

# ***Retail 2014: The anytime anywhere universe***



## **#01**

Customer analytics for easy, convenient, personalised transaction experience

## **#02**

Supply chain optimisation enabling transactions anywhere

***Building the next retail business model***

## **#03**

Integrated technology, platform, and systems to provide seamless transaction services to anyone anywhere

## **#04**

A customer focused organisation, instead of a channel focused organisation

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# The retailer's dilemma

Technology has singularly been the biggest disruptor for retailers in recent times. It has not only changed the way consumers interact with the retailer but has also ensured that it is the consumer who drives the experience she wants.

Today's consumers expect the retailer to not only provide the convenience of shopping from home, in the physical format, on the mobile, tablet, PCs, etc, they also expect to pay using digital wallets, mCommerce, online, cash on delivery, buy online, return in store or vice versa, check online, buy in store or check in store, order online. Through the experience, they expect to stay engaged with the retailer via text messaging, social media and all forms of communication, keeping them abreast of trends and offers. If this is not enough, they also expect the retailer to provide them a seamless experience across all channels.

PwC's multi-channel report from earlier this year, *Total Retail* discussed how these consumer expectations are driving the retailer's business model. It is no longer just important to be present across channels and expect the consumer to 'walk in'. Today, it is also important to have a customer-focussed organisation, supported by an optimised supply chain, a technology that is seamlessly integrated across all functions and an analytical engine that can provide personalised services.

A decade ago in India, the most important thing was 'location, location, location'. The emphasis was on opening stores and technology was all about supporting the point of sale (POS), managing inventory and providing MIS to the 'central' management team. The one aspect that got ignored was the **customer experience**. The customer was just a card and loyalty meant managing points they collected when they shopped. Systems were largely built to manage POS, inventory and points.

Over a period of time as the business evolved, more systems were required to manage merchandising, procurement, planograms, etc. As the need arose, these systems were added to the old ones and integration taken care of to the extent possible. But customer experience still didn't feature! Then came the need for an analytics system to keep track of what needed to be stocked, how much, what was moving, not moving, store performance, etc. The result was a portfolio of systems, in most cases siloed and in some, integrated as required but still no customer experience!

Then the rules of the industry changed. Factors such as location, revenue per square feet, etc became irrelevant because retailers no longer needed physical locations. All they needed was a domain. They did not need to track revenue per square feet because they did not need physical stores.

Retailers had learnt that it was not just about having more stores in the right locations, it was also important to have a profitable business. They therefore consolidated and streamlined operations, perfected the art of sourcing, negotiation, all of which helped them add to their bottom line. However, business starts with the top line and growth is the key impetus. It did not take retailers long to realise that growth came not only when they opened more stores or entered new geographies, it came when the customer returned to shop with them again and again. So whether an eTailer, a physical retailer or both, the differentiation then was not the (e)loyalty card because everyone had that but the experience provided to the customer who shopped, wanted to redeem points, wanted to return purchases, wanted things personalised, delivery as promised and so on. The real game changer was after all managing the 'customer experience', in real time.

The obvious starting point is by first articulating one's customer strategy but the real challenge is integrating all the technology and concepts available today in a meaningful manner to meet the stated strategy.

In this report, we discuss the technologies available to retailers to leverage and integrate with their existing systems to enhance their relationship with the customer. We have spoken to leading retailers, who have deployed these technologies, to create differentiation and have used them as case studies for the benefit of the reader.

We believe agility in adoption of these emerging technologies and concepts and creating an enterprise architecture that remains receptive and scalable to these changes will continue to differentiate the market leaders.

**Rachna Nath**  
Retail and Consumer Leader  
PwC India

# Technology all the way

The evolution of the global customer, emerging technology and increased mobility has made it critical for Indian retailers to be present in multiple channels. These factors have also made retailers create multiple points of interaction with the end-customer, be it the physical store, an e-tailing site, the mobile, the PC or the tablet. All through this, the customer expects retailers to provide a localised, seamless and distinctive shopping experience across all channels. This could mean that the site should look similar to the store layout of the retailer, schemes need to be consistent across channels as also the price.

