

A man with a beard and glasses is looking at a smartphone. He is wearing a brown jacket over a grey sweater. The background is blurred, suggesting an indoor setting. A large, semi-transparent maroon shape is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text.

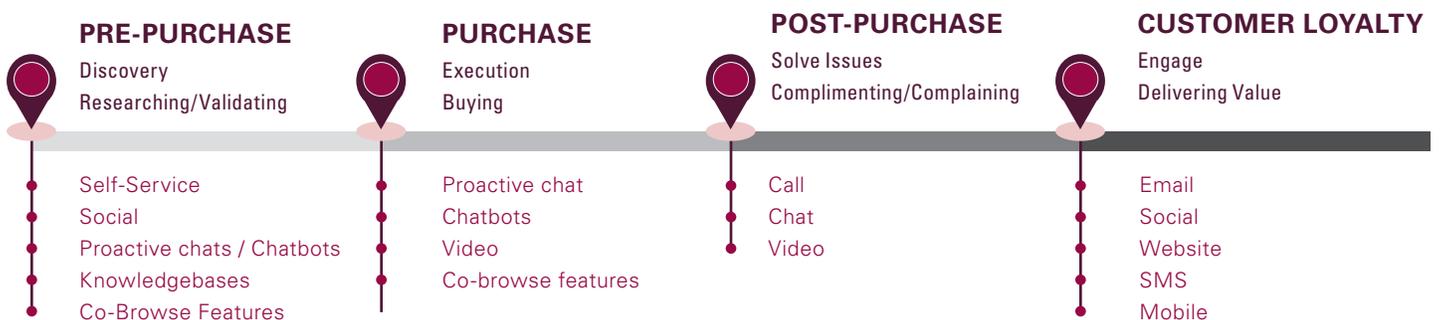
Seize Micromoments: **The Shopping and Service Experience**



Service Sells:

10 Tips for Bringing Service into Digital-Store Commerce

How can you architect the core areas of your shopping-service experience for greater scalability, cost efficiency, and customer satisfaction? This paper will share some examples of how you can implement scalable modern commerce and service experiences that drive both sales and loyalty.



Let's start at the most scalable, common needs and give examples of when you can start experimenting with innovative unified commerce and service capabilities. Here are ten tips:

Tip #1:

Empower Your Shoppers (and Employees) with Self-Service

There are more ways than ever to arm shoppers and your associates with information to answer their questions quickly and accurately. Self-service is an excellent way to scale flexible options to drive faster sales and greater satisfaction. The great news - chances are you've already invested here in some way.

Online shoppers are hungry for content and know how to consume it. From product details and videos to user reviews, digital shoppers are savvy and like to have information at their fingertips to help them make decisions, with **most shoppers saying they prefer to find answers themselves through online support.**¹ Customers expect complete, contextual answers to their and want to access it anywhere, with 69% of smartphone users are more likely to buy from companies whose mobile sites or apps help them easily find answers to their questions.²

A Knowledgebase of common questions and answers not only empowers shoppers and your employees to quickly find answers to common questions, but it also creates a sense of community. Knowledgebases leverage the wisdom of the crowd to unlock and share product and brand information that resides within customer bases. Start with a rich base of information, and allow customers and employees to constantly add and curate content it to keep it fresh. The more it's used and cultivated, the smarter and faster it should get at automating and predicting decisions for users.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Build a mobile-accessible Knowledgebase that can be easily modified.
- Use services that grow and change with customer input: make sure the Knowledgebase is capable of constantly improving on automating and predicting intent.
- Allow users to rate if the content is helpful or not.
- Gamify participation to build engagement and loyalty. Allow active customers to contribute content, and reward them for participating.
- Start experimenting with how to personalize responses based on shopper history, what's in their cart, their segment, preferences, and loyalty status.
- Allow administrators to "merchandise" content and answers to boost specific content to align with campaigns, or promote cross-sells and upsells.





Tip #2: Chat Proactively to Reduce Cart Abandonment

Simply put, chats equal conversions.

