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TOP 10
BEST PRACTICES
FOR OMNICHANNEL RETAIL SUCCESS

TOTAL RETAIL'S | **TOP 10 SERIES**
10 tips in less than 10 minutes

TOP 10 BEST PRACTICES
FOR OMNICHANNEL RETAIL SUCCESS

SIMPLY PUT, OMNICHANNEL RETAILING IS BEING ABLE TO CREATE A SEAMLESS SHOPPING EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR CONNECTED CUSTOMER — ONE WHO USES TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL SHOPPING CHANNELS SIMULTANEOUSLY THROUGHOUT THE PURCHASE JOURNEY. WHETHER IT BE AN E-COMMERCE WEBSITE, PRINT CATALOG, BRICK-AND-MORTAR STORE OR MOBILE APP, THE CONNECTED CONSUMER EXPECTS THE ABILITY TO PAUSE AND RESUME THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE AT DIFFERENT POINTS ACROSS ALL CHANNELS. CONSUMERS INTERACT WITH YOUR BRAND, NOT SEPARATE CHANNELS WITHIN YOUR BRAND.

TO HELP ACCOMMODATE THIS NEW BREED OF HIGHLY ENGAGED CONSUMERS, HERE ARE 10 OMNICHANNEL RETAIL BEST PRACTICES CULLED FROM THE PAGES (PRINT AND WEB) OF *TOTAL RETAIL* AND *TOTAL RETAIL REPORT*. KEEP THESE TIPS IN MIND WHEN CRAFTING AN OMNICHANNEL RETAIL STRATEGY FOR YOUR BUSINESS:

1. **Organize your company for omnichannel alignments.** A key pillar of an effective omnichannel strategy is organizational readiness. A consistent challenge retailers confront in realizing the benefits of omnichannel retailing is resistance from stakeholders in your organization. To ensure success in an omnichannel environment, realign your existing organizing processes and systems. Once that's in place, then you can focus on hiring a talented head of omnichannel, who can spearhead other omnichannel initiatives that improve the customer experience and foster long-term innovation and growth.

2. **Have a single, unified view of your customer.** A holistic view of each of your customers is a foundational enabler for your omnichannel strategy. To get this view, you must use all the data you have, from every interaction with your customers — regardless of channel— to present a compelling, tailored experience whenever and however the shopper chooses to interact with your brand.

3. **Have a single, unified back-end technology platform.** One of the most important steps in building an omnichannel experience is unifying all existing technology platforms in your organization. Stand-alone technology platforms that don't work in unison compromise the customer experience and make it difficult for you to transform your offerings to meet your customers' expectations.

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4. **Offer a variety of fulfillment options.** The physical collection of goods is one of the most vital parts of the omnichannel retail experience. Shoppers want to order and receive merchandise through the channels of their choice, which requires specialized supply chain operations that connect all inventory data and make it visible to customers and sales associates alike. While the logistical challenges are immense, omnichannel retail leaders like Wal-Mart and Macy's are already well on their way, offering several of the prevalent fulfillment methods, as well as implementing the technology to support this new breed of supply chain. Wal-Mart, for example, is fulfilling and shipping orders from its stores, offering buy online, pick up in-store, and investing millions of dollars in its distributed order management platform. Macy's has turned 500 of its 840 brick-and-mortar stores into additional shipping facilities. Use these companies as your guide.

5. **Invest in RFID.** For omnichannel retailing to be successful, real-time information needs to flow seamlessly through the supply chain to the consumer and vice versa. This is where RFID (radio frequency identification) comes into play. RFID provides the means to accurately track inventory in fulfillment centers and retail stores. While RFID isn't a new concept, omnichannel retailing has given RFID adoption a new sense of urgency. From consumers' perspectives, they're expecting an "always open, always on" shopping experience, and RFID is the critical enabler that allows 24/7 networkwide inventory accuracy. From a retailer's perspective, item-level RFID is an essential component to enable supply chain visibility and inventory accuracy, which is needed to know what's available, where it's located and how best to deliver it, helping meet consumer expectations anytime, anywhere.

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6. **Train store associates on omnichannel pracxtices.** It's important to train in-store associates around your omnichannel strategy. After all, in-store interactions are a key opportunity to gather information about customers, which is critical to a successful omnichannel strategy. However, this must be done in a respectful manner, and may require additional training of in-store associates on customer service skills. Furthermore, keep in mind that techniques for gathering customer information may require additional systems or technical training.

7. **Have store associates use mobile technology.** For an omnichannel strategy to work, you must also empower your in-store associates with mobile technology. Armed with mobile technology that's tied to your core commerce platform, in-store associates can offer shoppers more valuable assistance. With access to product information, customer history, preferences and wish lists, and inventory levels right at their fingertips, retail associates are better equipped to drive sales and create a more engaging customer experience.

8. **Don't forget about omnichannel branding.** You can't afford to let any moment of your customer brand experience be less than consistent, cohesive and reliable. Your customers will be quick to recognize the disconnect if you offer a killer store experience but a lame web experience, and vice versa. Your digital presence — whether it's your website, Facebook page, mobile app, etc. — must radiate the same design and feel as your physical stores. The level of creative execution that you put into the lighting, music, layout and mood of your stores also must be translated online.

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9. **Have an attribution technology solution in place.** Attribution solutions apply advanced analytics to the massive amount of data that's collected as part of your omnichannel strategy in order to allocate "credit" to each customer interaction in driving conversion. Deployed properly, these capabilities can help you more precisely measure the return on your marketing investment and optimize your marketing spend across channels.

10. **Prepare for an omnichannel future.** Due to recent advancements in technology, you can now enhance your customers' in-store experiences by using insights gleaned from their online shopping habits, user-generated product reviews, social activity and more. Furthermore, in the future this may get even more refined. Imagine a sales associate, headed to the stockroom to get an item, returning with two or three additional items based on that shopper's omnichannel profile. Envision a shopper in a dressing room interacting with an iPad to review dynamically suggested accessories that go with the dress she's currently trying on. Or a shopper receiving an offer specifically tailored to her shopping behavior printed on her receipt (e.g., "75 percent off the matching belt for your dress, if purchased online in the next 60 minutes."). The possibilities are limitless, and only those retailers that start down this path now will discover which ones are most successful for them.