

Retailers' Tech Capabilities Still Fall Short

Shoppers keen on automated returns, location-based mobile coupons

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Today's consumers are open to various types of retail technologies, and they are even warming up to others that were once seen as too creepy.

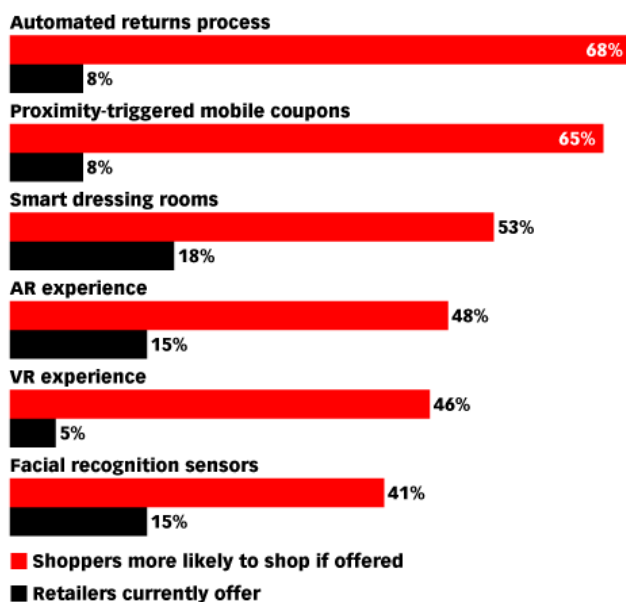
A recent study by BRP (Boston Retail Partners) and Windstream Enterprise found that many consumers would be more likely to shop at a retailer that offered tech capabilities like automated returns, as well as augmented and virtual reality experiences. But while interest is there—and retailers are aware of the impact it could have if offered—a good number of them don't offer such capabilities yet.

In fact, while 68% of US shoppers surveyed by BRP and Windstream said they would be more likely to shop at a retailer that offered automated returns capability, just 8% of retailers said they offer this feature.

Meanwhile, 65% of US shoppers said they would likely shop at a retailer that offered proximity-triggered mobile coupons, but again only 8% of retailers reported doing so. And that was the case among the other tech features mentioned, including facial recognition sensors, smart trial rooms and virtual reality experiences.

Technologies that Would Make US Shoppers More Likely to Shop at a Retailer vs. Technologies that US Retailers Offer, April 2018

% of respondents



Source: BRP (Boston Retail Partners) and Windstream Enterprise, "Retail's Digital Crossroads: The Race to Meet Shopper Expectations," July 24, 2018

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This mirrors findings from a study RIS and International Data Corp. (IDC) conducted last year, which showed that many retailers lag in technology adoption, both in-store and online. Indeed, barely half of retail executives in North America said they are up to date with customer Wi-Fi, and less than one-quarter said the same of in-store pickup and returns for digital orders.