

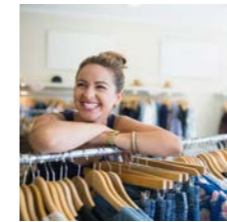
It's all about staff



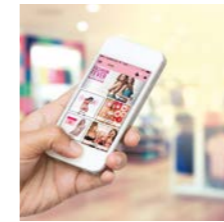
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Table of contents



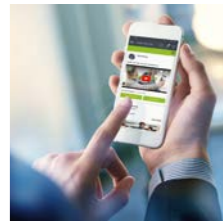
7.
Staff-centric
thinking leads
to customer-centric
business



11.
Employee &
Staff journey



19.
Think big but
start small



23.
App on the
shopping floor



27.
Your IT architecture
determines your
power to execute



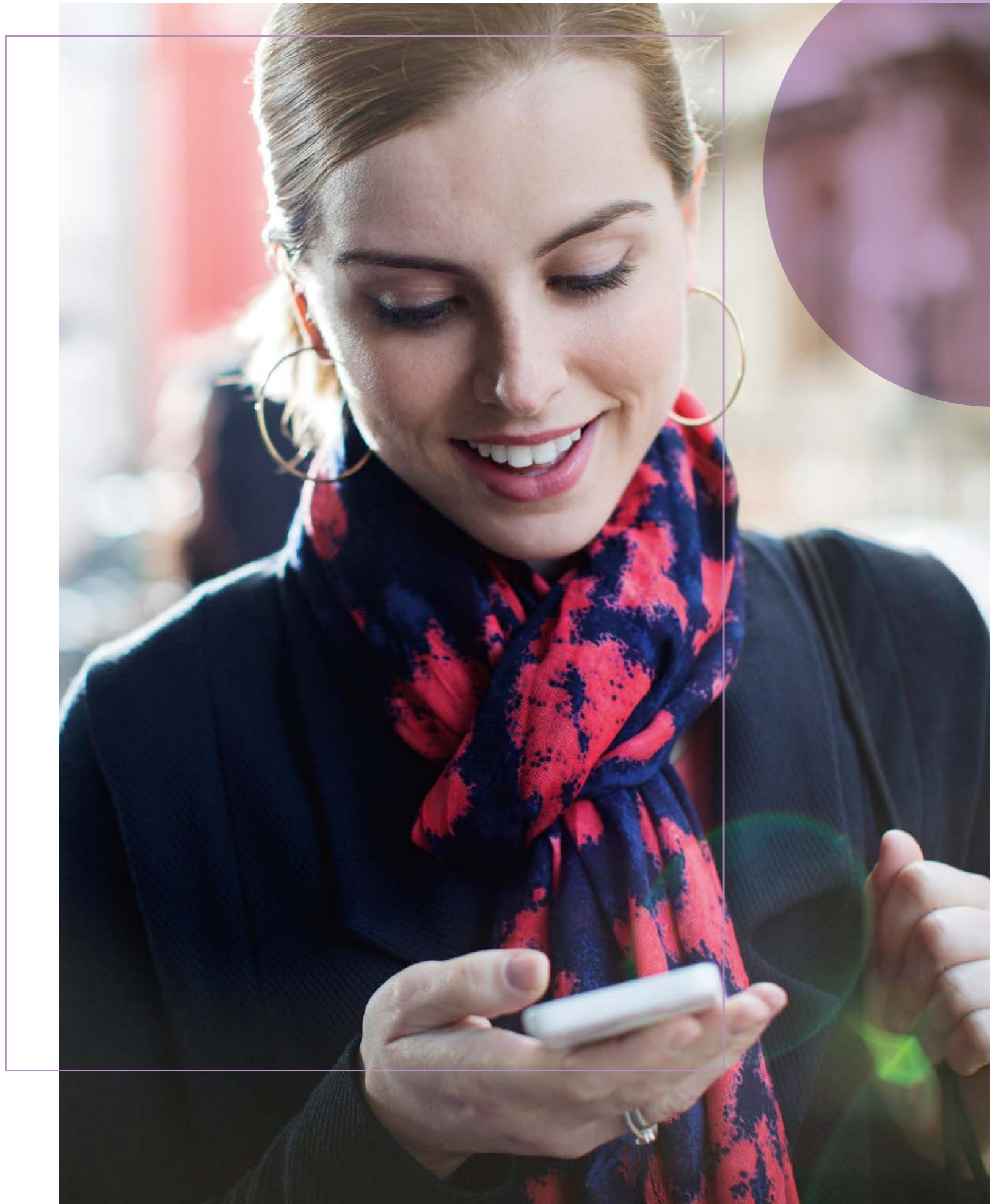
31.
Keep your
employees fresh



33.
Column



35.
How can we help?



Foreword

What turns a shop into a great shop? That is the question we are working on every day, and many answers and visions are possible. However, the simple fact is that the things that used to make shops great are now being increasingly taken over by webshops:

