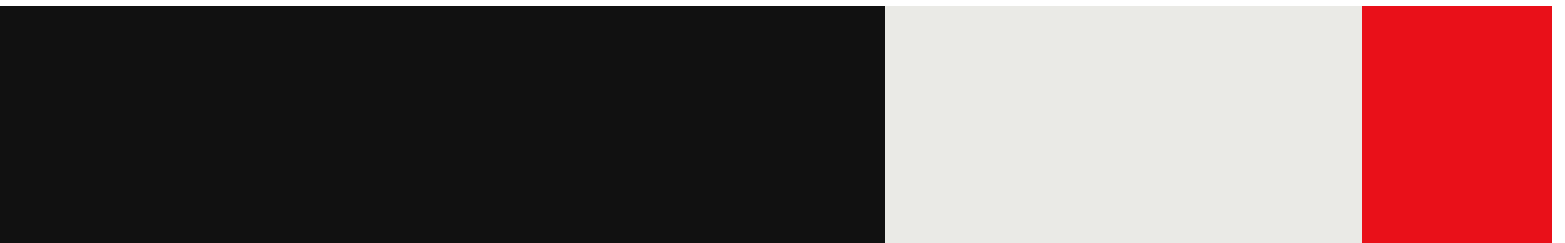


3 ways the customer journey is changing—and how retailers can keep up

Article



With an increasing number of ways to discover, research, and buy products, the customer journey is becoming less linear and more spread across touchpoints in the physical and digital worlds.

We break down some of these changes and what retailers need to do to stay ahead of the curve.

1. The journey is less linear

While the phases of the customer journey remain the same (awareness, consideration, conversion, loyalty) the path to purchase is becoming less linear, said our analyst Suzy Davidkhanian on a recent “**Behind the Numbers: Reimagining Retail**” podcast episode.

“You might become aware of something you need at a party, and then your friends talk about it, and you do some research,” she said. “And then you forget about it, until you get on Instagram and now all of the sudden it’s back into your mind.”

2. More touchpoints = more consideration (but not necessarily more conversions)

There’s no shortage of ways brands can connect with consumers, which can be both good and bad, said Davidkhanian.

“You have so many different ways of making sure you’re part of the consideration set,” she said. “[But] there are just so many more brands out there.”

And awareness doesn’t equal conversion.

“There’s a difference between being aware of brands and then being ready to make that purchase,” said Davidkhanian.

3. Product discovery is moving back in-store

Pre-pandemic, consumers found out about new products in-store or relied on typical advertising channels like TV or print, said our analyst Sky Canaves. But with the rapid acceleration of ecommerce during 2020, that behavior moved online to social and ecommerce channels.

Now that pre-pandemic behaviors are returning, there’s a shift back to stores.

“People are recognizing the limitations of online discovery and looking back to stores to provide that surprise and delight and introduce them to new products,” she said.

The bottom line: A shifting, nonlinear journey requires a flexible, everywhere-all-at-once approach.

Some call it omnichannel, hybrid or harmonious retail. Davidkhanian prefers “all-channel.”

No matter what you call it, it's all about being where the consumer is and serving them most efficiently, said Canaves, citing the beauty industry as a best-in-class example.

“They’re on social, they do direct-to-consumer, and they’re in physical retail from specialty beauty to big-box stores,” she said. “They have their own stores and they’re even on Amazon. They know that the consumer is looking to buy everywhere and they have to be everywhere and make it as easy to get those products to them as possible.”

[Listen to the full podcast.](#)

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