



THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS: WHY OMNI-CHANNEL RETAILERS ARE WINNING

For retailers, the days of relying on a physical presence without incorporating digital selling channels are over. In today's highly competitive marketplace, retailers must blend both worlds to meet – or exceed – customers' expectations.

After all, it's the consumer, rather than the retailer, who now defines the shopping journey.

Customers determine when, where, and how they will interact with a retail brand.

To that end, retailers must make their products and services available through the channels their customers prefer in order to capture their audience wherever they are – and provide customer service through these channels, as well. In fact, high-performing service teams are four times more likely than underperformers to have outstanding capabilities in mobile customer service, social sense and respond, and omni-channel interactions.¹

While convenient for the consumer, this hyperconnectivity can be complicated for retailers. Before, most retailers' processes were siloed into systems of record, such as POS, e-commerce, inventory, supply chain, and merchandising. Now, businesses must integrate these into a single system of engagement to provide a better customer experience. Implementing a cloud-based solution that incorporates a 360-degree view of the customer accomplishes this and enables retailers to engage with shoppers anytime and anywhere. This, in turn, helps remove the barriers to buying, giving customers a clear path to purchase.

Learn how an omni-channel approach to customer service helps retailers respond to shifts in consumer behavior, increasing engagement and driving sales.

Knowledge Is Power

Consider the fact that more than 80% of consumers research a product prior to entering the store.² So not only do they know as much or more about the product they're buying, their purchasing journey consists of two or more touchpoints, bridging digital and physical channels.

A shopper might use her smartphone to click through a digital ad and continue to browse the retailer's website. She may place items in a digital shopping cart to review later. Or she might decide to visit the physical store in order to get a closer look at the merchandise.



“It’s the combination of digital and physical that lets us truly tailor the experience for our customers.”

Nick Botter, Manager, Marketing Technology, Suitsupply

42% of consumers surveyed said it would be helpful if a physical store knew about the online research they did prior to getting there so they could receive better service.³