- A AAA location? At home on the sofa with your laptop is always closer.
- A very wide choice? No shop can match the stock on platforms such as Alibaba, Amazon and Wehkamp.
- The cheapest in the market? Here too, online wins time after time with an even lower price.

Nevertheless, there is one aspect on which online shops will never score better, and that is good shop staff. Good staff is why the customer still comes to your shop. They make sure that the customer does not have to search endlessly for that one product or the bit of extra information that is actually on another site. Good shop staff has this knowledge at their fingertips, and can also demonstrate the product to customers so that they can get the best out of it. Five years ago, we wrote an article about employee engagement entitled "A laptop does not smile" and that title is true to this day.

The shop's staff is the differentiating factor that ensures a fantastic shopping experience. The better the staff is, the more pleasant it is to shop there. Attention

to the customer, the products and the layout are all things that make for an enjoyable shopping experience. Good shop staff also offset their costs. In fact, Gallup's* latest figures show that engaged employees are not only sick less often and are less likely to quit, they are also 21% more profitable. So that investment is quickly earned back!

At least, it is if you invest in your staff. The fact is that personnel are not just automatically good; some effort has got to go into that. And once employees are well trained, retailers have to find a place in their hearts. Because only then do your employees become truly engaged and not only sell your products and brand, but also become one with your brand and express your brand values every day.

This Valhalla is more accessible than you think. In this white paper, we consider developments in Employee Engagement. Why is it important and how do you make sure that your shop staff gets engaged? Where is the 'low-hanging fruit', what are the pitfalls, and what steps are essential in engaging your staff? This is a must-read for everyone who has employee engagement on their agenda.

We hope you enjoy reading it, and get inspired.

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*Gallup Survey "Employee Engagement on the Rise in the U.S." August 2018



Staff-centric thinking leads to customer-centric business

Engaged staff is your best loyalty scheme

In recent years, retail organisations have been focusing a great deal of effort on ensuring the business is omnichannel friendly. Silos at the head office are broken down, technology is introduced to the shop floor, and it is paramount that the customer is recognised on every channel. We're doing everything in our power to be as customer-centric as possible!



‘IT’S THE STAFF THAT TRULY MAKES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PURE PLAYER AND A SHOP.’



Pret A Manger.

It’s old news that your business should always be built around the customer, but one of the most important assets in the store can hardly be described as technological. This asset is, of course, your staff. It’s the staff that truly makes the difference between a pure player and a shop. Because, let’s be honest, a retail store is little more than an online store, except that you have the product physically in front of you. So it’s the staff inside the store that can offer customers the added service they seek, in whatever size or shape it is provided.

This service, which is offered by the staff, ensures customers have a pleasant store experience, it creates customer loyalty and can contribute to higher sales. 87% of consumers who say they have received excellent service in the store also indicate

they are therefore prepared to spend 5% more. This excellent service is best achieved through the staff, provided they are engaged and are given the opportunity and resources to offer excellent service, or in other words, to be empowered.

The staff is essential in achieving good returns, but the head office is rarely really in touch with what goes on in the hearts and minds of the staff on the shop floor. Surveys by Gallup show that almost half of the companies have no clue whether or not the staff feels any engagement towards the brand or the customer. That same survey also reveals that, on a global scale, 13% of personnel feel ‘engaged’. In western countries this percentage is about 30%, which still leaves 70% of unengaged staff. If these figures don’t lead to a wake-up call for retailers, the consequences of these figures surely will! An engaged employee, on average, calls in sick 1.25 days a month, while a disengaged employee is sick 2.13 days a month. That’s almost double! Furthermore, a staff member who feels engaged improves customer retention by 18%, making the employee a very effective loyalty system!

The numbers don’t lie and change is urgent, but it isn’t easy for retail organisations to simply change their ways and become staff centric. In fact, the past decade has seen a focus on reducing the employee costs, resulting in frozen wages and more effective work methods, preferably in fewer working hours. We see it clearly in supermarkets, where the shelves are now restocked during shopping hours – the shoppers having to manoeuvre through the aisles past fully stacked carts – by young personnel with little product knowledge.

