase decisions
Online Appointment Scheduling

As retailers diversify their in-store experiences and invest more in value-added services to drive in-store traffic, they need a reliable tool to ensure all logistics go off without a hitch. Online appointment scheduling gives shoppers a seamless experience, as they can make their appointments digitally and then venture to the store to participate in an event, service or one-to-one appointment.

When shoppers decide to book an appointment, they have full control over where, when and how that booking is fulfilled. They enter their information and their preferred store location, as well as the day and time they want an appointment. In some cases, they can even share additional context with an expert associate, so the retailer has more insight into their needs and expectations. The retailer and specific location’s employees instantly have access to all this information, which ultimately sets everyone up for success:

- **The brand** can serve more relevant pre- and post-appointment messages and marketing campaigns that truly capture consumer attention;

- **The store** can better schedule employees based on appointment schedules and upcoming classes; and

- Because associates have advance notice of an upcoming appointment, they can better prepare to ensure each engagement runs smoothly and that it’s personalized to the needs of that specific customer.

78% say the strategy has increased in-store customer loyalty.®
RETAILER SPOTLIGHT

David’s Bridal

Wedding dress shopping is an extremely emotional, and at times, frustrating process. Many brides wait their entire life for the moment when they find their dream gown. So, for David’s Bridal, providing a stellar experience from beginning to end is critical. David’s Bridal offers an appointment scheduling tool on its website to help eliminate some of the frustration that comes with the process. The bride or member of the bridal party can set a day and time to visit a store. They can even opt-in to receive a text message reminder prior to the appointment. Since offering this capability, David’s Bridal has found that 93% of customers with in-store appointments make a purchase, and those who book appointments have a 50% higher conversion rate.
Chat and messaging tools are helping brands successfully connect the dots between their digital experiences and their in-store environments. Like online appointment scheduling from your company website and other channels, Facebook Messaging and chat features allow you to capture customer interest at its peak and offer instant gratification.

Using artificial intelligence (AI) and/or your service professionals, you can field customer questions and inquiries, offer product advice/recommendations and even advise shoppers to schedule a one-to-one appointment with an in-store expert. You can then allow customers to instantly book their appointments through these same channels, creating seamless access to the help they need — no matter where they are or what device they’re using.

Chatbot interactions in retail will reach **22 billion** by 2023.⁹
Examples from Express and Sephora illustrate the very different ways retailers can use messaging based on their unique business, objectives and customers. **Express** offers personal styling services and uses chat to proactively engage with customers to inquire if they need assistance. After asking a series of questions, reps pitch a styling appointment and give shoppers the power to make their appointment across channels. **Sephora**, meanwhile, uses a Facebook Messenger bot to automate the service experience. By asking a series of questions, the bot can obtain additional context into the customers’ needs, frustrations and goals. At a specific point in the process, consumers can either schedule an appointment or class, or ask to speak to a live agent if they aren’t satisfied with the level of service.
Make the Most of Your Clicks-to-Bricks Experience

In the context of commerce, digital’s influence is undeniable. But progressive retailers know digital isn’t a threat to their business; it’s an opportunity for their brand to shine.

By embracing one or several of these five trends, you’ll be able to create a clearer, more powerful connection between your digital brand experience and your brick-and-mortar stores. The key to doing so successfully is determining which trends and tactics best align with your brand mission and your customers’ needs and expectations. Find what makes your brand unique, what products and services you deliver the best, and how you can leverage digital tools and channels to augment the value of your brick-and-mortar experiences.

Although brands may take different approaches to executing these trends, the one underlying factor that dictates their success is intelligent appointment scheduling technology. The events and classes registration software from TimeTrade allows retailers to seamlessly plan, manage and run store-level experiences. Conversely, it gives customers the power to RSVP to exclusive events and set appointments with in-store brand and product experts — on their terms. Leading up to, during and after the event, brands can digitally connect with consumers, sending timely reminders and relevant follow-up messages to create a seamless omnichannel experience.

Learn how TimeTrade can help you simplify event registration, scheduling and class management, so you can harness the power of bricks-to-clicks.
TimeTrade helps leading brands optimize engagement through all phases of the customer relationship. TimeTrade’s Intelligent Appointment Scheduling solution harnesses the power of artificial intelligence to improve meeting scheduling strategies through real-time customer insights and actions, producing better meetings and higher growth businesses, with TimeTrade customers outpacing their peers by nearly 3X. Tens of thousands of businesses — including leading global banks, retailers, and software companies — use TimeTrade’s Appointments-as-a-Service platform to deliver the personalized attention expected by today’s on-demand consumers.

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