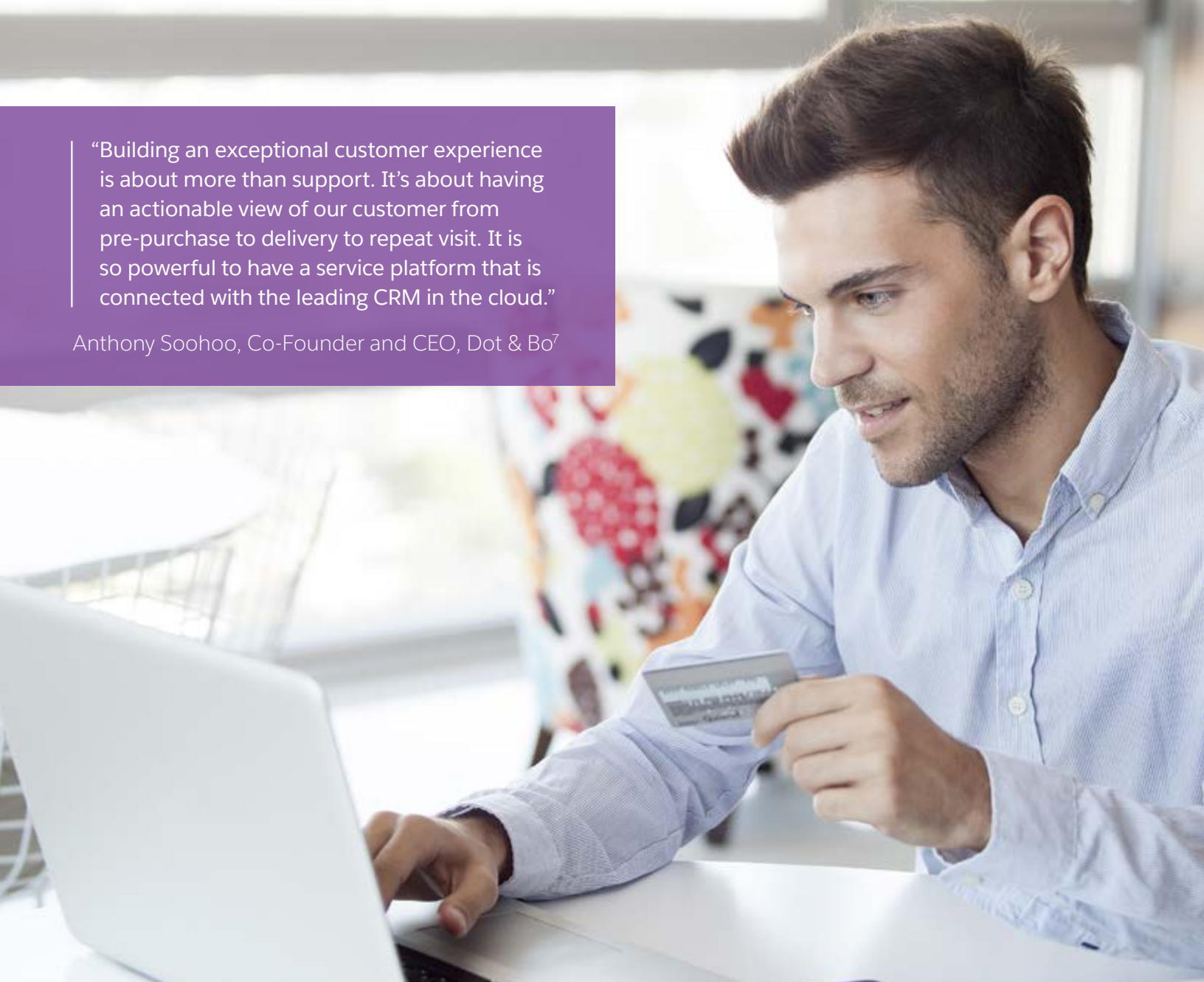


An FAQ page goes a long way in providing answers, but when a shopper needs more, it's up to the business to provide additional resources. Most consumers consider connecting by telephone as a last resort, preferring to chat online with a representative, seek out customer forums, or simply use a search engine. In fact, research has found that 34% of millennials say they'd rather get their teeth cleaned at the dentist than call a customer service line.⁴

By utilizing a knowledge management system for their digital channels, retailers are able to keep all

information current, organized, and in one place – making it easier for agents to provide information for customers through chat. And providing the right information at the right time can make all the difference when a customer is seeking answers or trying to make a purchasing decision.

Live chat and call center agents armed with information keep the customer engaged, while providing a high level of customer service. And 75% of customers say they spend more due to positive service interactions.⁵



“Building an exceptional customer experience is about more than support. It’s about having an actionable view of our customer from pre-purchase to delivery to repeat visit. It is so powerful to have a service platform that is connected with the leading CRM in the cloud.”

Anthony Soohoo, Co-Founder and CEO, Dot & Bo⁷

Make It Personal

Retailers who have a complete 360-degree view of shopper behavior across all channels are able to provide the kind of personalized service consumers demand. Connecting all the data from every interaction with a company – what they’ve purchased, issues they’ve had, how often they’ve engaged – gives agents the information needed to assist them quickly and efficiently.

Shoppers expect omni-channel services – like buying online and picking up in store, or buying in the store and shipping from there – to be a flawless process. Easier said than done, considering the fact that many

retailers have long been organized in a siloed manner with little or no collaboration across functions like merchandising, stores, IT, and supply chain.

According to Bain & Company, “to deliver on new omni-channel strategies and meet the expectations of today’s customers, retailers have no choice but to work more effectively across functions and channels.”⁸ Businesses who build strong digital capabilities first and then work to integrate all other aspects of their operation tend to do well in both digital and physical spaces.

Break Down Barriers

Customers won't tolerate a complicated, time-consuming buying experience. So in today's hyper-competitive landscape, retailers must do everything in their power to offer an obstacle-free shopping journey.

Typically, the journey begins online where successful retailers do much of the work for the consumer. Self-populating fields, saved preferences, recommended offers based on previous purchases, and a variety of shipping options are features most customers appreciate, if not expect. It stands to reason that retailers who invest in this advanced functionality are more likely to experience repeat business – online and on site – thanks to these convenient, time-saving options.

According to recent research from Salesforce, 31% of customers want store associates to know what they previously purchased in the store or online, but only 10% of consumers have been offered a recommendation or deal based on their purchase history. In fact, half of consumers who shop in stores would be more likely to shop at a certain retailer based on the technology store associates use to assist them.⁹

But even as more shoppers turn to alternate channels during the buying journey, the line between digital and physical continues to blur.

Consider this scenario: A multitasking professional on her way home from work pulls into a suburban supermarket to pick up groceries, a few household items, and a birthday present for her nephew. Using the retailer's app to find the best deals, she discovers that a particular toy is not available in store, but can be purchased online. She buys the item from the app while still in the store, electing to have it shipped there for pickup over the weekend.¹⁰

The steady growth of online sales has the potential to breathe new life into physical stores. And retailers who understand this are well positioned to capitalize on the phenomenon.



Conclusion

As shoppers' behaviors evolve, retailers must develop effective strategies for anticipating and responding to their changing demands. Providing an omni-channel experience and differentiating themselves through exceptional customer service helps ensure retailers stay top of mind. Those who implement cloud-based CRM solutions can expect to engage, keep, and grow their customer base, while preparing their businesses to scale for the future.

ABOUT SALESFORCE AND SERVICE CLOUD

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¹ 2015 State of Service Report, <https://secure2.sfdcstatic.com/assets/pdf/misc/state-of-service-report-salesforce.pdf>

² http://blogs.forrester.com/kate_leggett/14-10-03-leverage_the_power_of_proactive_chat_for_predictive_engagement

³ <https://www.salesforce.com/video/191731/>

⁴ https://secure2.sfdcstatic.com/assets/pdf/industries/retail_connected_shopper.pdf

⁵ 2015 State of Service Report, <https://secure2.sfdcstatic.com/assets/pdf/misc/state-of-service-report-salesforce.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.salesforce.com/campaigns/service/retail/>

⁷ <http://www.salesforce.com/customers/stories/dot-and-bo.jsp>

⁸ <http://www.bain.com/publications/articles/three-rules-for-building-the-modern-retail-organization.aspx>

⁹ 2015 Connected Shoppers Report, https://secure2.sfdcstatic.com/assets/pdf/industries/retail_connected_shopper.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.strategyand.pwc.com/perspectives/2015-retail-trends>