

COLUMNS

Social, location and mobile will drive in-store sales

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By **Jeremy Geiger**

As we enter the fourth quarter sprint to the holiday sales season and year-end recaps, we will see our fair share of media and industry experts obsessing over the rapid growth of ecommerce and predicting yet another year of online putting bricks-and-mortar retailers on the ropes.

Yes, the Amazons of the world are here to stay, but so is the in-store shopping experience.

SoLoMo, not so long

Despite the continued growth of ecommerce, 90 percent of retail sales still occur in-store. It is no longer an "either or" world of ecommerce versus in-store sales.

This year, the winning brands and retailers will leverage online and mobile channels to not only grow online transactions, but also secure an even greater share of in-store sales.

SoLoMo the integration of social, location-based and mobile marketing is driving much of this change by breaking down the silos between online and offline marketing.

For example, location-based targeting and mobile marketing platforms now allow brands to add a location element to their digital marketing campaigns, pointing shoppers to local retailers where their products can be purchased.

Moreover, retailers will benefit from these brand marketing promotions driving more shoppers into their stores. They will see additional traffic, bigger baskets and more sales.

Retailers are further using SoLoMo tactics to drive online to offline marketing campaigns and improve the shopping experience with in-store mobile technologies.

Buy or reserve online/pick up in store is becoming a common offering among bricks-and-mortar retailers.

This option provides shoppers with the "Amazon convenience" of buying online plus the instant gratification of going to the store to pick it up right away no shipping fees and no waiting for delivery.

Setting store by

Tablets, electronic kiosks and in-store mobile targeting technologies are adding convenience, fun and product research capabilities to the in-store shopping experience.

A growing number of retailers now equip staff and sales associates with tablets for accessing product information, inventory levels, feature and price comparisons, among other details.

Digital marketing technologies and innovations that once favored the Amazons of the world are now being used by retailers to gain a competitive advantage through the infusion of SoLoMo.

retailer to gain a competitive advantage through the inclusion of SoLoMo.

In fact, an argument could be made that bricks-and-mortar retailers should focus the vast majority of their efforts into SoLoMo-infused local marketing opportunities that leverage their unique strengths locally, versus trying to compete head-to-head with Amazon, whom many analysts claim to be the best pure ecommerce player.

There is no doubt that ecommerce revolutionized the shopping experience with new options and conveniences for consumers.

Nonetheless, the majority of U.S. consumers continue to prefer the social experience of shopping and buying in-store.

WITH THE convergence of social, location-based and mobile technologies, shoppers can now benefit from both the convenience of finding the relevant product information they are looking for online, and the experience of seeing, touching and buying in-store.

Amazon is here to stay, but watch out as 2013 marks the year that bricks and mortar makes a strong come back.

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