HOW TO KEEP UP WITH A TSUNAMI OF ECOMMERCE CHANGE

James Brooke
Founder and CEO, Amplience

Amplience

When it comes to eCommerce, the rate of change is unprecedented. Yes, Covid-19 has come along and put everything into overdrive, but a lot of these external factors were already in play before we even knew Covid existed.

And while some businesses are tackling the changes head on, ready and willing to adapt and stay agile in their approach, others however are simply getting left behind.

We're going to delve into the top things affecting eCommerce, but most importantly show you what you can actually do about it so you stay ahead of the competition, stay relevant to your target customers, and ultimately stay afloat.

TOP TRENDS AFFECTING ECOMMERCE

There are a number of factors affecting retailers and eCommerce today. But we've pinpointed some of the key things we're seeing in the industry, the external factors that are really driving the industry forward at pace.

WHO IS GOING IN-STORE ANYMORE?

With lockdowns happening around the globe, social distancing measures in play, and general shopper concern, Covid-19 has come along and decimated the number of interactions that are happening in brick-and-mortar stores. But shoppers were already moving away from the high street – we were already seeing a rise in digital interactions, driven largely by an increase in mobile use.

78%

DECLINE IN FOOTFALL WITH COVID-19*

*British Retail Consortium and ShopperTrak, November 2020

IT'S TIME TO BRING THE FUN, BUT ONLINE

While more and more shoppers are heading online, typically it has been in-store where retailers could have fun with customers, provide the "surprise and delight" moments where they could set themselves apart from competitors. Online experiences however have remained quite functional. Focus has justifiably been on a smooth customer journey

right through to checkout, but this hasn't left any room to add value to customers in a fun or exciting way. Standing out has been hard.

Given the decrease in in-store visits, as noted before made worse by Covid-19, the onus is now going on retailers to move those experiential experiences online, giving customers something they wouldn't necessarily expect, something to help keep their brand top of mind.

THANKS TO SOCIAL MEDIA, WE'RE MOVING AWAY FROM THE HOMEPAGE

Social media has been a game-changer when it comes to how people are buying online. Whether actually within the platform itself, like Instagram, or directing people to other channels, customers are interacting with brands at all different points along the "typical" retailer funnel.

Whereas retailers would often spend their time and efforts on their homepage, given it was quite often the first point of entry for shoppers, now customers are coming direct to product detail pages (PDPs) and product landing pages (PLPs). This means brands have to redefine their brand experiences and they have to pivot their efforts and direct resource to deliver more content to suit different situations.

IOT DEVICES ARE HERE TO STAY

Nowadays, nearly everything is an IoT device. You've got wearables with health and fitness applications, you've got fridges that can order groceries for you, you've even got the likes of Traeger Grills where you can control your barbecues via Wi-Fi.

This connected world, and the proliferation of IoT devices, is opening up a stream of possibilities for customers to connect and purchase from retailers. But with all these touchpoints comes increasing pressure on retailers, both technologically and in how they present themselves to customers across so many different channels.
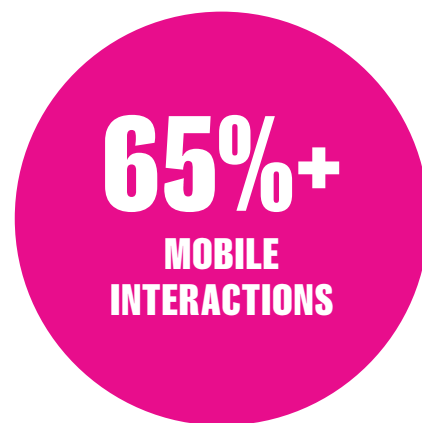
CUE THE EXPLOSION OF CHOICE

Shoppers can literally buy from anywhere. What with international shipping now making overseas retailers as accessible as ever, large-scale marketplaces (cue Amazon) saturating the market, retailers are clawing for attention, looking for ways to stand out any way possible. But how?

EVERYTHING CUSTOMERS DO STARTS WITH A SMARTPHONE

The rise in mobile has been well documented, with customers very evidently now browsing mobile first. Even with lockdown measures at play and more shoppers at home, they're still predominantly using their mobiles to browse and buy. One large UK retailer even reported 81% of their transactions during lockdown to be on mobile.

However, one thing to note is that customers aren't always converting on mobile. Often, they're using multiple devices to research and interact with a brand before purchase. This is placing added pressure on retailers to deliver consistency, personalization and performance across all channels, due to customer expectations and the risk of buyer drop-off at any point.

65%+
MOBILE INTERACTIONS

LET'S SWIM. NOT SINK.

All these factors driving change, all the things that we don't even have the time to mention, they're all creating a growing wedge between what your customer experience is now and what your customers actually expect from you.

It's clear that customers are no longer in your stores, but instead your store is their world. Compound that with the fact that on the back of Covid some retailers are seeing Black Friday volumes online every day – an increase that doesn't necessarily convert to a rise in conversion – and it's clear retailers need to adapt, they need to think not just to the future but how they can stay relevant now.