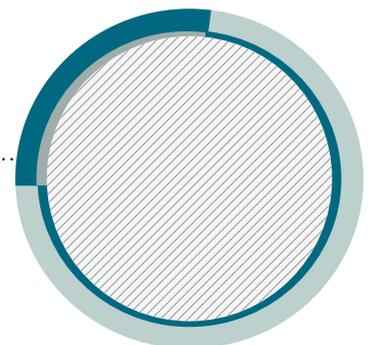
Shoppers often want to try to answer questions on their own with self-service, but 77% of online shoppers want to get in touch with a real person before they make a bigger ticket purchase.³ Chat is a scalable, effective way to deliver that personal touch digital shoppers crave. 31% of online shoppers say they are more likely to purchase something after using live chat. This, combined with real-time visitor monitoring and customized triggers, means that chat can become a powerful measure against shopping cart abandonment.⁴

If you're don't currently have chat across the site experience – do it. Shoppers like chat because it's efficient and effective when done right. And brands like it because it's more cost-effective and scalable than call-based assistance. Customers reported the highest satisfaction rates when it comes to live chat, 73%, when compared to traditional platforms like phone (44%), and email (61%).⁵ Live chat is a win-win.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Help make your shoppers' lives easier. Offer help comparing products, serving as a personal concierge, or trigger an offer for assistance with product comparisons or check out if they're idle or dwelling too long.
- Be sure associates can access the shopper's account history to see previous purchases for personalized product recommendations or upsells / cross-sells.
- Provide agents with shopper membership status to offer a coupon code or VIP treatment during a chat.

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Tip #3:

Introduce Chatbots & Virtual Assistants with a Conversational Interface

While human-powered live chat offers a personal touch, it gets tricky to scale as more shoppers shop digitally. Artificial or Adaptive Intelligence (AI) powered service is a great way to deliver fast and effectively for the most common needs, and shoppers are getting more comfortable with chatbots. By 2020, it's predicted that 85% of customer experiences with brands will take place without any human interaction.⁶ Younger people are more open to bots, and even the majority of Boomers end up satisfied with bots – even if there are dead giveaways it's not a real person.⁷

Natural Language Processing (NLP) and semantic technologies are rapidly getting better at recognizing intent, and virtual is a great way to scale effective, almost-human service. Look at your call center and chat inquiries to determine the most common shopper needs – and start using AI and machine learning to handle those. For retail eCommerce as an industry, the most common reasons people contact the (expensive) call center is for shipping and delivery questions.⁸ There is no reason half of the incoming call center calls should be about something easily accessible via self-service or chatbots. Divide common tasks with limited value-add between AI-driven chatbots and self-service Knowledgebase, and reserve high-touch customer service channels for the exceptions: high-value VIP customers, and escalations.

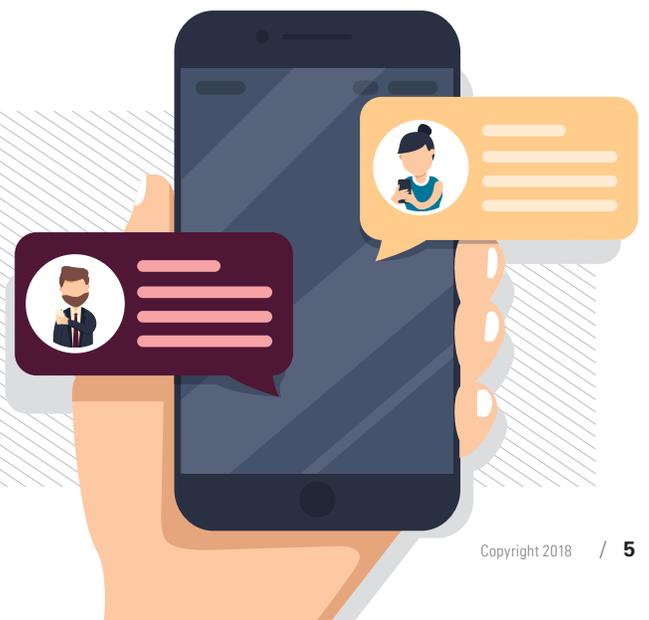
KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Offload ordinary (and expensive) phone and human-chat related queries, and reserve 1x1 service for high-value VIPs and high-touch escalations.
- Use AI to route escalations to the call center more effectively.
- Leverage chatbot integrations to allow shoppers to enroll via non-traditional channels, like virtual assistants via Facebook.
- Use Chatbots for 24-hour coverage during times of day and holidays when live humans are not available.
- Tie AI-based chat to Knowledgebase and FAQ: If a common question is asked, link back to self-service to get them comfortable using the tools, and void escalating to a live person.
- Prompt common page-specific questions to alleviate concerns and accelerate sales. On product details pages, ask if the shopper needs help comparing products. During check out, ask if they have any delivery-related preferences or questions.

