



Technology in Retail: From centre stage to supporting player

Beyond four walls


Retail trends 2016/17. Vol 1.

Using digital technology to facilitate the best customer experience

Australian retailers have had an interesting relationship with digital technology. If the relationship was a romantic comedy, then the 90s/00s were the early part of the movie, where the title characters are sworn enemies who will never find common ground. More recently, we have entered the phase where both leads grudgingly acknowledge the existence of each other, but are still awkward around one another, with misunderstandings and obstacles galore. Like the best rom coms, the next few years should see a glorious finale, where both parties realise they are meant to be together, and neither can function properly without the other.

But before the violins swell and the credits roll, we want to take a deeper look at what's happening with digital technology in the Australian retail sector.

Is technology the knight on a white horse that will ride in and save the day for the bricks-and-mortar retail sector, or is it all a bit more complicated?

A decorative dashed line graphic that starts as a wide arc on the left, curves upwards and to the right, then loops back down and to the left, ending in a yellow arrowhead pointing downwards and to the right.

Change, change, change

Is there any other sector the word 'reshape' has been associated with as much as retail? From locally owned and run small stores, through to the development of larger general and department stores facilitated by the invention of the car, to the development of shopping centres and big box retailers in the 70s and 80s; for most of the 20th century, societal and technological developments have repeatedly transformed the retail landscape. Then came the most significant technology driven change of all — the internet — at the turn of the 21st century.

Since the arrival of e-commerce as a platform, most Australian bricks-and-mortar retailers have perceived it as a threat, albeit a distant one in the beginning. Sometimes this fear was with good cause. It is inarguable that digital technologies, the internet and e-commerce in particular, have had a significant impact on the retail landscape. These technologies were an element of the disruption that saw seven of the eight companies who, in 1980 had been the largest US retailers, filing for bankruptcy, being acquired, or losing their place as major industry players by 2000.¹





What do we mean by omnichannel retailing?

Omnichannel retailing is an evolution of multichannel retailing. Multichannel offers customers a selection of channels to choose from, but all channels are separate. Omnichannel means offering the customer the opportunity to interact with more than one sales channel to shop from a retailer for any given transaction. They can buy online and pick up in-store for example, or use mobile in-store to research or make a purchase, or they can buy in-store and initiate a return online. In omnichannel retailing, a retailer is looking to have a 360 degree view of customer purchases and interactions across all channels.²

Retail down under: an Australian perspective

As the global retail sector adapted to the impact of internet retail in the first years of this century, Australia had a different experience.

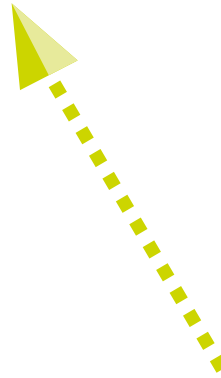
Until about 2010, because of its geographic location and the costs of getting products here, Australia was largely insulated from the challenges that online and foreign-owned retail giants brought to other markets. This delayed impact has had a number of consequences, including a slower adoption of omnichannel retailing by major Australian retailers, and a misunderstanding of the role that digital technology can play in supporting physical retail.

Today, online retail has well and truly arrived. According to National Australia Bank's (NAB) March 2016 Online Retail Sales Index in-depth report, online spending increased 12.4% over the last year. While the online retail sector is still smaller, in comparison to traditional bricks-and-mortar retailers, online sales have grown at nearly double the pace over the past year.³

So while Australian retailers are becoming wise to the challenges that e-commerce can bring, are they aware of the opportunities that the same technology can also give them?

We take a look at some Australian companies assisting bricks-and-mortar stores in Australia and overseas to implement a successful omnichannel approach. They are working to help physical stores use the best available technology to provide exceptional customer experience and maintain the position of the physical store at the heart of the Australian retail experience.

Predictions, disruptions and trends



In our 2012 report, 'Digital Disruption: Short fuse, big bang'⁴, we predicted which sectors we thought would be among the first to face significant challenges as a result of digital disruption.