This is an entirely opposite direction than that of the shoppers, who are becoming much better informed and expect (demand even) a higher level of knowledge from every member of staff. As a 16-year-old part-time employee, it’s not easy when you’re asked a question about gelatine leaves and you’ve never used them before in your life, let alone know what they are. To solve these kinds of day-to-day problems, investing in the infrastructure that concerns itself with personnel, needs to take priority.

Besides organising up-to-date training courses and sales programmes, a target focus should be on the communication towards the personnel. How can we ensure the communication becomes more relevant and how can it contribute to more engagement? What’s more, empowering the staff is vitally important. This means adjusting the protocols to provide better service for the customer. One method, for instance, is by allowing staff to have smartphones or similar devices in the store. There are limitations, of course, which should be agreed upon beforehand, but it does mean that the staff is given a certain level of freedom to be more customer centric.

The challenge now is to get organisations to think and work with staff-centricity at the core! ■





Employee & Staff Journey

Connected & engaged employees are the key to success

We wrote it in our book "Surviving the New Retail Reality":
"In coming years, a battle will erupt to see which chain will be able to attract the best retail employees". Now, we're still as convinced as we were then, although we should elaborate on and further refine our statement: "In coming years, retailers will (have to) make enormous efforts to engage and technologically empower their employees, so that they are able to offer their customers the ultimate customer experience."



‘IT’S THE STAFF THAT TRULY MAKES THE DIFFERENCE.’

THE NEW ROLE OF STORES DEMANDS A RENEWED VISION ON STAFF

Physical stores today have become social meeting places, inventory locations, distribution points, service points and inspiration centres all rolled into one. In short, the role of the store in the new retail reality has changed more than ever before. And the role of the staff has changed more than ever before with the store. In fact, employees are an essential factor of success when it comes to personal advice, excellent service and a flawless omnichannel operation. Is this something new? Hardly, but never before have we had the (technological) resources to aid the employees in actually putting this into practice. And never before has the urgency been so great for a strong vision on store staff.

STAFF CENTRIC THINKING: THE EMPLOYEE JOURNEY

It is of vital importance for retailers to

position their store staff at the centre of attention. In addition to centric thinking, staff centric thinking will be a new trend. And in addition to thinking in customer journeys, attention should also be given to thinking in employee journeys.

What does a day in the life of a store employee look like? What are the “stories” he or she goes through? What duties need to be carried out? What are the questions that (potential) customers ask? And, as a retailer, how can you make everything go quicker, easier or more pleasantly for your staff or the customer?

In short, where can you as a retailer add value to the professional life of your store staff, so that they can in turn provide the ultimate customer service to your customers? We see two main areas in which clever implementation of technology can facilitate this:

1. Employee Empowerment

Offering the technical tools and applications to allow employees become an integral part of the omnichannel operation by unlocking all relevant online customer, product and business information towards them in a physical environment.

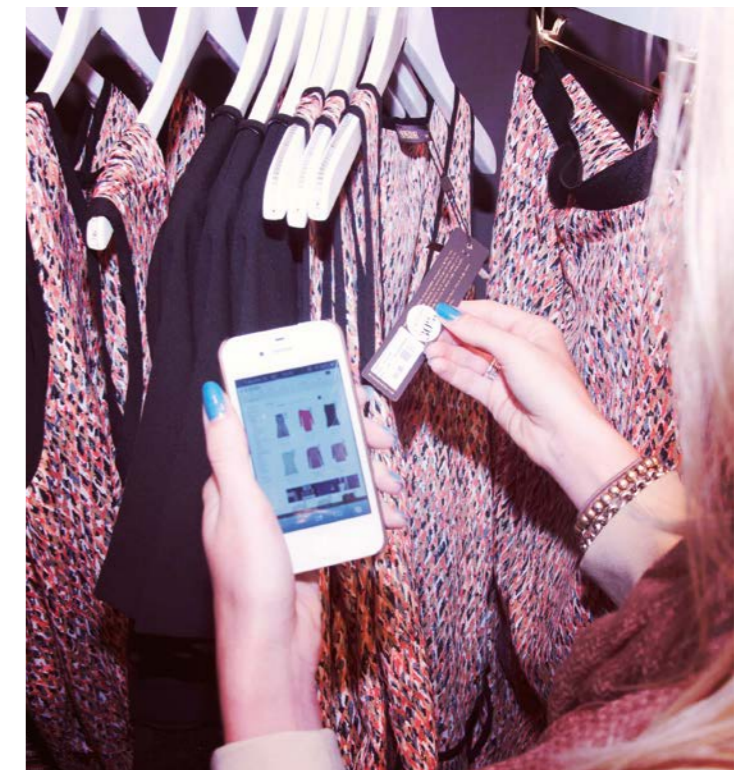
2. Employee Engagement

Involving, motivating and inspiring store staff in the firm belief that happier and more loyal staff leads to happier and more loyal customers.

1. EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

A quick fact check. Over 90% of consumers use – for any number of purposes – a smartphone in the store. About 40% compare prices, an equal percentage contact friends or family for advice, 36% take pictures of products, 29% take pictures of product specifications and deals, 28% scan QR codes or barcodes, and 23% sometimes even buy a product directly in store using the smartphone.

On average, around 60% of all customer journeys (with a peak of up to 90% in consumer electronics) now have an online component whereby smartphones and tablets are over-represented and are still gaining share. This while almost 70% of consumers indicate that they sometimes enjoy showrooming (viewing in store, buying online), an even greater percentage say they do a little webrooming (researching online, buying in store), and a similarly large percentage use all the





‘TURN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT INTO A TOP PRIORITY.’

channels criss-cross and in no particular order, called “boomeroming”.

In short: for us shoppers the digital and physical shopping worlds are one and the same. High time for retailers to empower the staff digitally!

There are tons of benefits to be won from equipping your store staff with smart technologies that connect online and offline with one another:

1. Single view of stock:

An at-a-glance overview of stock levels, prices, product specifications, related items, inspiring content and product reviews. This changes the store staff back into true product experts and ensures that every customer can receive the best possible service without needing to use his or her own smartphone to gather that information.

A good example is ProDirect Soccer in the UK, which unlocks all relevant data about their football shoes in the stores: personnel have direct access through

tablets and touchscreens to information like which shoes make the most crosses, tackle the most opponents and score the most goals, and which players are wearing which shoes. What’s more, the staff can also order any item right there in the store for you, arrange payment and send it to your address if you like. The only thing you’ll need your smartphone for now, is to take photos and videos of the amazing concept store.

2. Single view of customer:

Insight into all relevant customer data (sizes, preferences, purchase history, wish list information, etc.) makes sure that store staff can offer every customer a personal experience in which the chance of a successful shopping trip is maximised. In an experiment, Hunkemöller had already made it possible to automatically identify its customers through a combination of in-store beacons and a mobile loyalty app. The employee in the store receives a notification on her tablet with the name of the customer who has just walked in, her sizes, purchase history,



A single view of customer is a powerful tool for store staff.

‘BOOST PROFIT BY TURNING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT INTO YOUR TOP PRIORITY.’

wish list items, personal preferences and loyalty status, giving the staff member a head start in offering maximum personal service.

3. Endless aisle to minimise lost sales:

Having to say no to a sale in retail should be a punishable offence! By equipping all employees with a “mobile kiosk”, they become more aware of the fact that with every customer contact, every product need can be fulfilled.

The customer can pay directly with the employee (take the well-known Apple Store Geniuses, for example). No lost sale, no lost time, but you do get a perfect customer experience.

4. Omnichannel servicing:

Store personnel are a vital component of every omnichannel operation. Take a service like check & reserve, for instance, whereby the consumer expects to receive an almost instantaneous response to his query

on the availability of an item and whether it has been reserved. In practice, up to 50% of these requests tend to “bounce”, because the staff aren’t aware of the request, do not react adequately to it, cannot locate the item in question, or don’t have the item in stock at all. These are all issues that can easily be resolved by equipping every employee with a mobile device that enables them to receive real-time notifications, offers the possibility to interact directly with the customer and helps with locating the stock.

5. “2nd placement” of knowledge and expertise

Not only can you bring online knowledge & information to the store employee, the possibilities in the other direction are also endless. Why shouldn’t you equip your employees with devices which they can use to answer online customer questions, provide online advice, or even offer personal shopping services to online customers?

Personal shoppers at Nordstrom use their mobile devices in the store to send personal recommendations to their customers via text messaging, who in turn can purchase and pay for the items completely automatically by simply texting “Buy”. This project, named TextStyle, shows us that the boundaries between digital and physical are becoming more and more blurred. A smart way to make more effective use of in-store personnel and to offer quicker and more personal service to online customers!