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Tip #4: Offer Video Chat

If chatbots are for the most common inquiries, then video chat is for high-value interactions. Video chat is a great way to offer high-touch service to high-value or loyalty VIP customers, or even those customers with very specific needs around escalations.

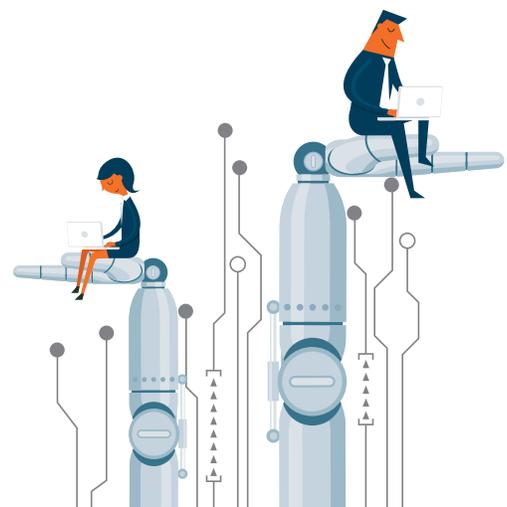
It will quickly become normal for customers to call businesses using video chat as opposed to the telephone. Video chat is simple and effective on a mobile device and gives the human touch in a virtual shopping and service realm. Mobile-video is increasingly used by all generations, but particularly by millennials, who use tools such as FaceTime and Skype, and represent 30% of retail sales today but, in just a few short years, will come to own majority of retail spend.⁹

There's also an opportunity to blend AI, Virtual Reality (VR) and video chat. Emotionally intelligent avatars are also starting to become more common. Digital simulations of humans as virtual agents speaking over video may also serve as a way to scale a lifelike, face-to-face service experience.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Human or VR agents can serve as a concierge to help assist customers with product selection, product setup, or provide a face for a customer service challenge or escalation.
- Start with a specific shopper need or customer segment and experiment before you scale human support to with video chat in real time. Where to start? Issues that are too complex and challenging to answer via chat, and segments like VIP loyalty members.
- A "real person" via video chat during an escalation can put frustrated customers at ease. Be sure these agents are equipped with technologies like Knowledgebase, co-browse, and video tools so they can field more challenging requests and still deliver personalized experience with quick issue resolution.

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Tip #5: Rethink Call Center Support

Customers are least satisfied when speaking on the phone with a customer service representative, which even falls behind automated phone self-service.¹⁰

Frequently the main sources of frustration for users are long waiting times and having to repeat their issue multiple times to various support representatives. Remember – “value my time” is the shopper’s #1 concern when dealing with customer service.

The call center should be thought of as the last line of service, typically reserved for human-necessary needs like escalations. Ideally, you don’t want to make the group of customers most likely to be frustrated wait and re-tell their story.