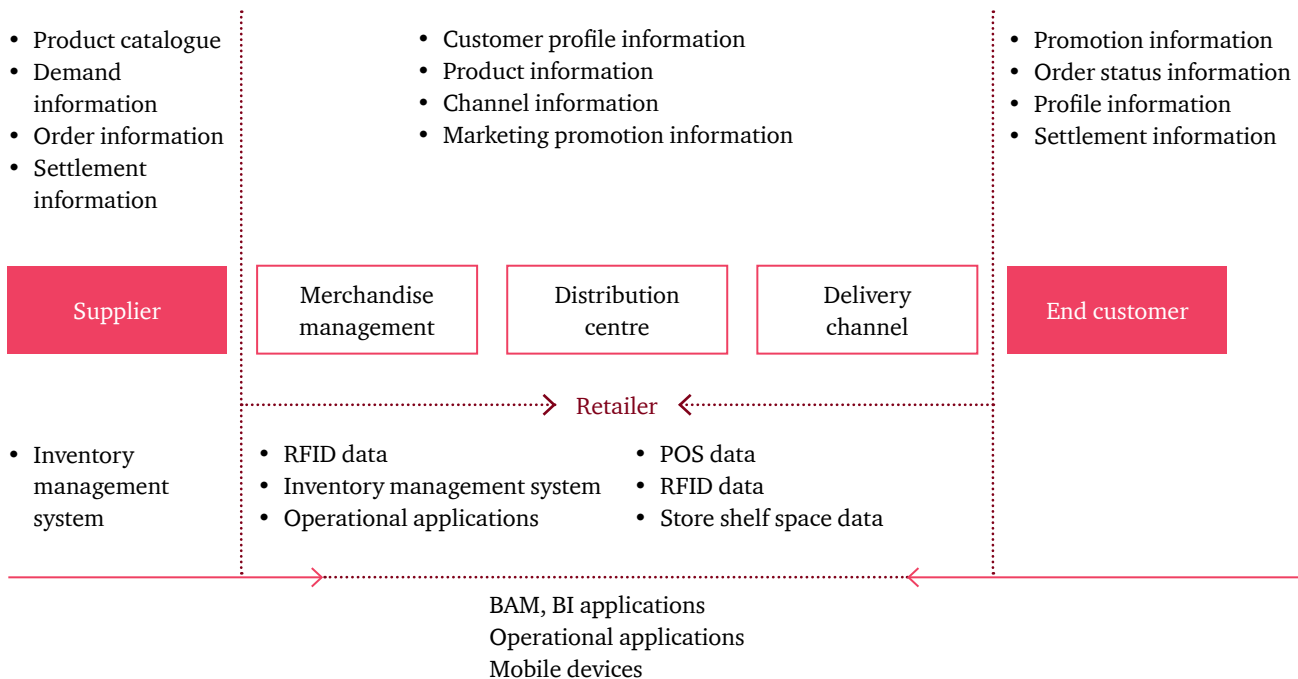
Over the last few years, there has been a shift in IT adoption by retailers. From being a back-end function supporting the business it is now helping retailers drive business growth, achieve operational efficiency, cut costs, take informed business decisions, seamlessly connect with customers, vendors or trade partners and employees. Technology has come to the fore to become the growth driver rather than a cost centre.

While modern retailers are focussing on IT adoption and using it to help drive the business model, IT penetration in the unorganised sector is also catching up. Unorganised retailers have also understood that if they need to compete with large modern retail chains, they need to remain relevant to the modern customer.

Retailers today are using multiple disparate applications across channels they operate in as well as for various business functions within a channel. They are investing heavily in integrating these technologies to leverage the information that leads to a more consumer-centric landscape. Retailers today have the vision of delivering the omni channel experience to customers and continuous technology innovations and investments is enabling them to achieve this objective with speed while still providing the flexibility driven by overall business strategy. The technology stack of yesterday is evolving to include new-age solutions and the biggest impact of this has been at the customer front.

