



HOW TO STAY AHEAD OF ECOMMERCE IN 2022 AND BEYOND

Thrive in the Face of Change

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Ready to get ahead of eCommerce change? You've come to the right place. Get in touch with our expert team today.

Introduction

Is This Anything New?

The rate of change in eCommerce has always been fast. 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 are simply getting left behind. In this guide we've highlighted some of the most important factors affecting retailers and eCommerce today. The factors that are 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 that retailers need to adapt. And fast.

The big question is how? What should you be putting your time and efforts into? Read on to find the answers to these questions and more.



6 Big Changes We're Seeing Today

1 Brands Are Rethinking the In-store Experience

With lockdowns happening around the globe, social distancing measures in play and general shopper concern, Covid-19 temporarily decimated the number of interactions that were happening in brick-and-mortar stores.

But now that lockdowns seem to be behind us, will shoppers head back to the high street any time soon? In truth, they were already moving away. We were already seeing a rise in digital interactions, driven largely by an increase in mobile use. And it's likely the pandemic created a permanent change in behavior for many shoppers.

Like offices, physical stores now need to think about the experiences they can provide that people can't replicate online.

2 The Fun is Moving 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 have historically 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, the onus is now going on retailers to move those experiences online, giving customers something they wouldn't necessarily expect. Something to keep your brand top of mind.

3 Social Media Has Moved Us 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.

4 IoT Devices Are Here to Stay

Nowadays, nearly everything is an IoT (internet of things) device. You've got wearables with health and fitness applications. Fridges that can order groceries for you. Even the likes of Traeger Grills where you can control your barbecues via WiFi.

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.

5 The Explosion of Choice is Real

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

Consumers have more choice than ever, which means winning their attention, their business and their loyalty is harder than ever. And the digital experience you give them is a key differentiator.

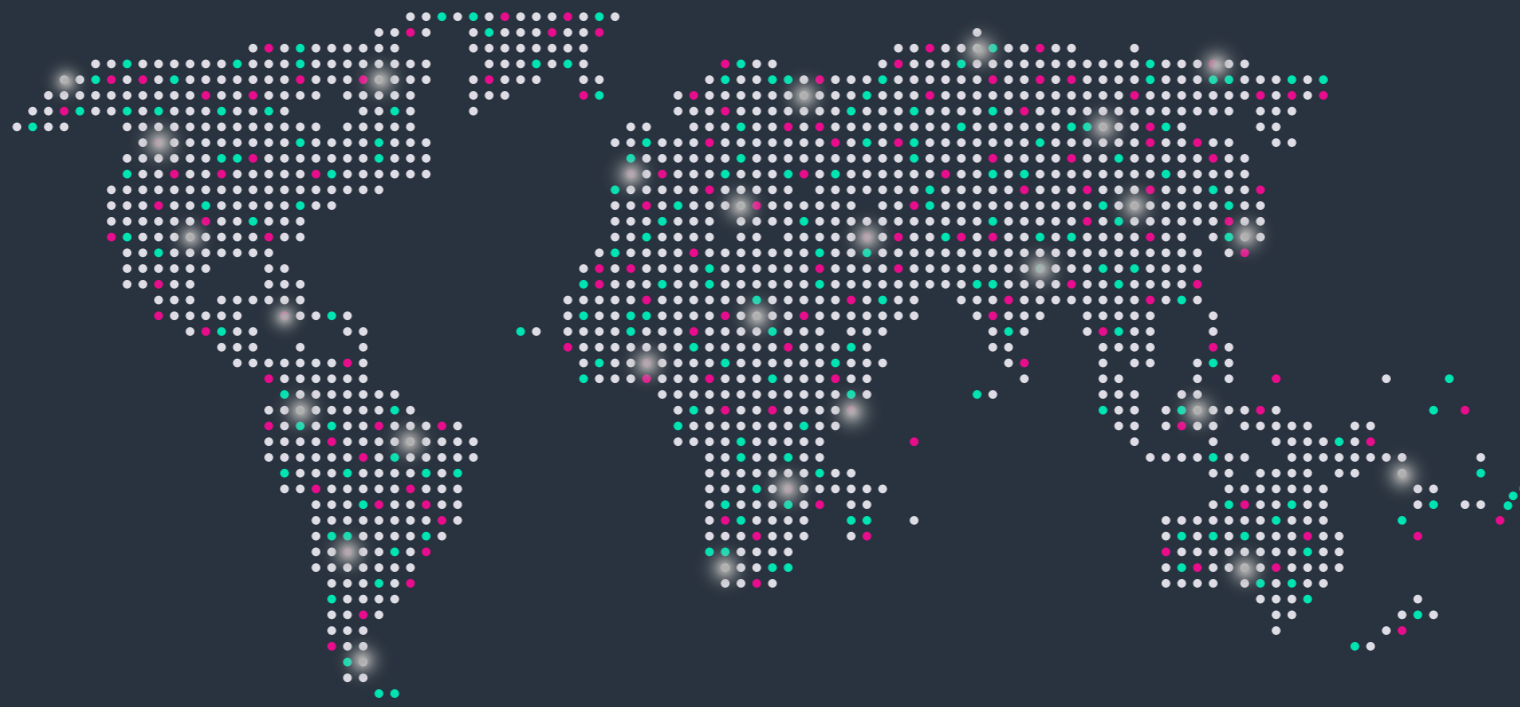
6 Everything Starts with a Smartphone

The rise in mobile has been well documented, with customers very evidently now browsing mobile first. In the US alone, mobile sales hit \$359 billion in 2021, according to [one eMarketer study](#) – a 15% increase on 2020. And that figure is expected to more than double by 2025.

One thing to note, however, is that customers aren't always converting on mobile. Often they're using multiple devices to research and interact with a brand before purchase.

With customers expecting consistency across all those touch points and the risk of them dropping off if those needs aren't met, this is placing added pressure on retailers.





4 Ways to Thrive in the Face of Change

Prepare for a Digital-Only World

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 and give 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. So the pressure is on for you to be constantly optimizing your customer experience to stay ahead. That means creating and managing 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.

Embrace an Agile Approach

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. Their inflexibility is killing productivity and your chance to keep up with the change. 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.

Manage Your Digital Experience Using Content, Not Code

It's time to do away with inflexible technology and broken content management systems, and instead harness platforms 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 move to a world where changing experiences is straightforward, fast and easily scalable. You get to give your business users the tools they need to take control.



Next Steps

Ready to Get Ahead of Ecommerce Change?
Want to know more about keeping up with online shoppers' expectations? And how a headless platform can take the heavy lifting out of digital content, improve your eCommerce experience and give you the freedom to focus on the things that matter?

Get in touch with our expert team by emailing contact@ampliance.com or visiting ampliance.com

Amplience powers digital-first brands and retailers with the freedom to do more. Our low-code CMS, DAM and Digital Experience Management platform allows more than 350 of the world's leading brand teams to manage content, not code. The result is a rapid ROI for our clients who are delivering data and insight-driven customer experiences that drive deeper, more valuable customer relationships. Amplience supports the industry's transition to Microservice, API-first, Cloud and Headless (MACH) technologies, is MACH certified and an executive member of the MACH Alliance.

Named a Strong Performer, Amplience was recognized by Forrester in The Forrester Wave™: Agile Content Management Systems (CMSes), Q1 2021 report with the highest possible scores attained in the criteria of decoupled delivery, deployment and system performance, components, and marketplaces.

Powering customer experiences for the world's most innovative brands, Amplience's customers include Ulta Beauty, Coach, GAP, Crate & Barrel, Harry Rosen and Missguided.

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