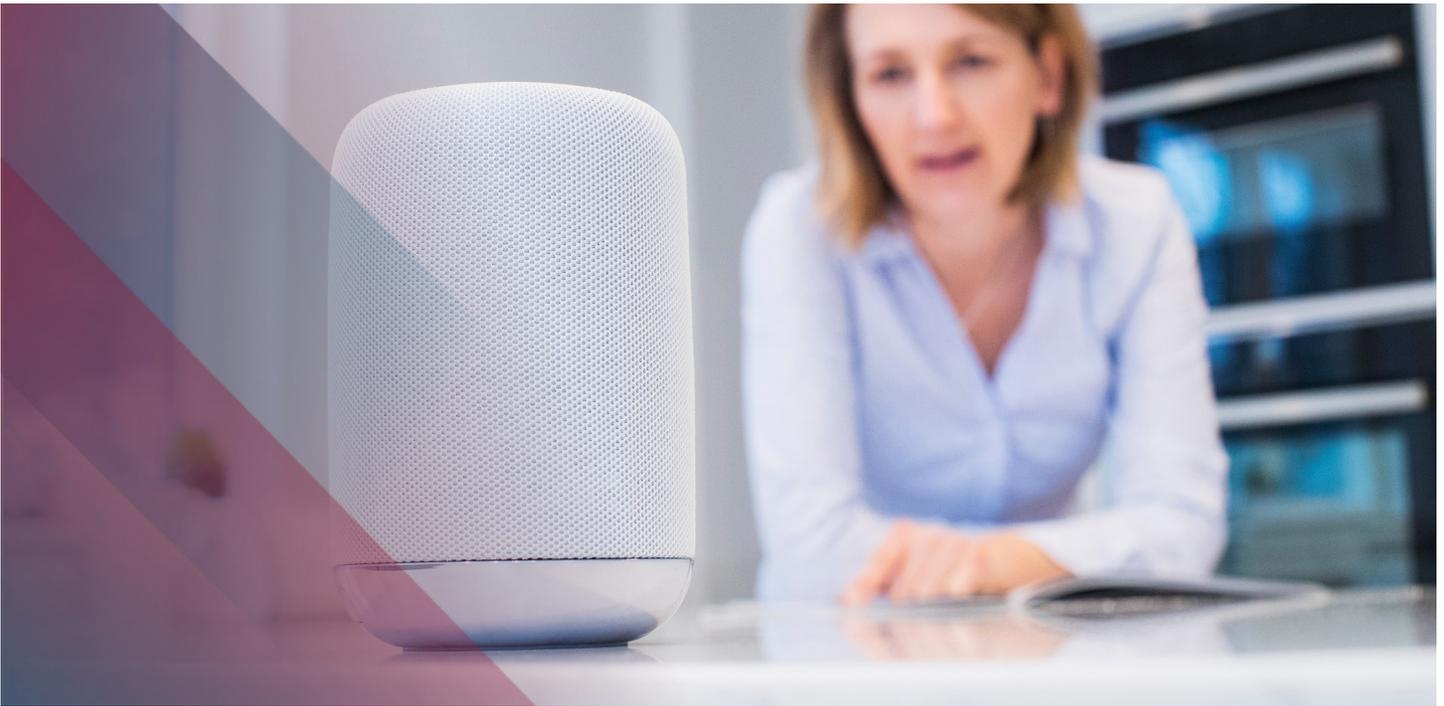
The phone is not enough. To offer an immediate resolution, allow agents to co-browse with the shopper to literally put them on the same page, and see what the shopper is seeing. Co-browse is a great way to offer white glove service, make the customer feel valued, and introduces an opportunity to give personalized cross-sell or upsell suggestions. It also shaves minutes off of chat interactions and phone calls by getting to the root of the issue immediately, and it improves first contact resolution by ensuring that both parties leave the interaction satisfied that they were understood and the problem was solved.

For call center success, give your call center agents a 360° view of the customer’s omnichannel history, segment, past purchases, current cart, loyalty status, and service history. Provide your call center agents access to place orders on behalf of the customer to alleviate more steps in their process or barriers to purchase. Arm agents with a rich Knowledgebase to access quick answers to questions to value the shopper’s time and resolve issues fast.

Lastly, make sure you’re preparing for the call center of the future – where rows of cubicles waiting for calls to be routed to them may no longer exist. Ensure the tools you provide associates are web-based and responsive. Make sure that you’re set up for the gig economy where you may soon have specialized product experts and agents who freelance and can help customers using the same tools from anywhere.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Stay away from making frustrated customers provide long, complicated order numbers. Retailers who make call center service seamless use a simple, unique customer identifier, one that they can recall easily, like a phone number or an email address, to link all activity across buying and service channels.
- Enable co-browse to more quickly resolve challenges.
- Provide agents with a 360° view of the customer’s omnichannel history, segment, past purchases, current cart, loyalty status, and service history.
- Give call center agents access to place orders on behalf of the customer to alleviate more steps in their process or barriers to purchase.
- Arm agents with a rich Knowledgebase to access quick answers to questions to value the shopper’s time and resolve issues fast.
- Think of co-browse outside of an issue resolution tool. Use it to provide a natural, consultative way to sell, increase average order sizes, improve conversion rates, and create better opportunities for cross and up-selling.
- Set up your tools and access for the future: Remote agents and freelance associates who will use web-based tools from anywhere.



Tip #6: Experiment with Voice Command Shopping and Assistance

Mobile and IoT assistants like Siri, Alexa, and Google Home have made consumers comfortable with voice commands to ask questions and to shop. On Prime Day 2017, Amazon cited one “v-commerce” order per second – using their voice-based Echo system.¹¹ With the readily-available advancements being made in natural language processing (NLP), semantics, and intent recognition, there’s a lot of exciting ways to experiment here.