Retail was front and centre in the 'short fuse, big bang' category — we expected the retail sector to experience significant disruption, and for this to happen soon. At that time, the impact of disruption on retail was largely expected by most industry analysts to manifest itself as a substantial reduction in physical retail space, as bricks-and-mortar lost ground to cheaper, faster, more convenient online shopping.

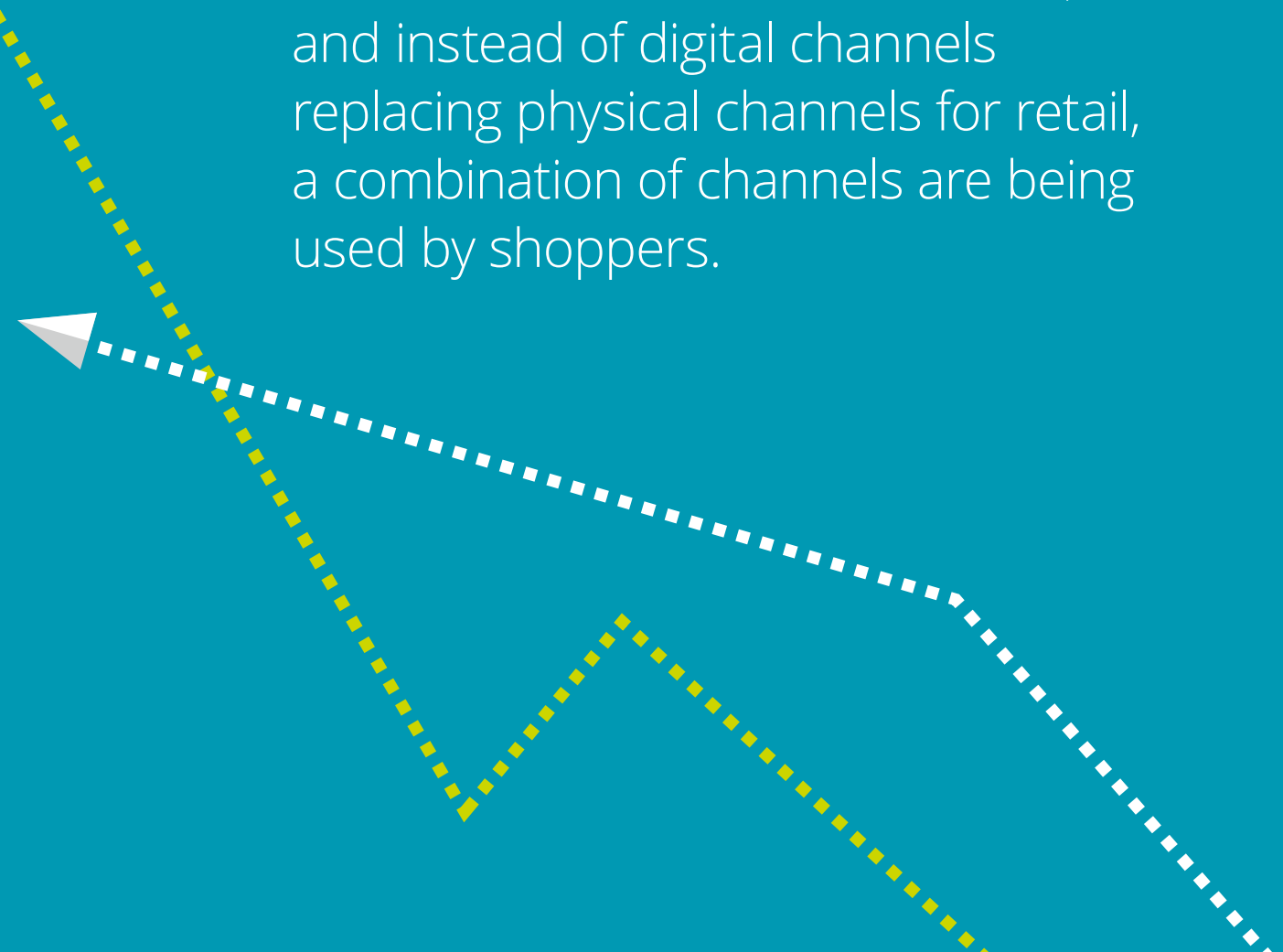
These predictions were based on an assumption that for customers, online was the epitome of convenience and that physical-only retailers could not compete. In other words, it presumed that online and in person retail were in competition with each other, and that only one could prevail.

