The Container Store's digital approach to creating a 'happy place' for customers

Article

"We all want to create that aura and the air of excitement so the customer across all channels can say, 'It is indeed my happy place we've got here,'" Dhriti Saha, COO of The Container

Store, said at eTail Boston this week.

Most retailers are making customer experience a priority, but according to an April 2023 survey by SurveyMonkey, 32% of customer experience (CX) professionals cite implementing new CX tools as a top priority.

Here's how The Container Store is using digital tools to enhance its CX.

1. Mobile apps for store associates

- **Efficiency meets expertise:** Mobile devices for "specialists" help answer customer questions, as well as "help them to demonstrate smartly the usage of the product, how to install it, and also explain the key features and benefits of the solution that you buy," said Saha.

- **Checkout via devices:** Having mobile capabilities allows specialists not only to help them find a product in its aisle, but also complete the transaction at that moment, said Saha.

- **Internal digital community:** The Container Store's app supports a forum for specialists to share best practices and celebrate success, fostering a culture of innovation.

By leveraging these tools, store employees have been able to drive in-store loyalty registrations, with devices accounting for almost half of all in-store sign-ups, Saha said.

2. AR, AI, and more to create customer high points

- **AR-based experiences:** Tools let customers envision how their organization systems fit in their closets and spaces.

- **App-guided shopping:** About 30% of customers at key stores now scan products using their mobile phones, Saha said.

- **Accessible answers:** AI-driven digital assistants on The Container Store's app and website offer instant answers and help inform decision-making.

- **AI-generated content and information:** Personalized content allows the company to cater messaging to customers based on individual journeys. "Make it simple so that the customer knows exactly what they should be buying the product [for] and sharing the future possibility and company solution [through] sharing automated images and stories. [This is] not only to inspire them, but also to reduce the friction they have in their mind to make a purchasing decision," Saha said.

According to dentsu, 21% of consumers strongly support brand use of generative AI for content and ad creation.

3. Empathy and serendipity after the buy

- **Customer portal:** Elevate the post-purchase experience by ensuring complete order transparency through a customer portal. Show the delivery date, status, installation info, and more.

"We'll all agree that creating an excellent after-buy experience creates a long-lasting relationship and customer satisfaction, which in turn creates customer loyalty, repeat purchases, and also ensure[s] the customer won by providing 100% transparency during the life cycle for the entire journey," said Saha.

After-purchase care is equally important when orders are delayed or unexpectedly canceled. Act empathetic. "It is all about keeping the customer in front by being super transparent," he said.

According to our July 2023 forecast, 65.5% of smartphone users will use shopping or retail apps in 2023.

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