Think of the most common requests shoppers make, especially mobile shoppers who may be on the go. Offer speech support to navigate your Knowledgebase, look up a customer’s order or delivery status, offer inventory status in local store locations, or answer the most common product questions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Experiment with voice-based order placement for users using your mobile site or app.
- Research what the most common questions are for service engagements and start with simpler inquiries, like inquiries on order status, return policy, local store inventory, and the ability to re-order items and check out via voice for known customers.
- Blend voice-based virtual assistants with proactive merchandising and marketing as well. Share which sales/promotions are going on, or, if a customer is a loyalty member, what special perks are available to them. If a product isn’t in stock, suggest a similar item.
- Graduate to more complex use cases like searching and comparing products, asking for personalized recommendations based on preferences and history, and placing products on hold in local stores.
- Investigate services like Google Cloud Natural Language API or Alexa Skills Kit¹² to get started with voice-based commerce and service.

Tip #7: Harness Social and Messaging Apps

Company-created branding has been replaced with access to peer-based and other objective information. Enter: social media. Today's consumers are curating the definition of brands on places like Facebook, Twitter, and Yelp – without brands in the conversation. Shoppers often wait until late in the buying process before engaging directly with a company. Having social trust is critical to succeeding in retail today.

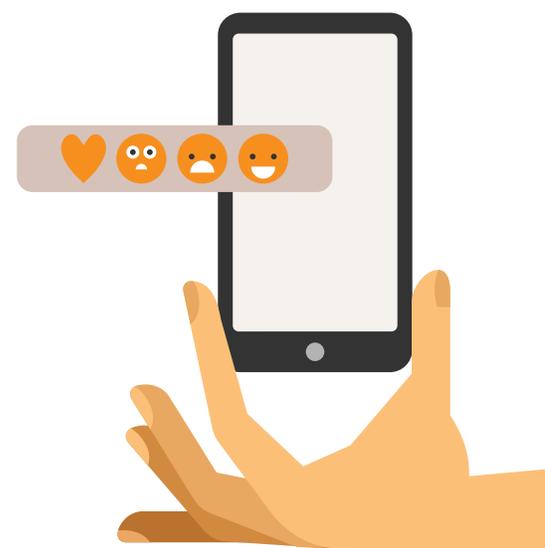
A social presence is vital for customer service today. While many consumers won't go to the effort to write a letter of complaint, social media platforms have made the process of interacting with businesses easier and more accessible. Social is not just about handling complaints—social presence also means you're always available to help your customers. Not only do brands have a public forum to show proactive customer care, it's also a place to collect and quickly route needs that need to be handled in other channels.

Shoppers who see a broader social presence by offering service in addition to social-based sales and marketing may be more willing to trust the brand. Alongside great social service, blend relevant promotions and personalized, retargeted recommendations on social media platforms to stay part of the shopper's journey. Social retargeting is incredibly successful – making shoppers 70% more likely to convert after seeing an ad.¹³

Another organic service channel evolving quickly is social messaging platforms like Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and WeChat. While most people use these platforms to interact with friends and family, they will increasingly become more comfortable messaging with businesses. Offering such channels as interaction channels aren't very difficult, but should be thought of as good for quick-hit replies and simpler inquiries. Messaging apps are not typically part of a multi-channel service platform and agents lack the context of who the customer is, what products they have and especially what other interactions you have had in the past with the customer in other channels. Think of how to engage chatbots and Knowledgebase for messaging apps, and routing more complex needs to human-based chat or video chat, and the call center.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- On social media, promote your brand alongside social customer care, so your brand is seen as responsive and trusted.
- Experiment with personalized recommendations, retargeting and promoting new products and promotions on social media.
- Have social care on Twitter and Facebook fielded and handled by chatbots and AI assistance – and route complex needs to other channels.
- Ask customers to leave public reviews for good service experience.
- Use social media to humanize the brand. A virtual personality or messages from your founder may help customers feel cared for and listened to -- and that they're doing business with a company that understands them.
- Tie social and loyalty status together with a chatbot integration or special VIP service channels.



Tip #8: Digitize In-Store Service

If you have stores, don't forget the critical fact that most shoppers are omnichannel shoppers - with 73% of them engaging with digital *and* physical touchpoints to make a purchase.¹⁴ Make sure your associates are armed with a robust Knowledgebase, have visibility to omnichannel customer activity, and have high-tech tools that impress shoppers and make their lives easier.

Modernize the in-store associate. 84% of shoppers say they seek advice or recommendations from sales associates – and doing so makes them 87% more likely to buy.¹⁵ Empower sales associates with tablets connected to the customer's omnichannel behavior and profile to offer personalized recommendations. Invest in tools that can automate recommendations, which can be paired with in-the-moment human-based recommendations.