Of course we now know that what has happened in the retail sector looks quite different to those predictions. There has been a definite increase in the percentage of shopping conducted online, and physical retailers in Australia have certainly lost a significant share of growth in retail to e-commerce. But purchases in-store still

account for over 90% of all retail transactions, and instead of digital channels replacing physical channels for retail, a combination of channels are being used by shoppers. Bricks-and-mortar retailers have developed omnichannel initiatives to better synchronise their online and offline offerings. Forty percent of in-store visits were influenced by digital in Australia in 2015.⁵

Perhaps the ultimate sign that the death of bricks-and-mortar retailing has been greatly exaggerated, has been the growing trend for previously online-only retailers moving to open physical stores. Some of the biggest online-first retailers (Amazon, Warby Parker and Bonobos) have opened physical stores to allow customers to experience their products in person.⁶ According to a report by McKinsey & Company, despite the e-commerce boom, bricks-and-mortar stores will still account for approximately 85% of U.S. retail sales in 2025.⁷

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What customers want today

Even though the disruption predicted for the retail sector has manifested in a different way, these developments have caused significant shifts in the business models of retailers.

There is often a fundamental misunderstanding of why these changes have happened. The emergence and growth of online retail has definitely been facilitated by better technology. It has been driven by consumers who are attracted by the range of products available, operational improvements, access to products across the globe, and a generation raised using ever-improving mobile technology, making it quick and easy to find what they need and are interested in.

The rise of omnichannel retailing, or the clicks-and-mortar model, as it is often described, has meant more benefits for customers, in the form of the convenience, facilities expertise of physical shops being available, along with the availability, choice and personalisation of online. For most shoppers, omnichannel is already the norm. Consumers

no longer perceive barriers between different shopping channels — be it in-store, on desktop, mobile, via Instagram or marketing emails.⁸

For many retailers, ensuring that their customers have a unified experience across all channels has proved to be a huge challenge.

Many retailers who set up a clicks-and-mortar model often do so using separate divisions with unique tools and processes within each division. Meeting consumer demands for a unified experience means bringing together systems and processes across different channels.⁹ Doing this involves getting the technology right, which has been difficult for most retailers.



Technology + retail = a dynamic duo?

A 2015 article in Tech Crunch attempted to explain why efforts to bring shopper technology into physical retail have largely failed. Their view is that there are three requirements for technology adoption in retailing.¹⁰

First, the technology must help customers do what they came to the store to do — find and experience products. Second, the return on investment for the retailer must be crystal clear and compelling. Finally, the experience must enhance the magic of a great real-world retail experience, without distracting.

Their view is that integrating technology seamlessly into retail has failed because the retailer or the tech entrepreneur has failed on one of the three requirements above. For instance, encouraging customers to use apps or computers in-store to browse stock, having your in-store sales assistants use tablets to go through the store's website with customers, or having displays that are not interactive e.g. video walls, are not integrated experiences. Frequently they instead become barriers between the customer and a good experience.



Examples of the type of technology integrations that do frequently work are those that solve genuine problems for the customer e.g. the use of virtual dressing rooms or cosmetic mirrors that allow consumers to see what clothes or make up look like on them, removing the need to try on the products.

There is a big difference between truly integrating digital technology into the physical retail experience, and bolting it on afterwards as an afterthought. Digital technology is sometimes described as the electricity of the 21st century. Electricity is an enabling technology. It has little value in itself, but immense value if combined with associated technologies to produce goods and services that are cheaper, better or both.¹¹

Successful digital technology integrations in retail help the customer to save time and find what they are looking for. They will help the retailer to understand their customers better and to track what's working. Most importantly — it won't feel like an additional layer. It will be behind the scenes, or will integrate so seamlessly into your customers' experience that

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they won't notice the technology, only the positive outcomes. Digital technology should be seen as a conductor and a facilitator of better service, rather than the end point or main focus.