BYOD | Bring your own device

An important term within the framework of employee empowerment is “Bring Your Own Device”. Retailers give their employees access to the aforementioned services through their own personal devices (usually a smartphone). One huge advantage is that the employees are more comfortable working with their own devices and that these devices are often more up to date than those supplied by the retailer, plus the fact that the organisation doesn’t have to make a huge (one-off) investment in hardware. Granting access to staff through a dedicated app is – to keep it simple – sufficient.

Luxtotta – the parent company of Sunglass Hut – is already experimenting with BYOD by unlocking product and stock level information for its store staff. Privacy and user right management are naturally still a challenge, but our prediction is that the BYOD concept will really take off in the coming years.

2. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

What’s the point of empowerment if your staff isn’t engaged or motivated enough to actually use it? A poll conducted by the American firm Gallup reveals that only a third of employees are actively involved with the company. Just imagine that two thirds of your store staff is hardly interested at all in your formula. What kind of customer experience would this lead to? Lingerie chain Hunkemöller is looking for an easier and quicker way to inform, motivate and engage their store staff in order to bring them closer to the brand. The

company was the first to launch the Employee App “InTouch”, which gives employees access to features including:

- Chat function with colleagues, managers and the board of directors
- Inspirational (product) videos
- Polls
- Q&As
- Academy

Research into employee apps reveals a number of interesting facts:

- Over three quarters of the users say they (also) use the app outside working hours;
- News and (product) videos are features that are perceived as very pleasant and give employees a sense of involvement, being part of a community in which information is available to only a select group.
- Close to 90% indicate that the (product) videos provide new insights that can be applied at work and therefore serve as helpful aids in better servicing the customer.
- Users experience an increased sense of engagement with the company.
- Users show an increased Net Promotor Score, are more likely to give their employer a positive (or more positive!) recommendation when speaking with others.

The digital employee

Turn employee engagement and empowerment into a top priority, in the interest of the employees them-selves, your brand and especially your customers. Visualise yourself in the employee journey and facilitate (mobile, digital) solutions which maximise their added value for the formula. Only then will you be successful as a retailer in the new retail reality! ■



SERVICE.

Onderdeel van Coolblue.

Think big but start small

Make everyone a leader

One trend that retailers can't stop talking about these days is Holacracy; the employee model that helped put Zappos where it is today. And that same employee model that many have their doubts about. Without going into too much detail, holacracy means there is no management to tell staff what they know they are expected to do. The accountability is carried equally throughout the organisation and is brought together in self-organising 'circles'. The roles are clearly outlined, but job titles are no longer at the core. Every person is a leader of a particular business area.

Not every person is cut out to work in a holacratic organisation, nor is every organisation open to the seemingly free-spirited corporate culture. One obstacle is that many employees and managers have grown up in a hierarchal business culture and letting go of this mindset is a big ask.

Whether the employee model suits you or not, there is definitely an important lesson to be learned from holacracy: make everyone a leader / project owner of a particular part. And make sure that within this leadership, there is some amount of freedom to complete the project successfully.

Coolblue is a telling example of this strategy. One of the most important missions is to provide an excellent customer service experience. The staff members who spend a large portion of their time dealing with unsatisfied customers (customer service) need to always keep this mission in mind. It goes without saying that they achieve this by solving problems directly, according to predefined roadmaps. But they are also 'required' to send 10 hand-written cards per day to customers with whom they have spoken. Writing such letters takes time – valuable time – because it means they can't call/chat with the next customer. But Coolblue sees this differently, saying it contributes to customer satisfaction on the one hand, and employee satisfaction on the other. Coolblue does leave it entirely up to the employees to which customers they send the cards, as well as the reasoning behind their choice. No manual is needed here.

Besides offering freedom for the employees, we see that engaging employees is a major

trend that shouldn't be overlooked. We have already seen that a satisfied customer leads to improved customer loyalty, so retail businesses need to be making a serious effort to lift the engagement of their employees to a higher level. One method to achieve this is through the use of an employee app. This closed system is an easy and sure way to disclose information to employees and include HR solutions. But these features alone won't lead to more staff engagement. It's the addition of fun, social elements that will really get employees engaged, for instance by including employee time lines or various chat groups based on positions, departments or branches. Even more important are features enabling staff to share their ideas and opinions with exactly the right department. Store personnel is in contact with the customer every day and is usually filled with great ideas and valuable information. As a department, be it purchasing, sales, marketing or communication, this information is invaluable. Based on that input, you can be very effective in the next steps forward which, by the way, are likely to be widely supported by the store staff (seeing as the idea originated from them).