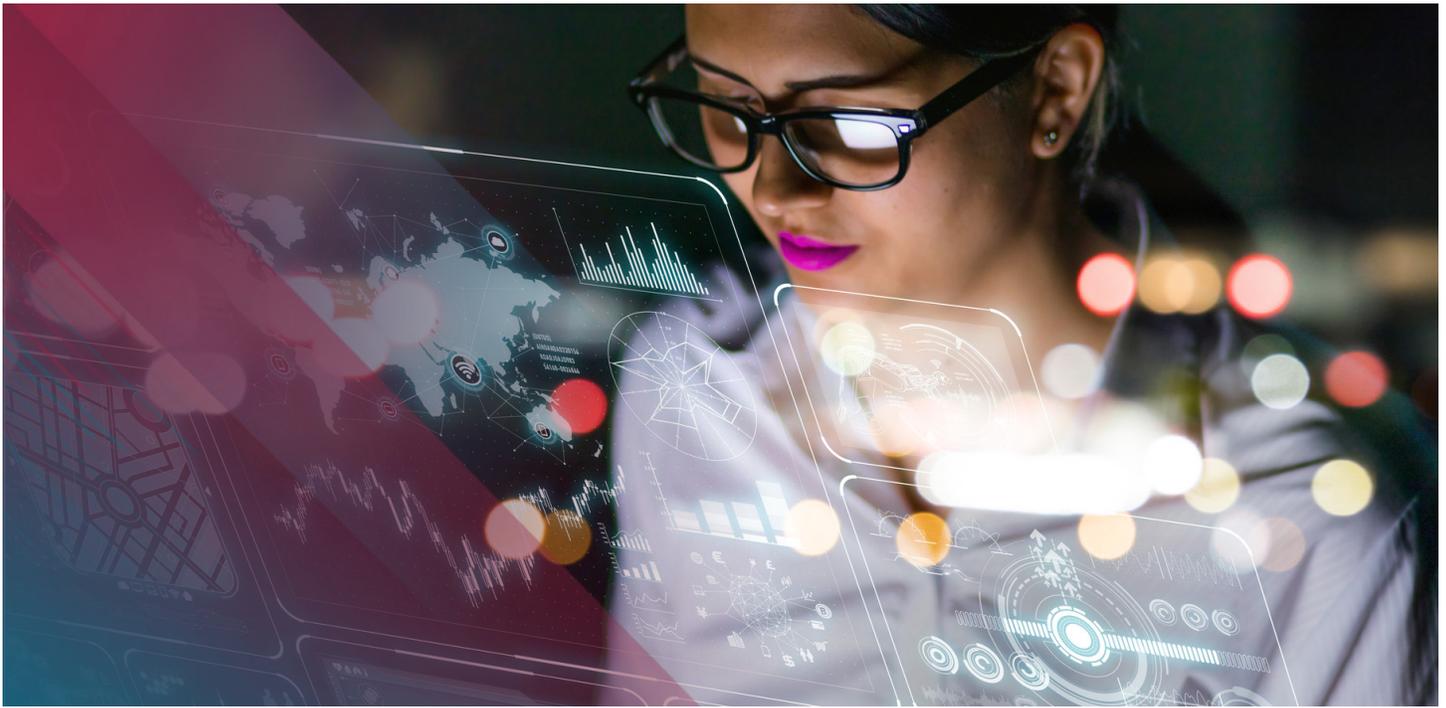
Whether shoppers prefer virtual or in-person assistance at the store, value their time by making their purchasing experience modern and easy. Allow associates to bypass lines and check them out via tablet anywhere in the store. Allow them to have items shipped directly to their homes, and enable endless aisle – where associates can place an order on the shopper's behalf for out of stock or pre-order items. Signing up new accounts when placing in-store orders is a great way to introduce loyalty membership and start collecting data that makes for better shopping experiences.