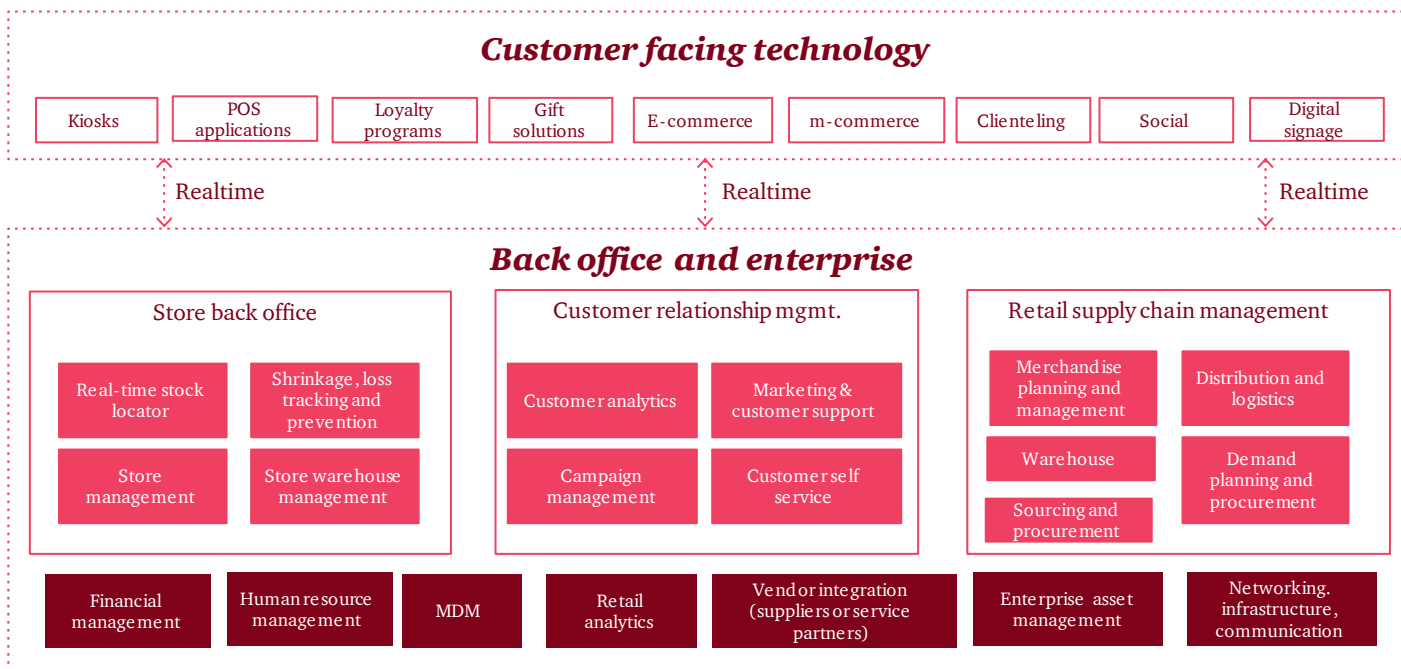
## Information landscape

### Information requirement for retailers



Multi-channel is the norm rather than the exception and in-store, out-store and retail technologies are changing the way a consumer buys today, interacts with the retailer and above all, talks about the experience. Retail analytics, mobile POS, digital signage, clienteling applications, virtual shopping, etc. are the technologies shaping the Indian retail industry today. This coupled with processes targeted at providing customers with the flexibility to interact with the retailer is redefining the way traditional retail used to happen.

**The emerging retail technology footprint**



Convenience to the customer is the overriding sentiment and concepts such as ‘buy online’ and ‘pick up in store’ or ‘check in store’ and ‘buy online’ or ‘check online’ and ‘buy in store’ has moved the cheese for the industry. All this is being driven by technology and according to recent surveys by RAI and Nielsen, modern retail chains will spend 13,668 crore INR for technology related solutions to gain competitive advantage in the business. The customer has embraced digital economy in a big way to **discover, engage and transact.**

The explosion is primarily propelled by the steady and healthy increase in the percentage of smartphones and smartphone users who are conducting more transactions on their mobile devices. Technology adoption is moving faster than businesses can respond. Small and boutique retailers are able to create immediate connect with the consumer, drive brand presence and loyalty by using a web of powerful and relevant social tools to engage with the customer.

