

Mobile Consumer Journeys: What to Expect in 2022 and How to Manage Them

With more than 32,000 stores globally offering mobile self-scanning to their customers* by the end of 2020, retailers had already discovered the power and possibilities of mobile consumer journeys in store—from offering discounts, to integrating shopping lists and pushing promotions. Mobile self-scanning is dismantling the barriers of traditional brick-and-mortar shopping while integrating the online experiences consumers are used to. We talked to retail analyst Alan Burt, from UK-based research and consulting firm RBR, and our own Leyla Fegghi about how mobile self-scanning is being adopted globally and how retailers can ensure these mobile journeys are always available



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Store digitalization will incessantly develop, enabling better consumer journeys and greater staff efficiencies. Retailers are increasingly investing in digitalization such as self-checkout and mobile solutions including self-scanning solutions for consumers, electronic shelf labeling and other digitalized touchpoints.

WHAT ARE THE TRENDS ACCELERATING MOST QUICKLY IN THE RETAIL VERTICAL?

Self-service is taking off strongly, particularly mobile self-scanning. Some retailers provide handheld devices to customers to scan products as they shop. A greater number offer apps allowing customers to use their own smartphones, while a minority offer both options. A growing number of retailers around the world are also experimenting with checkout-free technology, with cameras and sensors tracking shopping journeys.

Mobility has become a key trend in enabling consumer centricity. Ensuring store staff efficiency allows them to focus on serving consumers anytime, anywhere and empowers them with accurate, up-to-date information—which means mobile devices for employees are now mandatory for many retailers. For consumers, mobile self-scanning is a popular and expanding trend to enjoy a fast and personalized shopping trip.

HOW IS MOBILE TECHNOLOGY SHAPING RETAIL JOURNEYS?

Smartphones are integral to people's lives, allowing consumers to take control of their shopping journeys. For retailers themselves, mobile technology supports omnichannel customer journeys. Alongside in-aisle checkout, store associates can use mobile devices to identify additional items to be fulfilled from e-commerce, check stock in other stores and generally help answer customer queries.

While it is key to design the right solution to deliver consumer satisfaction and staff efficiency, retailers must consider how they can ensure the highest availability of the solution. As faults can be detected during consumer use, it is important to create trust with consumers, by ensuring the technology is consistent and 'always-on'—that's how retailers can encourage repeat use.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ENABLERS AND ACCELERATORS FOR MOBILE TRANSFORMATION?

The integration of mobile with other store systems is critical; store staff need access to the latest information so they can add value to customer journeys. It's vital that retailers' systems are robust and reliable—for example, ensuring comprehensive wi-fi availability, so customers can use their own smartphones for mobile self-scanning.

Having a solid service model in place is key to implementing and operating journeys in a multivendor environment. Retailers need to consider a proactive service that ensures the availability of the journey end-to-end. Over 70% of the TCO is caused by operational costs over time. Proactive remote management—leveraging relevant device and business data—increases availability, provides a better TCO and enables business decisions.

WHAT DO RETAILERS NEED TO CONSIDER TO ENSURE TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION?

Enabling choice is a pre-requisite in modern retail, alongside making sure the customer experience is as smooth as possible. Retailers need to iron out any part of the process that could cause friction, and a quick and easy checkout is a major part of this. Having staff on-hand to assist customers who might be less familiar with new technologies would also help adoption.

Emerging yourself in retail today, it's happening all around us. We've seen disruption in retail based on mobile technology starting its evolution years ago. This mobile journey is part of our Storevolution™ program at DN. Retailers are, of course, at various stages of adoption—but eventually, all will be (to some degree) heading in this direction, creating exponential growth.

HOW DO YOU SEE MOBILE TECHNOLOGY DISRUPTING THE RETAIL INDUSTRY?

Disruption has come from consumers using mobile devices in their everyday lives. The growth of e-commerce saw customers often better informed about products and prices than store associates, so retailers have had to adapt. Store transformation was already happening before COVID-19, but the pandemic has led retailers to seek further options to reduce contact between consumers and staff.

THE TAKEAWAY

Retailers are at a critical inflection point: evolve consumer and staff journeys—including store infrastructure—or risk being outperformed by more agile retailers. We encourage retailers to assess their IT and business teams to find ways to improve the customer experience and staff journeys with mobile technology.

*RBR Mobile Self-Scanning and Checkout-Free 2021 report