Younger generations prefer to shop without assistance in stores, but rely heavily on their mobile device. Think of mobile as an arm of service when shoppers are in store. Make sure Knowledgebase content is easily accessible on mobile to support these experiences. Think of ways your mobile site or app can link to the in-store shopping experience to serve as a personal concierge. Target and The Home Depot, for example, have in-store guides that direct shoppers to the exact store location (aisle and bay number) where the products they are looking at are stocked. Other retailers use beacons and QR codes to prompt video tutorials of products. As always, make sure chat and/or video chat is available along with self-service, product videos, and personalized AI-driven recommendations are available to help give shoppers confidence to buy in-store.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Arm in-store associates with tablets that allow them to see omnichannel history, personalized recommendations, and process orders on behalf of shoppers.
- Make the mobile site or app an in-store concierge for solo shoppers. Provide guidance for efficient shopping, recommendations and the usual means of pre-sales assistance (Knowledgebase, chat, video chat).
- Provide perks for those engaging with mobile service in the store. Surface what promotions are available, allow them to scan an item to add to their wishlist or check the price. Use this information to help build out their profile and send tailored messages.





Tip #9: IoT and Augmented Reality for Product Help and Field Service

The future is here. The Internet of Things (IoT) will continue to transform companies from being product-based to service-based. If you are a CPG or manufacturing brand, IoT can revolutionize how you track product use and send preemptive alerts when a customer has a product issue. Clothing manufacturers are just starting to experiment with wearables and conductive yarn, which will bring forth many new ways consumers can immediately get and give information to the brands they buy from.¹⁶

Preemptive service wins on all fronts: faster resolution at lower cost, better planning, and anticipation of future customer needs. But managing IoT relies on a vast ecosystem of technologies to monitor, measure and trigger service.¹⁷

Augmented Reality (AR) can blend with IoT, knowledge, and applications to offer more intuitive automated experiences. Think of a field service technician or a consumer taking a mobile picture of a product that is not working. By simply pointing the app the user will be able to retrieve in real time all the information about the device, such as case history, customer information, error codes, and knowledge to troubleshoot the problems. They could even automatically place an order for a new part or a new product.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Start with the manageable and useful. Remind customers to re-order products and allow them to do so via voice, mobile, or automatically.
- Experiment with image search. If you are having problems with a part or product, leverage advances in image search for identifying problems, seeking resolution with Knowledgebase or chat, and for re-ordering parts and products.



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Tip #10: Digitize In-Store Service

The ultimate goal for retailers today is to gain customer loyalty. It's six times more expensive to acquire new customers than to retain them,¹⁸ and being part of a loyalty program increases a customer lifetime value (CLTV) by 30% or more by increasing visit frequency, increasing spend per visit, and winning back lost customers.¹⁹ Digital advances in commerce and service provide many opportunities to introduce a loyalty program and keep providing value to brand loyalists.

Joining a customer's loyalty should not be a brand's shameless attempt to get an email address and push out batch and blast campaigns. With the advances in digital and customer experience platforms, loyalty should be a part of every customer interaction, and every customer interaction should be tailored to their loyalty status.

Pre-sale, think of ways to entice shoppers. Yes, promotions and seasonal sales are good, but with all of the information that can be gathered today, personalized recommendations and access are what provides real value. A loyalty program should be tied to marketing efforts to proactively send messages for personalized products, VIP access to new products, and additional "thank you" perks like invitations to special store events. If point accrual and redemption is your model, consistently remind them of how close they are to savings, or what can be purchased or unlocked with their loyalty point balance.

Parallel to sale, there are opportunities to tie loyalty into service and commerce. If a customer is a member of a specific loyalty tier, they may be entitled to a more personal concierge service like video chat. Chatbots could also be engaged if a shopper is identified as a VIP to make AI-driven, personalized product recommendations, or to fill the shopper in on sales for their favorite brands. In-store, loyalty members may get to bypass lines, get invited to in-store events, get free gifts to test out new products, or redeem special coupons to reward them for their loyalty.

Post-sale, think about specialized customer service opportunities for your most loyal tier of customers. Perhaps they get access to free or expedited shipping or "private" access to an exclusive call or chat line to resolve issues and answer questions. If you reward customers for being loyal with valuable, relevant engagement, they will reward you with their ongoing business.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Make loyalty status an important characteristic on the customer profile. Tailor promotions, marketing, recommendations, and customer service based on their status.
- If you have stores, push lucrative omnichannel shopping habits by inviting loyal online shoppers into the store for special events.
- Tier a loyalty program to unlock access to special products, savings, and service perks.
- Experiment with an exclusive channel for VIP video chat, SMS or phone support to your most valuable customers.





Bringing it all Together:

Unified commerce and service are greater than the sum of its parts. It's a clear winning strategy for retailers who want to seize micromoments. Tying service to commerce strengthens sales and ROI, and tying commerce to service increases customer loyalty – every retailer's goal.

