

CONVERGENT COMMERCE

Navigating the increasingly fragmented world of emerging channels and shoppable touchpoints



In the last decade, retail channels and consumer engagement touchpoints have both mushroomed. But at the same time, digital and physical environments are converging. Shoppers may be using digital technology such as QR codes at shelf in a physical store for price and product information, for instance.

Touchpoints are also converging, with some previously used for consumer awareness and education now also becoming shoppable purchase channels. 'Buy now' buttons in social media, for instance, enable see-and-buy, one-click purchases. This means that in many cases there is now no actual pre-purchase 'shopper journey' per se; that the traditional plan, search and evaluate stages of shopper journeys have in some instances been severely curtailed.

'Channel thinking' in the sense of simply online and/versus offline has become redundant. Whilst the omnichannel concept of seamless customer experiences across touchpoints still applies, it is within the context of simultaneously converged and fragmented channels, environments and touchpoints.

Converging channels and touchpoints offer speed and convenience on the one hand, and for some of them discovery on the other. Some of the largest and fastest growing emerging commerce channels include Social commerce, Livestream commerce, Direct to Consumer (D2C), Voice commerce, and q-commerce (on-demand delivery).

The implications for brands and retailers include:

- Understand shopper journeys including post purchase stages, touchpoint expectations and decision hierarchies by category and channel
- Understand what a consistent set of experiences across touchpoints looks like
- Determine the role of each commerce channel and touchpoint in awareness, consideration, trial, conversion, repeat purchase and advocacy
- Think through packaging and delivery criteria as part of the brand experience, and how to match the experience to consumer expectations such as sustainability
- Review how product packaging can be optimised for digital environments and sales in order to be made more delivery-friendly
- Consider how sensorial aspects, and in-store experiential aspects such as showrooms and try-on can be replicated in digital environments. Consider how the online experience and touchpoints can enhance the physical store experience, and vice versa
- Review sales and marketing investment based on channel and touchpoints strategy
- Determine the implications for joined-up sales & marketing and supply chain/demand forecasting, particularly for emerging channels with one-click see-and-buy transactions
- Review and harmonise channel pricing strategy

The new world of convergent commerce requires being omnipresent. The challenge is in how and in what manner to activate it.

To learn more, download the full paper:

www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/publication/documents/2021-10/Convergent-Commerce.pdf