An employee who is engaged will also be more inclined to share information about his or her employer. After all, an engaged person is proud to be part of the retail company. This sense of engagement certainly has value when we look at the social media side. Even though the numbers vary somewhat between surveys, the average number of Facebook friends is around 100. If a retailer, let's say, employs 1,000 people, a message that is shared by employees has a potential reach of 100,000 views. That's even leaving out the family and friends who share the post out of goodwill.

Engaging employees is a trend we'll be seeing a lot of in the years to come, and there are many ways to do it. Key in this, though, should always be that the head office enables their personnel to carry out the work to the best of their ability and empower them to provide optimum service. Enablement + Empowerment = Engagement. ■

**'ENGAGING
EMPLOYEES IS A
TREND WE'LL BE
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IN THE YEARS
TO COME.'**



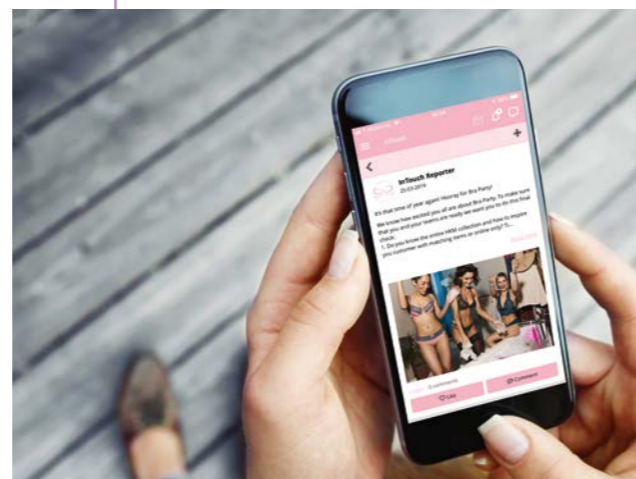


App on the shopping floor

Good, appropriate communication means engaged employees

Knowledgeable, well-informed and motivated shop staff are indispensable in current retail. They present an opportunity to set yourself apart from your

competitors, both online and offline. Which is why employee engagement is an important theme for every retailer.



Hunkemöller InTouch app.

‘EMPLOYEES WHO USE THE APP MORE, ARE CLEARLY MORE ENGAGED WITH YOUR BRAND.’

Engaged staff, who are really involved with the retailer, result in better customer service, more satisfied customers, and better store performance. What's more, productivity is higher and staff turnover is lower. Research shows that reducing staff turnover by one employee a month already results in a rise in turnover of at least 6%. At the moment, only 17% of shop managers feel that their employees are highly motivated and engaged. So there's work to do.

Good, appropriate communication means engaged personnel. This communication not only motivates, but also ensures that shop staff are well-informed. And that they can also inform their customers well. More and more retailers are using an app that enables direct personal communication. An app that provides actual information

about promotions, about shelf layouts and shop windows, and also nice motivational messages. The staff can also use the app as a source of information. The app puts all their colleagues' expert knowledge within reach. In short, the possibilities are unprecedented. But deploying an app alone is not enough. It's also about what you do with it. And, of course, about how actively you use it.

Which app content works now and what does not? Kega has researched the effects of the Intouch app in the shop. We compared the engagement of staff who do and do not use the app. We also investigated which type of content has the greatest effect. The five most important conclusions are described in this article.

1. APP USERS HAVE MORE ENGAGEMENT

Employees who use the app more, clearly have more engagement. Their engagement score is 14.5% higher than non-users. The app is least often used by temporary staff. Almost 30% of temporary staff never use the app. So this is where the most benefits can be achieved.

2. REGULAR APP USERS ARE BETTER INFORMED

Nearly 80% of the app users said that they are better informed about what is going on within the organization and 64% have become more curious about their work. Two-thirds said that they are better able to

carry out their work and 73% said they have become even better in their work. In short, actively sharing information certainly has a positive effect.

3. NEWS REPORTS ARE WIDELY READ, BUT DO NOT ALWAYS HAVE AN EFFECT

More than 55% check the news reports more than twice a week. 21% even do this daily. So news reports have a positive effect on employee engagement. News about merchandise, anniversaries, purchasing and training contributes to this in particular. Competitions and news from customer service are very positively regarded by employees, but do not immediately provide more engaged staff. However, these messages ensure that the app is regularly used. In short, provide a varied mix of news items. Also make sure that there is something new to read every day, because there are many regular readers.

