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THAT MAKES CENTS

Season 3 Episode 7
Scaling growth with next-gen digital capabilities

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Bobby: Hi, everybody. I'm Bobby Stephens, and welcome, or welcome back, to That Makes Cents. This is the podcast where we discuss consumer industry trends to explore their impact on both businesses and our everyday lives. Today's episode is all about the latest customer experience capabilities that are available to retailers. So how do retailers stay ahead of the curve in today's age when there's unlimited data and an always-changing digital experience? It can be a lot to manage. One key differentiator is a retailer's ability to know their customers and consistently deliver the right experience no matter how those customers choose to engage.

There are a variety of tools available to ease this challenge. One of the most well-known is Salesforce, who happens to have their annual Dreamforce event in San Francisco happening just a few weeks from our recording date.

So with that helpful timing and to get some expert thoughts on this evolving landscape, I'm joined by Jill Royce, senior managing director of business consulting for retail and consumer goods at Salesforce, that's a mouthful, and Adrian Trzaskus, aka AT, who is a digital transformation leader with Deloitte Consulting. Thank you both for joining us. And I'll turn it over to you to tell our listeners a little bit more about your background and your current role.

Jill: Thank you. It's great to be here. I'm Jill Royce, as you said, and I lead what's called business consulting here at Salesforce, like you said, for retail and consumer goods. It is absolutely a mouthful, so I'll explain what that means.

We are a CX consulting practice, and we are a team filled with tenured data-driven ex-marketing commerce and customer care practitioners, who we bring in as an investment team to partner with our customers with their executives and their teams, and, of course, with their wonderful partners like yourselves at Deloitte, to get everyone aligned on that future state customer experience vision, the strategies, and those critical use cases that will fuel personalization and accelerate their path to value and growth for our customers and to really power those great experiences for shoppers. And for a little bit of background on me, I've been with Salesforce for the last nine-plus years, helping our customers, do exactly that, but prior to that I spent 16 years in the ad agency world here in Chicago, and I really cut my teeth in client service and strategy, but always focused on data-driven marketing.

Bobby: Okay, AT, follow that.

Adrian: So, first, Bobby, thank you for having us. So excited to be here with you today, and I'm so thrilled that Jill could join us. So, I'm Adrian. My friends call me AT. I've spent the last 15 years leading global digital transformation projects. Ten of those years have been across the Salesforce ecosystem, going back to ExactTarget and Demandware.

Now currently working across the complete Salesforce suite, supporting executives to transform their business, and there's a number of really exciting new technologies that Salesforce has launched in the last few years that hopefully we'll dive into. My other primary focus has been loyalty, technology, and strategy, which is understanding this beautiful agreement between a consumer and brand. And here at Deloitte we're figuring out how we drive business growth through that relationship. So excited to connect today.

Bobby: Thank you, guys, for the background. Let's jump on into it. In my intro I touched on some of the impact and just some of the high-level capabilities that

Salesforce and others offer retailers, but, Jill, you're here because you're the expert on it. From your experience, let's just touch on that. What are some of the most popular and most used capabilities in the retail consumer products space at the moment?

Jill: Yeah. I mean, great question. Gosh, there's... We all know there's, you know, no two retailers are the same, but they all have a lot of the same things on their agenda right now, right? They all want to work more efficiently. Many are trying to cut costs and drive growth at the same time in today's challenging economic conditions. They need to smooth out supply chain issues. They want to invest in Web3. They're ramping up their sustainability initiatives and it's supercool to work at Salesforce because we have this great platform approach and a suite of capabilities to help retailers with all of that.

But what really stands out to me currently is, as we know, they all want to and need to deliver incredible personalized omnichannel experiences, and they want to do that without the worry of data security and data breaches and adherence to data privacy regulations, and so they want to be able to do all that with security and trust. And, so, that's really a long way of saying the most popular capabilities retailers are coming to Salesforce for is helping them connect and personalize the shopper experience across marketing, service, commerce, and the store.

So, to unpack that a little bit in terms of capabilities under the hood, first let's talk about marketing for a bit. From a data perspective it's really all about unlocking the power of first-party data through that collection and the unification of data and really reconciling identity, and being able to enrich those profiles to get to that incredible single view, that coveted single view of the customer. Retailers are also really loving our ability to help them with rich and fast segmentation and activation of those capabilities in the hands of marketers, and that's all kind of part of our

CDP capabilities.

Then there's all the marketing, automation, personalization, and intelligence capabilities. Retail marketers are activating across channels, so it's email, it's SMS, and push, and display, and integrations with things like TikTok and WhatsApp, and even good old direct mail, if that's what you're into, right? And they are using those channels to then drive engagement with their end customers, and doing that in those moments that matter to build true loyalty or LTD. And they do that with things like journey automation with AI-powered personalization so they can deliver really dynamic content in real time, next best actions. Think of a personalized back in stock journey with your specific size and color, plus recommendations based on your browse history and your past purchases. It's all pretty incredible stuff.

