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Hitting a *10/10*

eStar's digital strategist **Greg Randall** reveals how to create an amazing online experience.

ALL RETAILERS WANT to deliver a great online experience, but very few are making it happen. Before discussing the 10 principles required to create an amazing online experience, it is first important to understand what an amazing online experience looks like. To understand this, we will review great face-to-face physical retail experiences and understand what they look and feel like. This forms a frame of reference.

Consider a scenario where a consumer has buying intent ("buying intent" is a person who has a buying purpose or need), makes the effort to head to a physical retail store and has a one to one interaction:
1. A great salesperson will adjust the pitch based on a consumer's questions and preferences.
2. The salesperson presents relevant information based on these questions.
3. The information presented is easy to understand (no jargon).
4. The salesperson has sales tools and deep knowledge on the products and introduces this information at the right time. The consumer feels this experience is personalised because it is relevant to his/her buying intent and is presented on their terms. Like the physical experience, amazing online experiences should also be considered from the consumer perspective and based on a one to one interaction. Not one to many.

For retailers to deliver amazing online experiences they are essentially selling (present content) in the identical manner in which a consumer wants to purchase (receive content based on their intent).

In the pictured diagram there are two circles, "How Retailers Sell" (or how they present content) and "How Consumers Buy" (or how consumers want to receive content). The overlap is a representation of a retailer meeting the expectation of the consumer. This overlap is a retailer's online conversion rate1 (global average ranges between 2.3% to 3.5%).

The following 10 principles, when working together, will drive the overlap.

1. Consumers are on a journey
Consumers' online journeys are becoming longer. In 2013, a Google study found that, on average, consumers referenced 12 sources of information online before buying online or in-store. In 2010, the average was 5.

2. Each journey comprises multiple steps
In the eyes of the consumer, a "step" occurs when they take an action online and new content is presented or the same content appears differently.

3. The Function of "User Experince or "UX"
To understand how "UX" contributes, it needs to be broken down into two parts; Interaction Cost and Value Design. An Interaction Cost is the effort required of consumers to undertake each step within their journey. The ultimate goal is to reduce as many forms of effort as possible for your customers. Value Design is the creation and presentation of content. This helps simplify decision making.

4. Respect the fold
The "Fold" is as important as it was many years ago, but the dynamic has since changed. Though today's consumer is more prone to scrolling, they will only make the effort if they perceive the content below the fold will add value to their journey.

5. Let data do the decision making
Having access to the right data is an important part of determining what is and what is not working for your brand. Don't ignore this, the facts don't lie. On top of this, ask yourself what are you doing to acquire new customers? Do you know your customers' pain points and why they don't purchase?

6. Apply best practice aka the "Science"
The world of eCommerce and digital conduct has been around for over twenty years now, providing a wealth of knowledge for businesses to expedite their digital evolution.

7. Wireframing
The process of translating the experience plan to touchpoints is done through wireframes.

8. Design consumer first not mobile first
Retailers have the ability to leverage varying screen sizes to improve the consumer experience. Key considerations include:
- Simultaneously create wireframes for all touchpoints
- Consider context (and what experience the consumer is looking for on a particular screen)
- Do not forget about the enlarged monitors which are growing in popularity for desktop.

9. Design experiences for intent drive "Micro-moments"
A micro-moment is a consumer's moment of high intent and need for engagement.

10. Be iterative
Creating a great online experience is not a one-off process. Maintain customer engagement, keep data mining, insight gathering and making new hypothesis creations, continue iterative and agile development programming. ■

How Retailers Sell Online   How Customers Buy Online

2.5% – 3.5%