A true focus on a customer-centric approach means that retailers now have access to a large range of powerful and flexible technologies to derive insights from customer data and offer a blended physical and digital customer experience.¹² The challenge for retailers is firstly, to truly understand all aspects of their customers' journey, including their pain points. Secondly, to decide which of these issues are a priority to solve, and thirdly, to understand the difference between where digital technology can truly assist, and where it will just be a cosmetic improvement, with no substantive improvement for your customers.

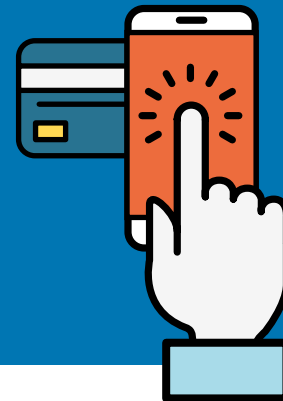
Dozens of start-ups have taken on the challenge of helping retailers to bridge the gap between digital and physical commerce. These range from companies supplying shelf-stocking robots, to augmented reality displays, to Wi-Fi based beacons that collect data on shopper behaviour. It also includes companies who are providing platforms that are assisting retailers to manage the complications that having a truly seamless unichannel approach brings.¹³

Three start-ups doing interesting things with technology and retail.

Oak Labs is developing technology such as connected/smart fitting rooms that can help retailers better understand customers' shopping experiences.

Fluent Retail is an Australian based company who help physical stores to easily roll out click-and-collect and other omnichannel solutions for customers.

With.me creates portable, pre-fabricated retail spaces that blend online and offline shopping. Features include self-service checkouts, smart fitting rooms, fully enabled for RFID and analytics.



Do you remember the world before Google?

More specifically, do you remember what shopping was like before we had the internet in our pockets? Browsing aimlessly on a Saturday afternoon. Or more often, if you needed something specific, a frantic dash around multiple stores trying to find the only brand of jeans that fit you well and give your legs those extra few inches.

These days, you can go online and within a few seconds you know the online stores that sell this brand, have them in stock and can ship to you. By contrast, the high-street shopping experience hasn't changed much since 2000. Shop locations are easily discoverable on the internet, but their inventories are not. You are just as likely today, as you were pre-internet, to do a mad dash around five shops to find your favourite brands. Or maybe not, because you'll probably opt for the convenience of buying online.

But George Freney wants to change this. He wants to make sure that the experience of tracking down what customers want in physical stores is as seamless as finding it online. And his company, Booodl, is making this happen.

George says, "Australian retailers are playing hide and seek with their consumers and we want to fix this problem. So much so that we have invested up to 60,000 man hours in solving it." Booodl's contention is that every day, millions of people walk right past the stores that sell what they need, and they don't even know it. They are fixing this problem by rolling out what they call Store Discovery Optimisation (SDO).

For shoppers, this means that they can see stores nearby stocking the product they are looking for; see the details about a store including location, opening hours and stock; chat with



the store about availability; and add a product that they want to their list, so they can receive nudge notifications whenever they are near a store that sells it.

For retailers, Booodl's SDO concept helps to increase shopper visits and sales. By registering for Booodl and being optimised for discovery, retailers can ensure the right shopper finds your store.

According to George, "if you ask retailers to choose where they would prefer a sale to happen, 9 times out of 10 most of them will always choose in-store (a store sale is worth more because the operational requirements, on average, are less for a store purchase than an online purchase) and over 90% of shopping transactions are still happening in-store. But physical stores can't continue to be successful if the data about the products they sell is not made searchable online."

