

Engage existing retail customers with these 4 strategies



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In today's competitive world, brand loyalty is no longer a guarantee for digital businesses. Customers are increasingly making purchases based on the experience that companies offer, rather than on the products or the prices. This means that customer experience has become a major differentiator for digital businesses.

Companies must find innovative ways to distinguish their offerings through the entire customer lifecycle, including later stages that still have untapped opportunities for engagement.

Customer experience doesn't end after purchase

People have grown accustomed to doing their own research on products before engaging with a brand. Key findings from a Gartner customer experience survey show that 82% of smartphone users consult their phones before they make a purchase in-store. This means that the opportunities a company has to influence customers in the early stages of the customer lifecycle are being cut down.



But there are still ample opportunities to reach out to new customers post-purchase and continue to engage them as a way of preparing them for the next purchase with your company. Research has shown that existing customers are both easier to sell to and more profitable than new customers.

Rather than focusing on narrowing opportunities to influence new customers, businesses should find ways to nurture their existing customers, ultimately turning them into advocates that will come back to purchase again and again.

Changes in customer loyalty

If existing customers are so profitable, why do businesses neglect them in favor of new customers? Often, the answer comes down to the changing nature of customer loyalty and how difficult it is to turn people into repeat customers.

Companies used to be able to develop lifelong brand loyalty in their customers through big campaigns or traditional loyalty programs. The idea of lifelong brand fans meant that loyalty was defined as buying solely from that brand – like a staunch supporter of Coca-Cola that refused to drink Pepsi.

Now, it is incredibly easy for customers to switch brands, and they don't hesitate to exert that right. Millennials will cite anything from poor customer experience to feeling that a brand no longer fits their identity as reasons for moving on from a previously favorite brand. Experiences are what earn customers' loyalty today, and businesses will need to adjust their strategies in order to account for this reality. The more information and differentiators companies are able to offer with their experiences, the more loyal customers will be.

These four strategies will help you focus your efforts on engaging your existing customers in a way that creates loyalty for your brand.