- The retailer has to ‘know the customer’ and not just stop there. She has to know the entire ecosystem and back it with strong consumption related analytics.
- Digital execution plans will have to go beyond ‘defining the requirement’ and start co-creating content and proposition with the consumer.
- ‘Frugal innovation’ will give the best chance to be the leader in this journey. Pilots are being seen in all aspects including the loyalty programme, supply chain, reverse logistics and payments.
- ‘Accelerating execution’ will hold the key to creating the entry barrier. Designing the digital and payment ecosystem as an integral aspect of the IT architecture will bring in the best value to the operating model.

# Connecting the dots

In this section of our report, we take a look at various technologies adopted by retailers worldwide to provide an enhanced seamless experience to their customers. These technologies integrate with the existing system which goes a step towards providing the 'wow' experience to the customers. Be it easing the payment process or real-time customer relationship management or virtual trial of outfits, the adoption of such technologies has helped retailers pull their customers back to their stores, online or offline.



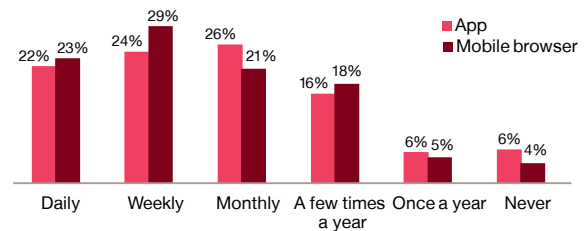
## M-commerce

The number of mobile internet users is to touch 155 million in India by the end of March 2014 and 185 million by June 2014 maintaining a Q-o-Q growth of 20%, according to *Mobile internet in India 2013* released by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and IMRB International. The report further finds that across both urban and rural India, over 50% of active internet users are accessing the internet on their mobile, apart from other sources.

Retailers have developed apps for smartphones to connect with customers who can not only shop using them, but also check loyalty points, pay bills, etc. Mobile apps are used to send gift coupons or vouchers to customers too. Retailers have also invested in mobile web browsers or mobile sites.

According to PwC Global's multichannel survey, retailers need to keep three important factors in consideration while designing brand mobile apps or browser i.e. speed, convenience and ease of use. The experience that a retailer is able to deliver to the time-poor customer is directly proportionate to the customer returning and using the mobile platform of the retailer.

## How often do you use either an app or the mobile browser on your mobile/smartphone for shopping?



Source : PwC Multi Channel Survey

## Barclays

With more than 150 million Indians accessing the internet using their mobiles, m-commerce is emerging as a key digital channel for retailers in India. Even when the potential of this medium is abundant, there are hurdles in the form of inconsistent buying experience, tedious purchase process and data security concerns which deter consumers from making purchases using their mobiles. Mobile apps such as Barclays Pingit help consumers overcome these barriers by making use of QR codes.

Retailers getting registered with the app are provided with a Pingit branded QR code specific to a product or promotion and the advertisement medium used. Once a prospective buyer scans the QR code provided, along with the advertisement, the app enables the user to complete the purchase in a few clicks. This makes 'on the go' shopping effortless.

For retailers, it serves two purposes. It acts as an instant sales channel which minimises the time a consumer spends to make an actual purchase after showing interest in a product. The app also provides insights on ad placements as the QR codes can be tracked to a specific placement.

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## Clienteling

Today's customer expects sales associates to share the latest about a product or brand.

Retailers are therefore using tablets or mobiles to empower sales associates with clienteling applications helping them deliver a differentiated shopping experience to customers and thus increasing sales conversions and improving brand loyalty.

Clienteling allows sales associates to browse through the customer profile, customer buying pattern, etc. and have personalised dialogue with the customer on the floor about new products launched, browse the product catalogue without having to physically visit every section in the store, help with product comparison, provide detailed product information, product recommendations basis customer buying history, running offers and promotions, etc. and at the end complete the sales transaction without the customer going through the queues in the cash counter.

Clienteling applications empower sales associates with a 360-degree view of the customer leveraging the customer information across various customer touch points (be it e-commerce, POS or CRM). These applications also provide sales associates with their personalised dashboards or to-do list. This when coupled with social media can help drive customer behaviour in-store.