As well as identifying a business opportunity, George has set Booodl up with an ambitious mission — to help physical retail thrive by making sure stores, brands and retail places such as shopping malls and high streets are optimised for location centric search and discovery. His background has always been in technology and online businesses, so it's interesting that he feels so passionately about the importance of the continuing success of physical retail.

When asked about this, he explains "I'm passionate about this because I want to run a business that has a positive impact. The world will be a far less nice place if huge percentages of all transactions are online, from within our homes, and delivered by drones." He believes in the importance of local communities, of people leaving their homes and shopping locally, and of

brands who have purpose. The research shows he is not alone. We know from Deloitte's Millennial Survey 2016 that younger shoppers are more socially conscious and want to know the story and the purpose behind brands.

He draws a distinction between transactional shopping for needs — like washing powder and toothpaste, versus experience shopping for wants — those items that contribute to our sense of self and our identity in the world; clothes, technology, accessories, homewares, etc.

His theory is that people will use the most convenient solution for their needs, so online shopping works for these needs. For the more discretionary items, in-store purchases remain attractive for offering an experience, building a community and cultivating loyal customers. Crucially however, customers want to be able to shop as easily in-store as they can online. Booodl currently has a large footprint across Australia with data from 22,000 stores in total. They are looking into overseas markets and getting ready to scale rapidly.

You can find more information at www.booodl.com

Case study: myagi

There have been many iconic teachers to take inspiration from in pop culture — Miss Jean Brodie, Mr Keating from Dead Poet's Society, Mrs Krabbapel from the Simpsons to name a few.

But if your start-up focuses on new learning methods, you probably couldn't have better inspiration than the patient and somewhat unusual training methods of the world's most famous karate instructor.

Myagi, a Melbourne and San Francisco based company, has developed an online platform that centralises training content from retailers and brands to improve customer service and sales skills for retail staff. Product knowledge and training is critical for frontline sales associates to ensure a great customer experience, and Myagi allows brands and retailers to deliver this in an engaging way, through an app straight to the sales associate's favourite device.

Tom McLeod, co-founder of the company, sat down with Deloitte to give some background on the idea behind the company and thoughts on Australian retail generally. The idea for Myagi came from co-founder, Simon Turner, who has a background in both wholesale and retail. He noticed both the standard of customer service in retail and the number of staff was declining globally, despite the fact that having good staff is one of the main competitive advantages of bricks-and-mortar retail.

Simon involved Tom and some other key staff members in trying to solve this problem, and things happened pretty quickly from there. In 2013, Myagi approached some small and mid-sized retailers to see if they were interested in their proposition and signed them up. In early 2014, they secured venture capital financing, and began to develop their training products and used the opportunity to become an aggregator for other brand training content as well.



Tom says “We are trying to solve a perennial issue for retailers, especially multibrand retailers. Often the only training available for their staff on the brands that they sell is when on the road sales reps would visit the stores from time to time and deliver presentations on new products. There are several problems with this model — for one, it’s not very scalable — and for the biggest retailers it’s impossible to do this often enough for all their shops. Other issues are that retail staff and product lines turnover so quickly (there’s a 30-50% turnover rate for retail staff) it’s hard for any training model to keep up with this.”

How Myagi works in practice say, for a multibrand sporting goods retailer, is like this: Employees, through an app, receive training content developed by their employers, but also training content from the brands that they sell. They also receive content specific to the sports retail sector that Myagi might commission, and content on skills development, like upselling, customer service, etc.

Myagi sees that there is a continuum of learning that needs to happen for retail employees — the basic level is around products — what they stock, features, what’s new in the industry, etc. The second layer is skills content — how do we ensure that employees are getting the skills that they need to improve as customer service staff, and to increase sales every day.

The company has done extensive research into how to produce training content that resonates with one of the retail sectors biggest demographic employee groups — millennials.

They have researched, with retail employees, the type of content that is likely to engage staff on the shop floor, what they want to consume, where and how. This follows what we

generally know about millennials’ consumption habits — they prefer video content in short formats, available on their own devices to interact with wherever and whenever they want. Myagi also facilitates competition and gamification elements, where employees can compete with each other to complete the most training.