The big question is how? What should you be putting your time and efforts towards?
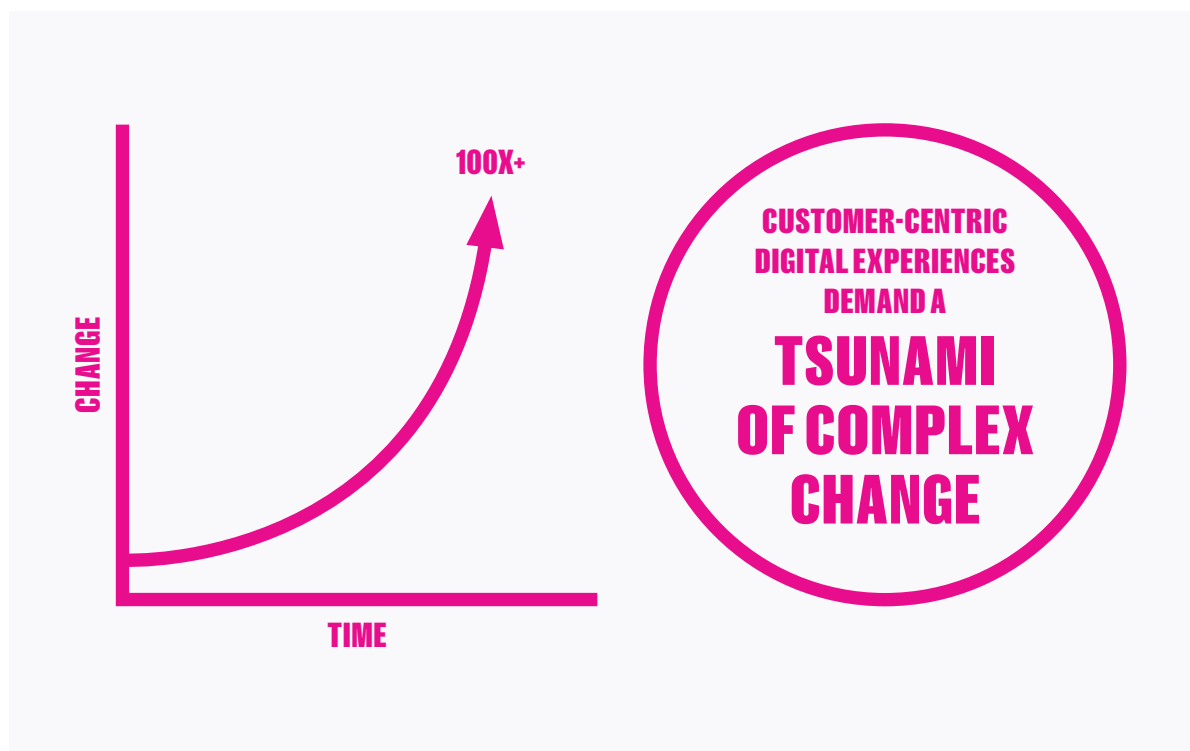
YOU MUST PREPARE FOR A DIGITAL-ONLY WORLD

Digital is the new black. That means dabbling in digital, or being responsive isn't enough anymore. Now more than ever, you need to invest in new technologies and digital platforms that will support a strategy centered around being digital first and customer-centric. Competing in a digital-only world will be tough. Success will depend on your ability to build your experience around the customer, giving them what they want, when they want it, otherwise they'll have no qualms in heading elsewhere.

CHANGE YOUR EXPERIENCE, NOT JUST YOUR CONTENT

It's time to stand out through your customer experiences – how you're delivering to customers, across what channels, how you can do so consistently, then layering in personalization and relevance.

The key then comes in continuing to optimize your digital experience, and the speed at which you can do so. Competitor offerings change, your own products change, customer preferences change all the time – so the pressure is on for you to be constantly optimizing your customer experience to stay ahead. This requires having to create and manage an array of versions of your experience, making thousands of changes every month, every week, perhaps every day if you can automate some of it, across millions of customer journeys.

LET'S GET AGILE

There's no getting around that delivering a customer-centric, digital-first approach relies on technology and importantly how you shape and manage all your processes and workflows.

The problem lies in the bottlenecks and the backlogs that quite often the monolithic platforms of old can't respond to. They're inflexibility is killing productivity and your chance to keep up with the change.

67%

RETAILERS HAVE CODE CHANGE BACKLOGS >1 YEAR

These platforms may have you releasing monthly if you're lucky with many retailers experiencing a backlog of technical change that they simply can't get done. They're letting you control experiences through content management system (CMS) templates that are inefficient in delivering a high-performance frontend and that business users have little control over.

No matter how responsive you're trying to, you're hampered by a lack of agility.

THE ULTIMATE ANSWER: IT'S TIME TO MANAGE CONTENT, NOT CODE.

It's time to do away with inflexible technology and broken content management systems, and instead harness platforms, like Amplience, that let you define the customer experience in content, not code.

Basically, you get to eliminate complex templates and templating languages that require developers to make changes and shift the paradigm to a world where changing experiences is straightforward, it's incredibly fast, and it's easily scalable. You get to give your business users the tooling they need to take control.

TAKE CONTROL WITH AMPLIENCE

Be aligned with your customer's expectations. Be ahead of your customer expectations. Let Amplience help you deal with this tsunami of change through our leading digital experience platform.

Want to know more about how to control your digital experience? You can find out more about how Amplience can help here or read Amplience's Headless Experience Management whitepaper.

Amplience

Amplience London
6th Floor Tower House
10 Southampton Street
London, WC2E 7HA

+44 20 7426 9990
contact@amplience.com
amplience.com

FREEDOM TO DO MORE