

# How Technology Can Save Brick and Mortar



During the just ended holiday shopping season, we heard about increasing online sales and how some brick-and-mortar retailers are struggling to compete with the channel. It doesn't have to be that way.

In spite of growing Internet sales, some stores are thriving, mostly by embracing the omni-channel model. Several of my retail customers are adding locations and expanding rapidly.



## The Un-Cola Strategy

While online shopping is convenient, the in-store shopping experience has advantages that cannot be duplicated online. So in addition to adopting an omni-channel approach, stores might consider employing the un-cola strategy, 7-Up's best ever pitch, to compete. In other words, the best thing about in-store shopping is that it's NOT online.

The reasons that shoppers give for still shopping in the stores vs. online are primarily that they want to *see or feel products in person and obtain the items right away*. This gives us some insight into what retailers can do to keep their in-store business growing. Technology that will

enhance the touch-and-feel experience and provide instant delivery will keep them coming back. And online retailers will never be able to provide an equivalent experience.

## Cool Retail Tech

Emerging retail technologies have the power to transform in-store shopping. For example, body scanners can help shoppers get the perfect fit and feel confident in their purchase. When it fits, it feels good. Emotion detection technology will sync a digital display to a shopper's mood and intentions.

Other devices like smart carts and beacons can recognize customers and provide suggestions to personalize the shopping experience. The shopper starts to feel like, "Hey, this store gets me." Nothing beats an emotional connection to help make the sale. Advertisers know this and stores can take it to the next level.

## A Comfortable Purchase

While some of these technologies are still making their way to stores, we are already seeing how mobile POS systems are helping to enhance the in-store shopping experience. By allowing shoppers to customize their selection and then to purchase on the spot, shopping excitement and satisfaction are maximized.

Take the example of a high-end furniture retailer where a couple trying out a new couch can complete the purchase while sitting on that very couch. This creates a memorable, sensory experience that will leave these shoppers craving more.



Even intelligent vending machines can wow shoppers with video, sensory stimulation, touch screens and engaging interactions to make buying a Coke a memorable experience. The possibilities are endless.

Take these steps to improve your brick-and-mortar store experience with technology:

1. Contact a retail technology expert for ideas.
2. Read a retail technology case study, [Timothy Oulton](#).
3. Engage in the conversation by commenting on this post. What touch-and-feel experiences can you envision for your store?

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