Another feature which has made their product extra appealing to retailers is their ability to demonstrate the correlation between levels of customer service training and sales figures. Tom says “this is the kind of information that if you told businesses a few years ago you could make available, they would dismiss as science fiction. But companies today are much more savvy and informed about the importance of collecting data and how they use that info. And they are also more used to working with other tech providers who provide similar analysis to them for their data.”

As retailers evolve past being purely point of sales, and more to being communities of interest and spaces for experiences, and the distribution and supply chain become separate, stores become showrooms. The role of staff then becomes even more critical. They need to be more knowledgeable than customers — no mean feat in today’s world where everyone can become an expert with 10 minutes of googling — and also be able to demonstrate to customers how the product they are selling fits into the customer’s life narrative.

Myagi is confident that they have the system to equip retail staff with the skills they need to optimise customer experience in the stores of the future.

More information can be found at www.myagi.com

How Australian retailers' adoption of technology compares globally

Both companies we profile work globally with other retailers, and have interesting views on how the Australian market differs from other markets.

Myagi CEO Tom McLeod's view is that the larger markets of the US and UK have been subject to fiercer competition for longer. So in the background they have been looking for that competitive edge for a long time, and honing, testing and implementing the things that give this to them, including technology.

On the Australian retail market, George Freney of tech company Booodl agrees that we are definitely behind the times. The impact of online shopping has not yet hit Australia as hard as other countries, the US and UK in particular. Delivery footprint is more challenging here, especially the last stage to people's doors, and click-and-collect is very complicated for retailers to implement. There are also things that retailers in Australia can learn from online: how to convert browsers into buyers, how to use data properly to understand customers, and how to

better understand the customer journey. He also believes that employees are crucial. As a retailer, if your store is your biggest physical asset, then salespeople and how they interact with customers is one of the most important drivers for profitability.

George believes that a certain decline in the number of physical stores in Australia is inevitable, in that much like the US (though not as drastic) we are overstored for our population. Since 1995, the number of shopping centres in the US has grown by more than 23% and GLA (total gross leasable area) by almost 30%, while the population has grown by less than 14%. If Booodl and companies like it are successful, it should help to minimise the loss of shopper traffic and visits, and maximise the key dependency — getting shoppers into stores.

Five retailers getting 'phygital' — successfully using technology to integrate physical and digital experience

Blackmores opened their first retail location in Sydney's Westfield Bondi Junction at the end of 2015. The store, designed by Deloitte's spatial and brand experience team, is a prototype that aims to provide a personalised experience for customers to take control of their health. Featuring human, digital and tactile experiences, the store includes a "mindful ocean" device, a collaboration with scientists at Swinburne University of Technology, which allows shoppers to watch their brain waves on a screen and observe how they change after a short meditation exercise.

Topshop has "virtual fitting rooms" in many branches. These allow customers to see what they would look like wearing specific garments on a large screen. They also partnered with Google to offer customers a front-row view of their catwalk show at London Fashion Week, and allowed them to instantly buy many of the products they liked from those shows.

Shiseido, this Japanese beauty retailer has always used technology as a central point of their offering. Their cosmetic mirrors are digital screens that customers can use to scan product barcodes and see an image of their

face with that product virtually applied to it. This allows customers to sample multiple products without the hassle of removing the sampled makeup multiple times. The screens also offer beauty advice, special offers and usage guides for products.

IKEA has blended its famous printed catalogue with online shopping in innovative ways. Readers can scan the catalogue with their mobile devices to see relevant content, including 360-view furniture displays. Customers can also virtually place IKEA furniture pieces in their own homes to choose the products that work best, without having to actually go into a store, or wait until the product arrives.

Nordstrom spends more than 30% of its capital budget on technology. The American store uses data from its customers on social media effectively in-store. For example they track Pinterest pins to identify trending products and then promote those popular products in their bricks-and-mortar stores.

As a retailer, if your store is your biggest physical asset, then salespeople and how they interact with customers is one of the most important drivers for profitability.