You can't predict how and when people will engage to shop or get support. An integrated platform with shared omnichannel data and AI-driven intelligence sets your business up for success to experiment and change quickly to meet the needs of ever-changing customers.

By partnering with Oracle, you can become a modern commerce and service organization. With a unified platform that delivers stellar experiences and cloud-based services that reduce complexity and costs, Oracle helps customers:

- Acquire new target customers.
- Generate more revenue and profitable growth.
- Retain your existing customers and strengthening those relationships.
- Become more efficient and agile.

Oracle has the portfolio of applications, intelligence, and infrastructure to scale customer experiences across companies of all sizes. Oracle takes the burden of managing technology and infrastructure and lets brands focus exclusively on their revenue-driving customer experience.

Learn more about Oracle products and solutions:

ORACLE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PLATFORM:

The only Leader in Forrester Wave™: Digital Experience Platforms, 2018

Oracle Customer Experience (CX) helps retailers deliver customer experiences that increase revenue, loyalty and agility, while decreasing complexity and costs. Brands can deliver connected, relevant experiences that adapt to every shopper's unique journey. Informed by shared data and driven by the latest in AI, Oracle Customer Experience delivers a suite of cloud-based products and services that grow with our customers' changing needs.

The Oracle CX Suite is comprised of the following:

ORACLE COMMERCE CLOUD:

Leader in Gartner Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce, 2017

Oracle Commerce Cloud is the most modern, scalable SaaS commerce platform on the market. With the latest tools and mobile-optimized storefront, business users can take control of their shopping experiences with drag and drop design, catalog and search management, content capabilities, integrated AI and AB testing, plugins with external technologies, and proven commerce features, out of the box.

ORACLE SERVICE CLOUD:

Leader in Forrester Wave™: Customer Service for Enterprise Organizations, 2017

Oracle Service Cloud engages customers when, where and how it best suits them, empowers employees to meet customer needs, and adapts quickly to the changing needs of your business. With capabilities like case management, knowledge management, omnichannel management, and business intelligence, Oracle Service Cloud has led the customer service space for a decade, with hundreds of successful customers across multiple verticals.

ORACLE LOYALTY CLOUD: Engage, reward and recognize loyalty members with personalized interactions throughout their lifecycle. As part of a comprehensive CX Suite, retailers can move faster, reduce costs, know their customers on a deeper level, and deliver experiences that keep shoppers coming back. Manage loyalty tiers, allow customers to accrue and redeem points, and use loyalty status to inform all interactions across the customer journey.

ORACLE MARKETING CLOUD:

Leader in Forrester Wave™: Leader, Gartner Magic Quadrant for CRM Lead Management, August 2017

Oracle Marketing Cloud leverages data to target communications and marketing programs across the customer journey. Personalized marketing orchestration connects digital and physical behaviors to optimize messages across email, mobile, social, and on eCommerce sites via merchandising and recommendations. Oracle Marketing Cloud powers marketing orchestration at leading global brands.

The Oracle CX Suite also leverages a number of Oracle Service Cloud and Engagement Cloud services for IT professionals, that increase business agility, lower costs, and reduce IT complexity.

ORACLE AUTONOMOUS INTEGRATION CLOUD (OIC):

Maximize the value of your investments in SaaS and on-premises applications through a simple and powerful integration platform in the cloud that enables simplified data passing.

ORACLE DATA AS A SERVICE (DaaS): Leverage a myriad of data sources to connecting you to the right customers, making every interaction personal, and effective.

ORACLE INFRASTRUCTURE AS A SERVICE (IaaS): Offers a set of core capabilities, such as elastic compute, storage, networking, bare metal, migration tools, and container to help you quickly increase business value and performance.

ORACLE PLATFORM AS A SERVICE (PaaS): Develop, test, and deploy the next generation of applications in the cloud in a secure, cost-effective manner that speeds time to market and increases competitive advantage.

ORACLE DEVELOPER CLOUD SERVICE: Allows developers, IT professionals, and business leaders to quickly develop, test, and deploy the next generation of extensions and custom applications in any language in a secure, cost-effective manner. Development can be done in popular IDEs using Oracle Cloud environments provisioned in seconds.

ORACLE MOBILE CLOUD SERVICE: Makes mobile app development and integration quick, secure, and easy to deploy.

Take a smarter approach to commerce with Oracle: Connected data, connected intelligence, connected experience.

>> Learn more at [Oracle.com/Commerce](https://www.oracle.com/commerce)

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