



CEO Insight – Retail Trends Post Pandemic Bricks and Mortar

By: Janet Hawkins, CEO & Founder Opterus Inc.

When it comes to bricks and mortar retailers, to reference an old fable, you definitely want to be the piggy that build their house of bricks. That piggy planned for the worse and no matter how much the wolf huffed and puffed, the brick house did not fall down. In this case, obviously the pandemic is the wolf and that piggy's house is bricks and mortar retailing.

If you are like that piggy, you have already built an organization that is strong and can withstand. This pandemic was unexpected, and it is hard to plan for something as specific as the economic environment it created but it showed me that no matter what, bricks and mortar retail is not going away.

Lockdown after lockdown frustrated shoppers showed they clearly want a hands-on experience with what they are planning to purchase. Although ecommerce thrived, the desire remained to get out and go into a store and have a 'shopping experience.' As soon as lockdowns were lifted, I saw and continue to see consumers lined up for hours to get into stores. There were posts on social media, expressing the excitement to finally be shopping again. This is a good thing, and it shows retailers that, perhaps things are changing, but consumers don't want the storefront to disappear.

But this means that retailers need to change too. Some are already changing. Silos need to come down. Retail organizations need to think about measuring success in new ways across the organization. Pure revenue driven KPIs for stores do not truly measure the value of having that storefront. Considerations need to be made for the value of experiential retailing that, more often than not, lead to increased customer loyalty and additional consumer purchases in store and online.



The most important thing to consider when thinking about that instore experience is your front-line associates. It is crucial to ensure that they and the store is ready for the consumer. There is no room for a major disconnect between strategy and performance at the store level. Centralized communications result in significant execution compliance improvements because of better traceability and accountability. As well, higher associate satisfaction and more efficiencies that allow them to be more productive, effective, and ready to meet today's consumers.



Let Opterus help you with all your operational needs by using the best solution in the industry to keep your store associates working confidently and safely.

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