



Analytics in an Omni Channel World

Table of Contents

03	Extending the Single View of Consumer
04.....	Extending the Single View of Inventory
04.....	A View into Tomorrow
05.....	About the Author
05.....	About Wipro Ltd.

Every retailer is aware that the shopper expects each experience to be flexible, convenient and enriching. Enter omni-channel that facilitates browsing from home, adding to the cart via the mobile phone while driving to work, and picking up the product from the store at the end of the day. Omni-channel is meant to provide a unified consumer experience across channels, products and buying stages like in the scenario outlined above.

But is it enough?

Does the consumer experience consistency in product choice, pricing and promotion between the online and store worlds in today's omni-channel ecosystem? Will the retailer's loyalty program reward the consumer in exactly the same way, regardless of the channel of purchase? Can a consumer seamlessly switch channels from online to contact center in the middle of a transaction? And how does the consumer's interaction and perception in the social world translate into a better experience when he walks into the store the next time?

Answers to these questions are just the beginning of where omni-channel must aspire to be and how analytics can help in this journey. After all, the definition of omni-channel experience has moved beyond the realm of offering multiple avenues to complete a sale. Today, in every interaction between the consumer and the retailer, omni-channel stands for consistent and superior brand promise – every time and everywhere.

Extending the Single View of Consumer

Unifying consumer information across multiple channels has long been advocated as the first step in reinforcing this brand promise. While this is correct, it extends well beyond creating a unique ID or implementing a CRM solution. Insights drawn from web analytics must be used to shape search engine marketing (SEM), content marketing, social-media, blogging, and email strategies for generating interest in a product. Retailers have to find ways to integrate and consolidate consumer purchase history across store and e-commerce, and m-commerce systems. Aggregating unstructured data from social sites are useful methods in understanding a shopper better. Studying product returns & analyzing contact center logs offer rich insight into product use and consumer expectations.



Performing analytics on this wide source of data across multiple dimensions will assist retailers in offering tailored shopping experiences and communicate to consumers that loyalty is valued regardless of channel.

Creating a single view of the consumer also carries the instant benefit of determining the right promotion mix. Retailers can analyze data to discern the effectiveness of coupon usage or in-store discounts per shopper. They can also determine whether these instruments increased basket sizes, drove up sales of accessories, and broadly increased category spends.

The focus thus shifts from the channel to the consumer. When a consumer steps into the store and receives an offer on the phone for products stored in the online wish list, higher are the odds of completing the purchase. Alerting store associates of the apprehensions expressed by the shopper on social sites provides an opportunity to address them. Mobile apps providing additional information such as country of origin or calorific values accelerate the purchasing journey. And when consumers scan QR codes of products on shelves to retrieve additional information, an opportunity arises for retailers to beam appropriate offers.

Analytics also helps minimize the showrooming effect. By proactively identifying products or product categories vulnerable to showrooming, retailers have an opportunity to increase staffing in these aisles for personally engaging with shoppers, explaining how purchasing in-store could be advantageous and offering a deal or discount upon immediate purchase.

Extending the Single View of Inventory

Retailers can also work on creating a single view of inventory to enable more fulfillment options. Store associates equipped with mobile tablets not only save the sale by sourcing products from another store, but also assist consumers in looking for related items. According to the report of The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) study commissioned by Wipro in 2013, big data had enabled 52 percent of respondents to improve online sales by offering the next logical item. Just imagine the possibilities when the exact same analysis enables the store associate to offer the next logical item in a more personal interaction within the store.

In addition, when consumers are in the store, an analysis of their recent browsing history overlaid with inventory positions provides a new

stream of cross-sell and upsell opportunities. Big data analytics can also be used to study product affinity across channels, thereby enabling retailers to ensure ample stocks of products on the channels on which they are purchased most frequently. It must be highlighted that faster data synchronization between POS and merchandising systems – less than 10 minutes in some cases – is the key to the success of these interactions.

A View into Tomorrow

While big data analytics allows retailers to make the right offer at the right place at the right time, there are valid concerns on data privacy. Regulators for example are increasingly formulating privacy norms. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) study states that 64 percent of retail CXOs found legal problems as a major barrier in the effective use of data, while 32 percent cited data protection laws as the major impediment.

Interestingly, the same study also points out that consumers' concerns about the security of their own data are currently a far smaller impediment to gathering more consumer data: only 15% of respondents cited this as an issue.

This is not a paradox. It points to a future where data privacy regulation may be strengthened, and yet consumers would be open to sharing data, provided it offers them value in return. And the rise in omni-channel spending will be in large measure due to enhanced data analytics that performs a 360° view of the consumer; helps in maximizing channel effectiveness, results in a superior order-to-cash performance and reinforces the brand promise.



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Arun Kumar is a General Manager & Global Head of Retail Consulting Practice at Wipro. He is responsible for shaping Wipro's retail solution strategy and expanding Thought Leadership across customer experience, omni-channel retailing, supply chain management, merchandising and store operations. Arun has over 18 years of experience in retail and logistics and has led consulting-driven engagements, managed global transformation programs and aligned technology solutions to business outcomes.

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