4. VIDEO CONTENT CONTRIBUTES TWICE AS MUCH TO ENGAGEMENT

Videos are viewed less often than news reports. Only 17% of employees do this more than twice a week (5% daily). Videos are posted less often than news, but are twice as effective in increasing engagement. Funny videos can inspire employees at exactly the right time.

5. ACTIVE BRANCH MANAGERS PROVIDE MORE USERS

It is important that store managers actively use the app themselves. If a branch manager does not use the app himself, an average of only 53% of employees will use the app (compared to 85% in total). For that matter, 30% do not use the app at all because it's unfamiliar. So make sure that the app has a clear place in the onboarding process for new staff and bring it to their attention regularly. ■



Your IT architecture determines your power to execute

Transformation starts here



‘ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE FANS OF YOUR BRAND?’

Those who love gardening will agree: all you need to do is walk into your garden and you almost automatically start pruning, trimming or mowing the lawn. That probably says a lot about your character, but it certainly means that you like to keep things neat and orderly. The state of someone else’s backyard is quite noticeable by comparison. When taking a peek in the IT gardens of retailers, we often encounter an overgrown, tangled up scene – a figurative spaghetti junction. As CIO, it’s a great starting point to undertake the long-term process of transformation, but not to make the difference today as a retailer.

These days we’re living in a multichannel, multi-touchpoint, always-on, ultra-competitive market. The explosion of potential customer interaction points – new channels, new devices, new applications, new services, etc. – means that providing a consistent ‘experience’ across all channels is becoming increasingly important. In fact, various studies reveal that a consistent brand experience is linked to more loyalty, and therefore more revenue.

Creating a consistent brand experience is, technically speaking, easier said than done. Certainly in a time when the IT landscape is divided across different applications, connected to each other like a spaghetti junction. This makes bringing order to chaos quite a challenge. Not to mention the costs of implementing overarching adjustments whereby you have to depend on several external suppliers, but also internally on different departments with different interests.

At Kega we focus on the store staff. After all, they are often the key between a sale and a

lost sale, or that definitive brand experience. It is therefore no real surprise that a number of our solutions and services focus on so-called Employee Engagement and Employee Empowerment. An example of this is Kega’s InTouch app, the professional’s answer to WhatsApp and Messenger groups that allows the head office to stay in control. How often do you think it occurs that an employee is still a member of the company Whatsapp group while he or she has left the company long ago and is working elsewhere?

The employees are actually very special in that sense, especially when we zoom in further on the IT side of things. Employee information is often spread across multiple systems – each with its own history. Plus, the personnel are kind of in a difficult corner. Different things are expected of the staff from every department of the retail organisation. Just try to imagine the different expectations from Marketing, HRM, operations or even the board of directors. It all seems to funnel down and come together at that one employee. So, what better place to start the transformation than right here!

But it all begins by asking the right questions. One of our favourite questions we always ask is: “Are you familiar with

the fans of your brand?” it is this question that often marks the beginning of a very informative talk with a host of underlying questions, such as:

- Does your business meet the changed privacy legislation on storage?
- Where is the customer data stored? (Physically, but also in what applications).
- What is known about the customer?
- What is the item information (data) journey?
- Where is my personnel information stored?
- Is there a security policy?

These are just a few examples of questions you can ask

yourself as a retailer when you start involving your staff in the customer journey. The Omnichannel Manager, the Chief Employee Officer, the Happy Customer Officer; they’re all spending more time answering these questions. These newly created roles in the changed retail landscape are popping up like mushrooms, each searching for an overarching vision on Omnichannel Retailing and, increasingly, on the customer and the staff. Because when you’re in the centre of this force field, you’re always trying to offer added value to the journey with the aim of creating extra business value. That’s how you can take retail further. ■





Keep your employees fresh

Job descriptions are changing

The transition from single channel to omnichannel by retailers has been going on for more than 15 years now. When it all started, this change was chiefly focused on marketing and IT: prices, product range and marketing communication were brought together and aligned with each other. The impact this transition had on the organisation during this first phase was mainly discernible in the marketing and IT departments.

Changes in terms of personnel, however, were still very limited: the beginning of selling through the online channel led to new positions mainly geared towards e-commerce. Due to the further shift from offline to online sales and the emergence of cross-channel services, such as Click & Collect, employees were expected to learn new skills, thus creating a change in the existing job descriptions.