And, of course, there's intelligence capabilities helping marketers actually measure and optimize campaign performance across paid and owned channels, so they can really maximize their budgets. This is probably my lifelong quest coming true. There's loyalty program capabilities, launching next gen loyalty programs, and, most recently, customers are starting to lean in on creating those next gen Web3 experiences as well. We've recently launched our NFT minting and selling capabilities, so some pretty exciting stuff on that side of the house.

And then there's customer care. Retailers have really doubled down there, sparked, of course, by the pandemic. They are really focused on making service moments easy and seamless, and so they're leveraging our service call solutions to do that. We all know it can take only one bad experience to lose a customer, so they're really prioritizing both seamless experiences while prioritizing cost reductions, finding things like enabling digital care channels, again, SMS, chat bots, even self-service portals, great ways for our customers to really help drive call deflections, reduce handle times, and at the same time delivering that better

experience. Maximizing NPS by empowering their agents with that same data-rich single view that marketers love, we're giving that to agents as well, and fueling their ability to deliver better experiences with AI-driven recommendations, next best actions, connectivity to commerce.

And then there's the trifecta, commerce. The pandemic obviously lit a fire for retailers, as we all know, to really upgrade their e-comm game, smooth out inventory, and our commerce solutions are really helping retailers do that as well. So, capabilities like inventory and order visibility, order management, payments, headless commerce, are all options that are helping retailers really scale e-comm across brands and geographies and doing that quite seamlessly.

Bobby: With all those capabilities, there's a lot of tools available for all types of retailers that could serve in those places, either across the board or in spot places.

So, AT, since we talked about your bit more of a technical background, you've been working in this space for a while. What's the evolution you've seen in these capabilities, and maybe what are some of the tools you're most excited about or combination of tools you're most excited about? Give me the short list.

Adrian: Yeah. Good question, Bobby. I would say the three that have been top of mind for me and a lot of our retailers would be CDP, one; number two, personalization, formerly called interaction studio; and loyalty.

So, the first one, Jill touched on that beautifully, the CDP, which is the customer data platform. It's really a platform that gives you a complete view of each customer. So, if you think about you buy something online and then you get an email and then you call in with a complaint and then you go into store. How do we create a unified profile for those customers, no matter what channel they're on, and then allows us to kind of do things like advanced targeting

and segmentation?

The second one would be personalization, which used to be called interaction studio, which is a super intelligent platform that delivers one-to-one experiences and that uses things like artificial intelligence and machine learning. And that platform kind of dictates and orchestrates what banner am I going to show you? What content am I going to put in front of you? What product might you be interested in? And then analyzes how long you look at a product, what category it's in, to really try to drive as much relevancy in every communication as possible.

And last would be loyalty. So, Salesforce launched their loyalty management product last year, and this platform is the loyalty engine for loyalty programs for things such as earn, tiers, redemption. You can set up vendors. That has super incredible reporting and dashboards, and integrates across the ecosystem.

So those three really stand out for me, Bobby, and I think it's because they're so cross-cloud. They touch everything from service, marketing, commerce. They really enhance the entire experience, and all three really strive to create this seamless customer experience regardless of the channel that you're connecting with the consumer.

Bobby: Pretty exciting. One thing you mentioned there, I'll surgically extract a couple of the terms. AI and machine learning, right? Artificial intelligence and machine learning. I think for a while tools or those concepts of AI and ML have been talked about, but generally required a data scientist or someone with a bit of a data scientist background for companies to feel confident exploring them at scale, right? Tinkering around with them is one thing, but really trusting it to go without a data science capability was maybe a little scary, to be honest.

So what I'm interested in is how either today or soon tomorrow these tools will become more and more accessible to your everyday business teams. Like where do these tools

sit on platforms, how can regular business owners configure them, use them. Maybe, Jill, you jump in first, and then, Adrian, you pile on if you have some thoughts, too.

Jill: Love it. Sounds good, Bobby. And, so I'll just start with I love when the business strategy girl gets the "How do you configure ML on your platform" question. And the reason I love it is because I can actually answer it, because Salesforce has made so much of this technology so business friendly. The beauty of Salesforce is there's all this really robust intelligence and ML woven throughout the platform. We've turned a lot of data science into clicks not code for business users. Certainly, not all of it. We love our data scientists, right? But we've really just given some time back to the data scientists in their day, because we've democratized some of the capabilities through our platform.

So, for example, in marketing in Salesforce, a business user like me can turn on amazing things like data segmentation, sun time optimization of my campaigns, ABN testing in campaigns, and AI-driven content selection, all with absolutely zero data science experience or support, literally zero. So, that's super compelling to, again, the business strategy girl.

In terms of service cloud, there are things like AI-powered workflows for case management. There's bots for personalized service. Automation and next best actions for agents, like I had mentioned previously, and, and this is AI, too, all native in the platform. So, again, no code. No more sort of, if you think of the good old-fashioned swivel chair between six and ten systems in a call center, we're eliminating that, right? It used to be 20 questions just to figure out who's on the line and what they need and why they're calling. And we're really throwing that aside and really powering agents with so much insight and technology right out of the gate.

And then commerce. Commerce is crazy. You can help shoppers find what they're looking for with things like predictive

sorting capabilities, which automates and automatically tailors the category pages on the commerce site and automates and tailors the search results for each shopper. So, that's just the strategy girl's take. AT, you're the tech expert. I would love your response there.