Tom McLeod's final thoughts were on the most important thing that Australian retailers can do to transform the sector. Without hesitation, he said — mindset. In fact, mindset shift was his numbers one, two and three! "Technology is an opportunity for physical retailers, not a threat. Retailers need to be proactive in how they work with technologies in their industries. In the US they saw tech companies and e-commerce as an opportunity from the beginning. For this reason, one of the biggest traditional retailers in the world, Walmart, now has an online business worth \$15 billion a year."

"Australian retailers need to realise, and quickly, that we are not match fit, compared to our overseas competitors," says David White, Deloitte's National Retail Leader. "We will always find it hard to compete on size and scale, but no one understands better what Australian customers want than Australian retailers. We certainly can learn from overseas, but the critical thing is applying this experience in an effective way locally, using what we know about our customers."

Other challenges facing bricks-and-mortar retailers

No matter what technology retailers embrace, the bricks-and-mortar retail market is changing in a way led largely by customers, but also heavily influenced by other market forces.

Deloitte is not contending that only technology will be the great saviour of physical retail stores.

We can see these market-driven factors playing out already in the US. “The US is the most over-retailed country on the planet,” Healey Cypher, CEO of Oak Labs and the former leader of the Retail Innovation team at eBay, said during a speech at the National Retail Federation’s 2016 conference. “We have 46 square feet of retail space for every man, woman, and child. The next closest is the UK with 9 square feet. That’s insane!”¹⁴ Australia does not have a problem on that scale, but could be heading in that direction, as retail development in both countries often runs parallel. Store numbers are in fact continuing to increase overall across Australia, but store designs, sizes and functions are changing.

In the US, the primary and underlying reason for the oversupply of retail space is that the growth expectations and demands of shareholders, independent owners and Wall Street are higher than the growth of the real economy. The pressure being exerted by Wall Street and shareholders to see short term growth is leading to retailers being pressured into making short term decisions, including opening more stores, over long term strategies. The same can be said in corporate Australia, where investors and other stakeholders continue to focus on short-term return over long-term investment.

Many bricks-and-mortar retailers with large footprints are finding themselves challenged by the short-term pressures of sales growth — and the long-term positioning of their businesses. But, ironically, there may be light at the end of the tunnel, as the bricks-and-mortar incumbents have one surprising advantage — their stores. Stores still carry within their walls a wide range of experiential levers that can’t be duplicated virtually, especially when innovatively targeted and applied. After all, despite attempts to simulate a physical shopping experience virtually, using virtual reality,¹⁵ 3D and other methods, the Amazons of the world at the moment simply can’t duplicate a customer’s experience as they embark on an early morning shop and encounter the sensory aroma of freshly baked bread.

Retailers can also employ high-tech and even higher-touch experiences to understand what all segments of their customers need. Millennials, the generation that will drive 40% of all retail sales by 2020, have very different shopping desires and expectations, to their predecessors. Less is more for millennials, and quality of lifestyle is desired over big quantities of everything. Smaller, more intimate and interesting environments trump massive, overwhelming spaces and choice.¹⁶



Where to next?

It's difficult for any retailer to stay on top of the huge range of trends and developments globally and locally.

The best thing that retailers can do is understand their customers. The next best thing they can do is be open to the advantages that integrating technology solutions into their operations can bring, and adapt their business processes and models to enable the quick and agile adoption of new technologies.

Boodl and Myagi are just two examples of technology companies that are helping traditional retailers to capitalise on what continue to be their most important advantages over digital — their physical stores, their expert staff and the sense of community created by an enjoyable, value-adding in-store experience.

The bricks-and-mortar retail store is definitely not dead, far from it. But the retailer that does not have a meaningful relationship with the consumer is dead.

The retailers that will be most effective in today's marketplace will likely be those that fundamentally rethink the retail experience, developing business models that blend physical, virtual, and community experiences,¹⁷ centred around the customer, with the technology not as the focal point, but as the infrastructure that enables it.

Appendix

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