

7 ways to create in-store experiences that drive traffic and sales

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Competition in the retail industry is fiercer than ever. Between e-commerce sites and subscription services, consumers have plenty of choices when it comes to where they spend their time and money.



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To stay competitive, you need to give them compelling reasons to come into your store and shop. Looking for ways to do just that?

Below are 7 tips and examples to get you started.

1. Have your sales team act more as consultants, experts or friends rather than “salespeople”

A *Time* article said it best: the retail worker of the future is “cool, charismatic and better paid”.

It's good to have the in-store technology and other bells and whistles, but don't lose sight of the fact that your front-line

employees are the biggest and most important creators of the in-store experience.

Any retailer that wants to stay competitive needs to step up their game when it comes to staff hiring and development. It's no longer enough to train employees on your products and store policies – these things are now the bare minimum.

You also need to train them to relate better to shoppers. Your associates should have the ability to connect with customers in a memorable way. This often means shifting from being a “salesperson” to being an expert, consultant, or even friend.

Ask yourself, how can you and your staff up level your relationships with your customers? If your customers still see you and your employees as “salespeople”, what can you do to change their perception?

Find the answers to these questions and use them to reinvigorate your staffing and customer service strategies.



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2. Let guests have some hands-on fun

Are you allowing your customers to experience your products or are those items just sitting inside boxes on a shelf? If it's the latter, then it's high time to mix things up. Figure out how you can present your merchandise in unique and experiential ways.

Can you ideate and test ways to promote more fun in your store? Perhaps you can allow customers to play with your products. Or maybe you can promote activities that keep the little ones busy. Find what works and see how shoppers react.

3. Make sure your physical and digital stores work together

If you have an online store, see to it that your e-commerce site works hand in hand with your physical location(s). Remember, modern consumers are using multiple channels and devices in their shopping journeys. Aside from shopping in-store, they're using their phones, computers, and tablets to research and buy products.

For this reason, it's important to not just have a presence on different channels, but you need to enable customers to shop across physical and digital channels seamlessly. In other words, you need to be an omnichannel retailer.

Here's how:

Implement click-and-collect: Click-and-collect, a service that lets shopper buy online and pick-up in-store, isn't just convenient for customers, it also drives traffic and sales in your physical stores.

So how exactly can you implement click-and-collect? The first step is to have a centralised retail solution that lets you manage orders, sales, and customers from one system. Or, if you have separate systems for your physical and digital stores, then you need to find a way to integrate the two programs. Whatever the case, talk to your solutions provider and ask them about their omnichannel retail offerings.

Bring your website in-store: Consider enhancing the brick-and-mortar experience by allowing shoppers to browse your online shop in your physical location. Enabling people to browse your e-commerce site in-store lets them see products or variants that you may not have on-site. If they see something they like, you can just have your sales team place an order for them and ship it to their home.

4. Redefine the checkout experience

Long lines at checkout are big a turn-off and can result in customers abandoning their purchases.

Don't let long lines affect your bottom line. If you're dealing with lengthy queues at checkout, take immediate steps to speed things up. For example, always be ready with additional registers. Open new registers and make sure you always have enough cashiers on staff to serve shoppers.

To make things even easier, consider using an iPad as your POS. Another benefit of using an iPad is that it lets you untether the checkout process. Rather than being stuck behind the cash wrap, you can quickly take the checkout process to the customer and ring up sales from anywhere in the store.



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5. Provide “retailtainment”

Retailtainment, as the name suggests, is the fusion of retail and entertainment – an effort on the part of retailers to provide customers with fun, unique experiences that elevate shopping above anything it's previously been. And it's becoming increasingly popular.

What kind of retailtainment should you offer? That depends on your store and customers. In some cases, bringing in celebrities or industry professionals could do the trick.

6. Promote a sense of community

If it makes sense for your business and customers, find ways to bring people together in your store. Invite customers and community members to events where they can learn new things, interact with like-minded individuals, or simply get a break from staring at their computer or phone all day.

Do note that building a community isn't just about holding events. Community building requires cultivating real relationships with customers and communicating with them on a regular basis.



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7. Create immersive experiences

Want your store to attract shoppers and make a long-lasting impression? Create a store environment that envelops customers and grabs their full attention.

Commit to reinventing the in-store experience. Do your research. Ask yourself – or even better, ask your customers – what would make shoppers come into your stores? Do you need to offer omnichannel services? Should you work on community building? The only way to find out is to get to know your customers and try new things.

Will it be easy? Not likely. But doing so is critical if you want to thrive in the months and years to come.

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