Adrian: When I look back five years or maybe more, and sitting within large technology teams, if we wanted to deploy some kind of like advanced algorithm, not even getting as deep as machine learning and AI, but just an algorithm that will do some recommendations or do some experiences that are relevant to you, I think about the team. So we had data scientist and senior devs that would establish and build the logic. That would then be handed off to an IT operations team that would deploy this to some instance, potentially the cloud. Then we would have a separate BI and analytics reporting team that would be in play. It would always be a different system that would be analyzing it, different team to get the data. You're also including all of the product managers and operations teams.

And when you look at retailers that have to move very quickly, the technology changes, they have to be nimble, they have to act. They want something in market as soon as possible, and many times dealing with technology budget limitations, this kind of advanced capability and locking in these kind of resources was really out of reach. They wouldn't do it because it was too long. It was too hard to understand. There was too many team members. Some could, but most couldn't. Now, the magic of it now is that these features are configured with a few clicks. Reporting is native in the platform. You even get recommendations on how you can tweak it and what you can change. And it's really given marketers the power to run these campaigns themselves and to enable these advanced algorithms internally within minutes, and I think that's super powerful and super exciting for some of the retailers that we're partnering with.

Bobby: All right. Speaking of coming a long

way, we're going to get to our final question.

So, something we like to do here on That Makes Cents is ask a final question that maybe asks our guests to predict the future or talk about what they're most excited about on the future of the topic. So, we're going to go with that second route today here.

So what are each of you most excited about in terms of the tools and the capabilities that will be on the forefront of transforming the customer experience in a few years? So, AT, why don't you start, and then Jill, you can give us the final thoughts.

Adrian: Yeah, so, where I think we're going to see a lot of innovation is how we identify ourselves and how we're able to share personal information about us in store or online. So, it's a mix of like, "Hi, I'm Adrian Trzaskus," and you can validate that that's who I am. How I'm able to share payment. So, here's my credit card, but it won't necessarily be saved in your system after I submit it for privacy reasons. And if I want to get approved for, let's say, an in-store credit card, how do I provide income or job verification, and even things like my address if you're going to ship something to me, for delivery.

I think all of this information will be able to be shared instantly. There's a good chance all of this is going to be saved on their own personal hardware wallets, where we have control of the data, we have control over who sees it, and it's going to use technology like three-factor authentication, which might have a pin, biometrics, and FC technology. So all of this is going to create a real-time authentication. It's going to have a huge privacy focus on what data I want to be able to share, and it's going to allow us consumers to share what we want and when we want it with retailers, to have these great experiences, but still allow us to have control of the data. So, I'm super excited and looking forward to that, Bobby.

Bobby: Okay, Jill. Beat that.

Jill: I can't, so I'm just going to go a totally different direction. I'm going to give you my very glass half full vision, part of which I'm sure we're going to hear about it, Dreamforce, which, by the way, it's the 20th anniversary of Dreamforce, which is pretty cool. But kind of way longer term, I'm really excited to think about what personalization and loyalty can mean for retailers in terms of some things that are really important and part of my passion, but also where we're seeing the world going. So, sustainability, diversity and inclusion are kind of really top of mind for me.

I can't wait to see retailers who have fully embraced digital transformation and have really infused those initiatives throughout the entire customer experience.

So, I picture a world where personalization comes in the form of my favorite retailers creating transparency with me in terms of the way they're managing the supply chain, and in terms of how their products and their services are not only helping me but actually helping the planet.

I hope to see a world where retailers in the future are using Salesforce to make huge leaps in dismantling the inherent biases in their legacy systems and in their practices with employee training and learning journeys and all kinds of cool things like that, and seeing retailers who, of course, have really robust Web3 experiences where they're selling and marketing and servicing to me in the metaverse and where I can pay in the form of coins and tokens, and I'm rewarded with a value exchange that's just right for me.

I can't wait to see retailers of the future really connecting, again, my lifelong quest, connecting brand and direct, connecting top and bottom of a funnel, but doing that in a way that really helps all of the stakeholders, not just the customer, not just the employee, but the planet as well. So, that's my extremely glass half full vision for retail in the future and some capabilities

that I can't wait to see what 5 to 10 years ahead look like.

Bobby: Yeah, I mean, you hit on secure but fast sharing, Web3, transparencies, and EFG elements.

It sounds like the future for both consumers and retailers is an exciting one, and if done right can be a very bright and positive future, and I agree with you on that or else I wouldn't be here today, right? So thank you both for your time. It was really great hearing from you both and learning a ton about these capabilities, what Salesforce has to offer, how retailers are adopting it, and where we think it's going in the future. So, listeners, if you want to learn more or continue the conversation, you can find and connect with Jill Royce, Adrian Trzaskus, or myself, Bobby Stephens, on LinkedIn. Or if you happen to be in Dreamforce, keep an eye out for AT and Jill. They'll probably both be there, and just listen for their voices now that you're familiar with them. And also to our audience, thank you so much again for listening, and we'll see you on the next episode of That Makes Cents.

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