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## Virtual shopping

A virtual shopping wall helps customers scan the barcodes or QR codes for an item on an electronic wall using their mobile phones and place an order with the retailer. This technology enables retailers connect with tech-savvy customers who are on the go while the retailer controls the virtual wall remotely to change assortments, price, run offers and promotions, etc. and deliver a fun shopping environment. This not only provides convenience to the customer but also helps the retailer beat the cost of setting up a physical store. Tesco in South Korea was one of the early adopters of this technology.

In India, Homeshop18 has launched India's first virtual shopping wall, Scan N Shop at the international airport in Delhi. Scan N Shop allows customers to simply scan the QR code against each item or order over the call centre.

## Virtual dressing room or magic mirror

Magic mirrors allow customers to virtually try on clothes or fashion accessories, thereby giving them an opportunity to preview products before making the final selection of products that they would want to try out.

This technology can be used by both online as well physical stores within the fashion industry. In the process, it helps retailers optimise the operational cost by the following ways:

- Reducing the space needed for trial rooms
- Reducing overheads of managing the physical trial process

Shoppers visit the physical store in order to try or touch and feel a particular product before making buying decision through online. This technology enables online shoppers to review the products within the convenience of their home.

## Mobile wallet

In a country such as India where cash is the king, it has been a cautious journey for the mobile wallet technology or mwallet companies so as to get the customer's buy-in over traditional means such as credit cards. Imagine doing all your financial transaction with just your smartphone or even your feature phone. A mobile wallet allows a customer to store everything, right from his or her credit and loyalty card details to personal information on the mobile phone. Whether you are making a payment at a medicine shop, a bookstore or even at the local grocery store, all you need to do is make a call to a secure number, flash your smartphone when you hear a unique tone towards the base station and your transaction is complete. This technology has become a reality, and several merchants (business establishments) are ready to transact in what possibly is the future of transaction.

On the flip side, security as well as privacy concerns still looms large from a consumer's perspective. Typical concerns include key aspects such as safety issues, consequences in case a smartphone gets stolen and lastly, if this technology can work on a feature phone as well.

Today the mobile wallet is being viewed by various business stakeholder as a key inflection point in the respective growth trajectories.

- The financial institutions who are the most trusted partners of customers and own the payment relationship are keen to use the mobile wallet as a preferred mode of transaction for their customers. Offers and payment options are available to move the customer from other modes of payment to the mobile wallet.
- The mobile operator owns the means to the end. It plays a critical role in showcasing the security of the network and assured connection which will go a long way in improving customer trust and comfort to use the mobile wallet.
- The retailer which houses the brand has several customer touch points – online and offline. The mobile wallet to them is viewed as an enabler to bring down transaction cost and increase customer stickiness.



Source: PwC's Mobile Payment in China's Digital Age

Adoption of this technology continues to be a challenge for both the service provider and the telecom companies. Some of the reasons identified are:

- Customers are wary of conducting financial transactions through a mobile wallet. While the use of mobile phones in order to make bill payments or purchase items is a rising trend, when it comes to the mobile wallet, the customer has expressed his or her concern about issues such as mobile hacking and theft.
- Customers are willing to use mobile wallet in place of a paper ticket. Insurance and loyalty are next in line where a customer is willing to replace plastic cards with the mobile wallet.

***The key to mobile wallet success is institutional support. There are regulatory guidelines which are currently in place. Driving adoption on this new channel is all about building trust with the customer.***





## ***A new frontier in mobile marketing and communication***

With the explosive growth of mobile phones across the globe over recent years, brands as well as enterprises have been quick to identify this medium as the next frontier in reaching out to their target audience. UK-based Eureka Mobile Advertising has moved away from the mass, spray-and-pray broadcasting model, to precision targeted and relevant mobile marketing and communication. Eureka's innovative 'serve-on-unlock' technology on the idle screen of your phone allows brands to reach out to their target audience in a manner that ensures guaranteed views as well as enhanced engagement.

