Corporate Blog Post

The customer experience battleground;
how 5G can give retail stores the edge

5G offers unique opportunities to retail just like any other industry, and it's all about customer experience

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Executive summary

The single biggest reason the retail sector should be embracing 5G is to improve and augment the customer experience. According to a report by ATT (https://www.business.att.com/learn/tech-advice/how-5g-will-boost-the-retail-industry.html), 'positive customer experience is a key to success in the retail industry'. We take a look at how to use it to stand out

Client:

Optus/Ogilvy.

Content type:

Post for the Optus consumer blog.

Brief:

To encourage business users to design and implement a mobile strategy that will make it easier to engage with customers.

Deliverable:

500 word blog post with strict parameters around sections, section lengths, SEO and keywords, social, key takeaways, related content, CTA, etc.

After online retail stores upended the business model, bricks and mortar retail stores had no choice but to get in on the act, deploying their own sites and working outside their comfort zones. But whatever the channel, there's one unique selling point that can propel you to the top, and that's offering the best possible customer experience.

Shopper demographics are also skewing younger – to the digital native generation who already use and expect the tools and technologies their favourite stores should be adopting.

The biggest potential stumbling block, and one that will need very careful planning and management, is to allow customers to opt in to all the data collection and re-use capabilities 5G can leverage to augment their purchase and browsing habits.

Scaling connectivity from one end to the other

Behind customer-facing systems, 5G can also revolutionise the entire supply chain from manufacturer to point of sale.

An unstocked item and vague promises about resupply is enough to drive customers to any number of websites where they can order and track their purchase to their door.

Smart shelf technology does the same thing (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9OO2F4Hcfs). When an item is low or out of stock, Internet of Things sensors can communicate with suppliers to re-order it. The customer can even use the in-store network to check on the progress of the shipment using their phone or device and opt how they want to receive it - pick up or have it delivered straight to their home.

All that communication will need a stronger, faster, always-on network, and 5G has been developed from the ground up for seamless person-to-machine and machine-to-machine communication.

A taste of what's bring trialled now;

Magic mirror
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lNKJRltaUmI

RFID tags affixed to clothes communicate to the smart surface in a dressing room, a device that's part mirror, part computer screen.

Data collected about the garment and (if they've opted in) the customer's past history can deliver personalised ads, design a look and show relevant accessories or even display different sizes of the garment being fitted, all of it virtually.

Summoning sales attendants for help, letting customers post selfies of an outfit to social media for friends' opinions and retaining it all to further personalise their next visit become a snap over a fast, high-bandwidth network like 5G.

High tech hotels
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xd0Wr8orhjM

The average hotel wi-fi is an area where better connectivity is sorely needed as people work and entertain themselves on the road.

With a building-wide ultrafast 5G network, guests can control almost everything from their phone handset – unlocking and accessing the room, adjusting the lights or air conditioning, selecting entertainment options and enjoying as much bandwidth as they need for working away.

Computer as (human) helper
https://www.ibm.com/blogs/ibm-anz/the-ai-sommelier-making-you-the-wine-expert/

It's not enough having smart AI algorithms assist us in our choices – to catch on in the mainstream they need to be user friendly.

One New Zealand service that's helping people pick the right wine for their meal or gathering is using natural voice recognition and processing in order to speak their language.

It's based on the technology behind IBM's Watson, famous for beating humans at Jeopardy in 2011. Watson's secret sauce is that it understands and can form sentences the way people speak them, and that calls for a huge amount of data transmission and synthesis – capabilities 5G was built for.

Conclusion

If you're looking for the best application of 5G technology to help your business stay competitive, book a consultative session at Future Now and find out how 5G can help transform your retail interface to provide the best customer experience possible. ◼