

Colgate-Palmolive on navigating the blend of physical, digital retail

Article

“The lines between physical and digital experiences are becoming blurred, and businesses need to resource and cater to both adequately,” said Diana Haussling, vice president and general manager of consumer experience and growth at Colgate-Palmolive.

Here is Haussling’s advice on navigating the gray area between the physical and digital customer experiences.

Identify your goals and how you'll achieve them

While developing its omnichannel strategy, Colgate worked with a consultant to identify what it would need to succeed:

- Data, to improve targeting abilities.
- Process automation, to streamline the digital marketing process across search, media buying, audience, and content delivery.
- Measurement, to set up an ecosystem with clear campaign KPIs and marketing mix models.
- Collaboration, to set up new, agile ways to break down silos.
- Partnerships, to establish vendor relationships that can advance the brand's digital vision.

When in doubt, refocus on your company's overarching mission.

"Use your corporate mission as your north star," Haussling said. "To set your company up for success, unite your employees, customers, and other stakeholders behind a common purpose that drives everything you do as an organization."

Master the "phygital" shelf

"Winning online and offline starts with winning the 'phygital' (physical and digital) shelf," Haussling said.

That can be difficult because "while the physical shelf is fixed for a certain time period, the digital ecommerce shelf can change by the minute," she said.

To master the phygital shelf, Haussling focuses on the these areas:

- **Availability.** Be sure to incorporate an out-of-stock strategy into your product pages to keep customers in the digital ecosystem (for example, enabling pre-orders or linking related products).
- **Search.** Dive into SEO trends and identify the keywords that drive the most visibility.
- **Content.** Keep content consistent across all retailers by implementing proper content monitoring processes.
- **Ratings and reviews.** By analyzing and putting metrics against product reviews, brands can help make improvements to customer sentiment.

Find your audiences and meet them where they are

It's essential to understand where your target customers spend time to create a seamless shopping journey across channels.

Colgate looked into the digital channels frequented by its shoppers and found that its toothpaste was trending on TikTok because consumers were curious how the toothpaste's stripes came out of the tube perfectly every time. So Colgate created a video explaining the [science behind the stripes](#), which became its TikTok debut.

This strategy created a digital touchpoint that built brand loyalty and educated consumers, said Haussling, aligning with Colgate's mission as a science-driven company.

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