Eureka uses proprietary technology as well as advanced analytical tools in order to leverage the idle screens of smartphones and engage at scale with opt-in subscribers. The business model rewards subscribers for their continuous engagement. Retailers with a large loyalty base can reach out to their loyal customers on their smartphones at regular intervals in order to deliver deals, offers, contests, trivia and videos, along with subtle sales reminders. Customer-centric brands can engage with and listen to their customers using Eureka's surveys, feedback as well as polling tools. Eureka is available in a white-labelled format to enterprises allowing them to create a closed-loop communication forum for their employees, sales staff, agents as well as partners. Thus, by the very act of opting in, Eureka subscribers are more receptive to ads, quirky content and exciting deals, and are willing to share demographic information, thereby allowing precision targeting. The Eureka gratification programme further ensures user loyalty as well as longevity of association. Marketers can make use of a combination of the company's offerings, including guaranteed-view branding, multiple-hotspot ad formats, surveys, feedback, polls, and timed ads. Brand engagement is also high due to the serve-on-unlock technology that guarantees views of ad copies.

## **Real-time customer relationship management (CRM)**

Personalisation is the order of the day. The customer today not only yearns for recognition, but also expects the retailer to remember his or her personal preferences. Technology more than ever before has made it possible to achieve this goal. Today, if a customer is a user of an e-tailing site, it comes as no surprise that within minutes of logging on to the site, specifically targeted schemes appear on the screen. In this scenario, what the e-tailer executes between the time a customer has logged in and the time he or she browses through the site is analyse his or her past buying behaviours, past purchases, possibly also link them with the social media presence of the customer on platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, compare that with the running schemes, and thereby tailor an offer customised to the needs and preferences of the buyer. Customer relationship management (CRM) today is no longer a passive response. It is real time.

- **Real-time feeds:** In order to be effective, CRM must provide real-time feeds to customer representatives, including real-time customer intelligence. The goal of a real-time enterprise is to act on events as they take place. Consider the following situation: in the case of product research and evaluation, a customer logs on to Facebook and posts his or her requirement to buy a laptop. He or she receives multiple offers from different websites with the configuration details as well as URLs with the product catalogue and order placing. In such a situation, companies such as Flipkart and Snapdeal utilise social listening tools in order to push forward their offers to prospective customers.
- **Placing an order:** The customer places his order and a virtual agent completes the purchase cycle after confirming the delivery date and the delivery person's details. Meanwhile, if his wife happens to call the toll-free number to order the same product, and if she is linked to the customer information, she will be immediately informed that her husband has already made the same purchase. The relationship agent also updates her with the delivery details.
- **Customer seeking information on a product:** The customer is talking to the CRM agent on how to get a replacement battery for his laptop and while speaking to the agent, he or she is able to place the order through the agent himself. The customer then provides his or her delivery details and is promised that he or she will receive the replacement battery in one day and the product is delivered to him in one day.



**Building blocks for the real-time CRM system:** The real-time CRM system is dependent on a number of technology applications that need to be integrated in order to work in sync so as to provide the buyer a satisfactory customer experience. A 360 degree view of the customer is critical in order to make this process a success because data about the customer not only resides within systems that are owned by the retailer but also within various social platforms. Connecting the dots and creating an integrated view of the customer is critical. These applications will include the following:

- Real-time database management
- Web virtual agents
- Call centre applications
- CRM intelligence as well as analytics for real-time decisions
- Sales force or service personnel contact management application
- Analytics, including social analytics

### **Introducing eBay India's PowerShip**

eBay India introduced PowerShip in 2012 in order to help ensure that sellers within its marketplace could provide a smooth and consistent product delivery experience to their customers.

PowerShip is an integrated shipping technology that allows sellers on eBay to seamlessly ship their products through the click of the mouse. eBay India has signed up with four leading logistics providers for this service in order to ensure efficient and timely delivery of products. These include BlueDart, DTDC, Aramex and FedEx. It has significantly enhanced the efficiency of managing multiple item shipments and delivery of items to eBay India buyers.

The service includes product pick-ups from the eBay merchant's doorstep, automated tracking of shipments and faster item deliveries by logistic service providers. This enables the seller to concentrate on developing his or her business rather than spending time on managing logistical issues.

