



THE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: ETAILED EAST 2016



The following report was prepared using data and insight gained from 4 months of research calls and benchmarking with ecommerce and omnichannel professionals.

Last year's holiday season saw some tremendous highs (and a few lows). Retailers faced a host of challenges during the holidays, as consumers waited for discounts or preferred to buy online. With unseasonably warm weather and decreased foot traffic in physical stores, the need to optimize online and mobile experiences is becoming dire.

The goal for many retailers is to use integrated technology and tools, engage with customers online, track the customer journey, measure sentiment and loyalty and tailor communications to meet their needs. The biggest growth area in retail continues to be online. Here are the major trends impacting growth in retail today:

Challenges and Opportunities for eTail East 2016

1 Looking Into The Future

There have been a ton of innovations within the virtual reality space as of late. Facebook is finally releasing the Oculus Rift technology. 3D TV is evolving and becoming more mainstream. Right now the focus is still heavier in gaming, but as the technology to create and consume becomes more accessible, retailers will look for ways to incorporate this into their brand experience.

2 The "Internet of Things" Is Becoming Disruptive For Retail

The "Internet of Things" is forecasted to be disruptive in the retail industry. It will impact the customer experience, supply chain and potentially create new revenue opportunities for retailers. For example, a consumer can use their mobile device to scan an item to find out more product information or receive personalized digital coupons when they enter a store. In terms of supply chain, smart shelves in a store can detect when inventory is running low and retailers can use smart price tags that fluctuate prices in retail time based on demand. The applications and opportunities are endless.

3 New Technology Applications That Will Shape Retail's Future

From shipping containers to shopping carts, the ties into the "Internet of Things" will continue to become more mainstream. Wearables are another technology that's expected to double year over year by 2016. The final application is called "machine learning." The software that powers all of these "connected devices" is evolving. With an influx of big data, advances in processing power, data science and cognitive technology, software intelligence is helping machines to make informed "decisions."

4 Social Media Is A Channel, Not a Strategy

Social media has numerous evolving platforms. It's a tactic that does a great job of supporting broad campaigns but rarely works solely on its own. In order to be successful in social media, it has to be fully integrated into other campaigns.

5 Big Data Can't Be Ignored

Big data is combining data from web browsing patterns, social media, industry forecasts and existing customer records in order to predict trends, prepare for demand, pinpoint customers, etc. Basically, it's a goldmine for retailers. Many retailers didn't focus on big data in the past because they lacked the skills and the resources to translate it into something meaningful. There are finally tools available to mine and manage data easier than ever. Now, retailers have the capability to use big data and incorporate analytics into their marketing decisions.

6

It's Still All About Mobile

Retailers who don't have a responsive website, custom apps or mobile-targeted campaign will simply be left behind. At a minimum, these are the requirements for retailers today. Many retailers are even moving beyond these programs.

7

Content, Video Platforms And Millennials

In order to engage with the next generation of consumers (millennials), video is a must-have. They prefer discovery based interactions with brands – using YouTube over conventional channels like television. Snapchat, YouTube, gifs, Vine, and more are consumed at an ever increasing rate. Streaming video takes this to the next level and platforms like Periscope and Blab have put interactive live video into the hands of anyone with a smartphone. The next year will see video continue to shine and streaming move to the forefront of marketing with innovative new campaigns that focus on consumers at their core.

Solving Major Omnichannel Challenges

Omnichannel is All About Organizing Your Business Around Your Customers

Innovation in retail is driven by consumers. Their expectations are increasing all of the time. They don't differentiate between retailers that they buy from – they are looking for the best place to fill their needs. They want a seamless experience at every touchpoint and sales channels to be invisible. As the lines become blurred between digital and physical, the need for integrated cross-channel and cross-device thinking is more important than ever.

Mobile Shoppers Are The Future Of Retail

During this past holiday season, some retailers saw increases of 40% in mobile traffic. Mobile is still growing at a tremendous rate. Consumers want to be able to do everything on their mobile device: find discounts, price comparison shop, learn about inventory, and research products. The issue is that retailers are still struggling to keep up with consumer expectations, as shoppers continue to drive the industry. Companies struggle to provide optimized mobile experiences that will keep customers converting. Retailers have to keep customers from abandoning the mobile experience and that begins with having a mobile site and/or app that is completely optimized.

Data Is The Key To Create "Real Time Retail"

In order to truly innovate, retailers must focus on the basics – their data. Great retail experiences are created by data, and then integrated with the technology. Consumers are demanding seamless shopping experiences that provide immediate access to products. This leads into the notion of "real-time" retail – the ability to personalize the shopping experience (look at a consumer's preferences, purchase history, online browsing history, etc.) in real-time. The goal for retailers is to be able to analyze all of these data points and offer targeted and relevant experiences. To do this, retailers need real-time analytics and data in a unified platform. This also ties into the notion of keeping "content as king" – using content in the web experience in a natural, organic way to enhance the personalized shopping.

Staying Future Focused And Evaluating New Channels And Technologies

With all of the rapid changes occurring in the online and multi-channel retail space, retailers have to understand what they should stay on top of, where they need to invest, and what channels offer the greatest ROI. They are also looking at what will be "the next game changer" so that they aren't left behind their competitors. Of course, they are staying focused on their main revenue-generating channels (search, email, affiliates, CSEs, etc.) but these channels aren't going anywhere. They don't expect to see huge jumps in growth from these channels. There is growth to be had, and they are looking to stay on top of it so that they can be first adopters and beat the competition.

eTail East 2016 at a Glance

"eTail's structure and location are much more conducive to organic networking – you can go and sit at the bar and still end up speaking to somebody interesting"

- Charis Marquez, Director, Site Merchandising/Vertical Experience, **Sam's Club**

Event Agenda



What's The Future Of Marketing: The Internet Of Things, Wearable Tech, And Ad Space Opportunities



Using Innovation To Drive Growth In Today's Retail Market



Staying Ahead Of Consumer Expectations To Drive Engagement And Keep Your Brand Top Of Mind

"I was bowled over by the conversations I was able to have with other retailers and the overall on-site experience. The facilitated networking at eTail is very unique. The connections I made are now becoming friendships."

- Dominique Essig, VP, Product Management & Customer Experience, **Bonobos**

Why Attend eTail East 2016



Unique Session Formats: Keynotes, track sessions, workshops and several different session formats give attendees the right amount of access to collaborate with other marketers and also hear from retail's game changers.



Hundreds of retailers: Coca-Cola, Disney, Macy's and hundreds of other retailers will be in attendance, giving insight information on where the retail world is heading and what your company can do about it.



Networking Opportunities: Women in Retail Networking sessions, think tanks, card swaps and several other events make eTail East the place to network the fun way.



Revamped Exhibit Hall: The Exhibit Hall is not only focused on providing cutting edge solutions, but also a fun environment with refreshments, alcohol, great food and an opportunity for peer to peer networking.



Learn more about how eTail East 2016 can benefit your omnichannel strategy and keep your operations on the cutting edge.

[Click here for more info](#)

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