

POST-PANDEMIC MARKETING: THE RISE OF OMNICHANNEL

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ABSTRACT

As we are trying to get back to normal, we are discovering that our current consumers are somewhat different than the ones we had before the pandemic. While some are actually the same individuals, they are different in the sense that they are displaying different shopping habits. They seem to prefer new rituals as a result of what they experienced during the pandemic. One of those new rituals is related to how they interact with marketing companies in completing their purchases. They simply like to buy whatever, whenever, and wherever. They want numerous options that allow them to choose the store that deliver their orders where they want them with the fastest delivery time. They also want to be able to change these routines every time they buy a product. And they want all those different transactions to be smooth and efficient so that they can have personalized and satisfying shopping experiences at the end of each one. The purpose of this paper is to highlight a channel strategy “omnichannel” that has an ability to cater to these consumers. It is hoped that a review of issues raised in this paper will provide the readers with a better understanding of this strategy and its practicality in different settings.

Keywords: Omnichannel; Multichannel

1. INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic has not only impacted how companies operate but also altered customer habits and expectations permanently. We are now trying to cater to consumers who are extremely demanding and well-aware of the options which they believe they should have, knowing that they have many choices in terms of products and companies that offer them. They are equipped with tools that give them an access to the latest offerings in the market. It is not an easy task to please these consumers and retain them as loyal customers in the long run.

We know that majority of these customers have preferred channels when interacting with and purchasing from a brand. We have been discovering that growing number of consumers appears to pursue more than one channel and they like to pursue them simultaneously in this process. For instance, Consumer X may research a product online, try it in store, purchase it online, get it shipped to his/her home, and maybe sign up for future email communication. On the other hand, Consumer Y may discover the product in store, try it in store, purchase it online, pick it up at store, and opt out from future online communications. Both of those consumers expect their shopping experiences through these multiple channels to be seamless and well-coordinated. Proper servicing these two different shopping practices which are taking place at the same time requires open communication across different channels as well as timely coordination and management of them. This is the growing trend in marketing channels and it is called omnichannel.

2. WHAT IS OMNICHANNEL?

The prefix “omni” means “all” or “every” and “channel” is used in this context as a reference to the many ways customers might interact with a company—in physical stores, by surfing the web, on social media, in emails, apps, etc. In general terms, omnichannel is a unique approach to sales, marketing and customer support to make sure that consumers have a seamless and unified brand experience, regardless of which channel they use (Awati, Goulart, Sharapani, 2023). It is a strategic customer-centric