### **How does PowerShip work?**

To enable PowerShip, eBay India sellers have to register for the programme from their eBay account.

Post the registration, each time a buyer purchases an item listed by a seller offering PowerShip, the system automatically assigns a suitable logistics partner based on the location of the buyer. The seller needs to then package the product within the eBay packaging material with a shipping label, declaration, invoice which is auto generated through PaisaPay. Once the item is packaged and labelled as mandated by the logistic provider, the seller has to only mark the order as 'ready to ship' in his or her eBay account, and the relevant logistics partner will then reach out to the seller in order to pick up the consignment for delivery to the buyer's address. Once the package is picked up, the logistic company's back-end system as well as eBay India's system integrate together providing both the buyer as well as the seller with the tracking details of the product on a real-time basis.



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## Big data analytics

Today's customers interact with retailers across multiple channels, be it in a brick and mortar store, the web, mobile, a mall or on a kiosk. Emergence of multiple retail channels and the explosive growth of social media platforms have increased the amount of both structured as well as unstructured data available to retailers. This creates an opportunity for them to generate meaningful insights so as to increase their revenue.

It is thus important for retailers to monetise the data being collected from multiple channels, and use it in order to get the single view of the customer. This requires retailers to process the huge volume of data quickly and integrate it with customer-facing applications, including point of sales, e-commerce, mobility, etc.

In today's world, speed is the key and how fast the retailer is able to analyse the information and convert it into an actionable insight is the differentiator.

Big data analytics employs latest technologies and architectures such as parallelisation, distribution, fault recovery, input-output scheduling which are designed to extract huge volumes of data, maintain and process them in order to derive meaningful insights within the minimum time possible.

It helps retailers in taking real-time decisions and execute an effective omni-channel marketing strategy. Insights can be used for online as well as in-store promotion, campaign planning, assortment optimisation, merchandising and dynamic pricing of products as well customising various offers for valuable customers.

## Soulflower

Selecting the best product that suits one's personal needs as well as aspirations often becomes a cumbersome task. Several retail companies face this predicament, and to combat this, Soulflower came up with a thought process that was driven by data analytics. Soulflower retails aroma oils and fragrances through shop-in-shops, standalone stores and online medium.

After researching and analysing the sample base of their loyal customers along with the demographic details and purchasing behavioural trends, they arrived at a conclusion that there is a positive co-relation between the shopping habits and personality traits associated to specific zodiac signs. They monitored their purchase data across all the 12 zodiac signs and found astounding results. Customers tend to exhibit behavioral trends that mirror their respective zodiac signs congruently. This was done in collaboration with Shoppers Stop. The findings indicated that Sagittarians are more inclined towards heavy ticket purchasing. This corresponded with their star sign characteristics, that is, adventurous, energetic, and optimistic and love for shopping. Acting along the same lines, the high spending and frequent home furnishing habit of Librans were found to be congruent with their inherent zodiac characteristic to appreciate beauty in all things around them. Contemplating over this idea of providing customised solutions to the customers at the individual level derived from zodiac traits, Soulflower refined their ingredients and came up with a customised line of zodiac-based pure essential oil aromatherapy blends.

Another instance of using customer data for enhancing the product portfolio was the analysis of purchases done during the Diwali season. And the *kesar* sandalwood oil with a blend of pure saffron, *ghee* and sandalwood was the result of the same. The need of providing a groom and care solution for men who prefer to grow and condition their beard and moustache was also an outcome of data analytics. After finding and testing the key ingredients required to nourish, condition and moisturise facial hair, Soulflower came up with its aromatherapy beard and moustache roll-on. Convenience and ease of carrying it made it one of their bestseller products. They also have a PMS relief roll-on product. Hence, what started off with a hypothesis, grounded firmly on thought process and data insights, ended up taking the shape of new products.



## **Gamification**

The shopping experience has evolved from just being about products to customers looking for a distinctive, personalised as well as a seamless experience. Technologies such as quick response codes (QR) codes, mirror walls, mobile wallets, and gamification have helped in providing such an experience.