In areas where the sales are making a partial shift to online retail, the emphasis in the physical store is leaning more and more towards service and customer experience. The question is whether the current staff members still have the right skills. The best sales person may be considered the best employee today, but what if that same person spends most of the day having to provide service?

The shift from buying in the physical store to the online channel has, until now, not led to lower staff levels in the retail sector.

Infact, the number of jobs in retail actually increased in the last couple of years. But the job descriptions are changing at an incredible pace. 21,000 jobs were lost in stores last year, but at the same time 26,000 new retail jobs were created. This growth can mainly be attributed to positions in logistics (delivery, distribution centres) and in customer service.

At the head office, too, there are massive changes. Whereas in the past there was often no data available on which to base decisions and management's gut-feeling dictated the course of action, the scales have tipped completely and there is now so much data, we don't know what to do with it. Analysing data and translating it to tangible actions demands specific skills that most retail companies simply don't have.

It's logical that this ever-changing need for staff to learn new skills has an effect on the recruitment and selection process. One of the key questions for the future will be "Where do we get the right people from?". It therefore makes good sense for retailers to map out in which areas the organisation expects to grow in coming years and which jobs and skills are needed in those areas to attract the right people before it's too late! ■



Power to the people

Ever a strong believer to the fact that in business people can make all the difference in the world. In retail I feel, more than in any other market, people really come first. For someone to actually buy that new product, the entire journey needs to be up to par. We all know what I am talking about, you will not buy the product if the quality is off, the sales assistant is rude, the online cart is too complex, pricing is off, etc. etc. But tell me, when Do you buy? Few sectors are changing as quickly and profoundly as retail. Retail has long been a one-way street where retailers and brands have dictated the relationship between themselves and their customers. But as the balance of power has increasingly shifted towards consumers, who could publically complain, retailers see their voice slowly become less important.

Apparently successful in getting the message across, during a talk by one of the founders of PicNic, a new Dutch company delivering a supermarket-on-wheels ('SRV' like) distribution and delivery concept for groceries, it got me thinking. When has it started to be normal to go from my home, to a store, preferably by car, park, struggle finding the right articles for the right price, wait in line to be allowed to pay, pack stressfully, go back to the service desk because you did not get your discount and then get started on the return trip and unpack, only to find out you forgot an item? Sounds like it's time for 'the next Ford, rather than a better horse'-concept for supermarkets. What will that concept be?

In the meantime, while we all continue shopping between bricks- and-mortar and online shopping

experiences, I see retailers are looking for new ways to replicate the speed and ease of online shopping, in-store. This focus on the relationship between the brand and consumer's ease-of-use is good, yet I feel one ingredient is often forgotten that could potentially have an even bigger impact - staff. Did you know that the best performing brands in the world also account for the highest grades when it comes to empowered and engaged staff? Quite logical when you come to think about it, as they have the best chance to make the sale in every channel or touchpoint. I am sure that when you think about your best retail experience, it was an employee making the difference.

With the geopolitical and economics in 2018, retailers should prepare for what could be a difficult year. In a world where omnichannel retailing is the standard, there is not one retail brand marketleader in both online and offline. Think about it, not one. So for most retailers it should not be the goal to be the biggest and best on all channels, but rather to focus on the primary channel and treat the rest of the channels and touchpoint as a support group. While that happens it's all about finding the equilibrium where retailers are listening increasingly to consumers' needs without losing their own point of view. What differentiates a business, is it the experience, staff, service or product, or a combination?

After that look at yourself, we are all consumers after all. What would you like?

Mike van der Hulst



How can we help?

In our quest to take retail further, Kega implements the Retail InTouch platform for employee engagement. A pioneer in employee engagement, we have many case studies to ensure your success when implementing an employee engagement program. This starts with the initial launch, the ongoing content campaigns to monitoring the engagement levels. We work with you to develop these Content Plans and to review their effectiveness throughout the year. In addition, we customize the employee app and store portal with additional pre-build functionality to support your business needs. These include task

management, polls, surveys, workforce scheduling, training and much more. The InTouch platform supports the daily operations of food and non-food retailers. Over 125,000 employees in more than 6000 stores use the InTouch platform to get the latest news from headquarters, communicate with each other, improve their product knowledge, and better service the customer.

Are you ready to experience the energy of Kega to engage your employees in an exciting and structural way? Give Kees a call at +31 252 75 02 75 or send an email to: kees.verkade@kega.nl.

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