Whether it is apparels, shoes or food products, gamification has moved from being just a concept to a dynamic marketing and advertising tool used for increasing customer engagement. Gamification, is the use of game thinking and mechanics in a non-gaming context. Retailers are designing their rewards and recognition systems from the concepts used in video games and applying them to daily consumer behaviour.

The idea behind the concept is that by adding gaming elements (such as small challenges and rewards) to the sales process, one can hope to increase customer loyalty. As is the case in every game or competition, participants have to be motivated by a valuable reward. Moreover, the success of check-in applications such as Foursquare and Shopkick have opened the doors to this potential and the multi-fold benefits of gaming strategy. However, it was social game developer, Zynga that highlighted the power of gamification when the company filed for an initial public offer (IPO) in December 2011. The provider of Facebook-based games, including FarmVille, CityVille and Words with friends, currently acquires more than 200 million active users per month, and is one of the successful example of social gaming.

Myriad retail brands have adopted the concept of gamification within their retail strategy.

## **Burberry**

The flagship Burberry store in London has 200 screens. Some of the brand's clothing products are tagged with radio frequency identification (RFID) microchips. So, when a shopper walks towards the trial room of the store, he or she will immediately activate a video footage which shows a model walking down a fashion runway wearing the same garment that he or she is about to try out. In fact, even before a buyer tries out a clothing product, the moment he or she sees a model walking down the ramp, wearing the same outfit, half the purchase has already been made.

## **Best Buy and CityVille**

According to Zynga, more than 230 million active users play its games, and more than 71 million Facebook users play CityVille. In this game, players build houses and roads to create a city, seeking to collect points they can use to unlock new game features. Best Buy became the first virtual branded retail store within CityVille. The recall value of Best Buy was so high that players were choosing to add it to their virtual world.

## **eBay**

For long, eBay has been gamifying the shopping experience. They have a powerful bidding system, an intricate feedback application structure, and a star awards system for power-rated sellers. The bidding system instills a competitive spirit in people to the extent that they are willing to pay a higher price to pick up a product because they have to beat their counter bidder.

## **Gilt Groupe**

Gilt launched its loyalty programme, Gilt Noir, for the top 1% of its online shoppers. Members received gifts and a privileged preview of current sale offers. This kind of special treatment goes a long way in building brand advocacy.

## **Valentino**

Luxury fashion house, Valentino launched a virtual 3D museum. The downloadable desktop application for Mac and PC users allowed viewers to navigate through various galleries, clicking over 300 virtual dresses and pulling up original sketches, advertising campaigns, 5,000 archival images and nearly 95 fashion show videos.

The virtual museum had over 10,000 downloads on the first day of its launch.

With the above examples, it is evident that gamification is the next level of growth for the Indian retail industry. It is a matter of time till retailers are able to develop as well as implement their strategies through different competitions that can improve customer loyalty.

Industry experts state that growth in the online retail space in India is following a global trajectory and the advent of global players in India will add more weightage to this industry. Consolidation in the online retail business is also a strong indicator of the growth potential of the same.

Thus, with social games attracting more eyeballs, retailers have yet another tool to increase customer engagement and boost loyalty, and thus drive sales.



## Digital signage

In today's digital world, digital signage is a medium adopted by retailers to communicate product information to customers while they are physically present in stores. It helps retailers to communicate rich content around product information, deals, customer real life experiences, etc.

Over the last few years, digital signage has not only replaced the physical paper signage within the store, but is an excellent technology to communicate the rich and interactive content to the customers, helping them delivering interactive or engaging shopping experience.

### ***Currently, the various types of digital signage being used include the following:***

- Static signage: Displays static images
- Kiosks: Place orders for shipments
- Video wall: Rich media content, product visuals, etc.
- Interactive signage: Allows customers to browse through the content

### ***Retailers today use digital signage to inform customers about the following aspects:***

- Assortment or catalogues which may or may not be on display
- New or upcoming products
- Deals, offers or promotions
- Inventory information, etc.

### ***Digital signage helps retailers to achieve the following:***

- Manage the content centrally
- Customise the content for a store or location or a particular time in a store, etc.
- Act as a tool of infotainment, specially while the customer is standing in billing queues
- Improve employee competitiveness in order to handle customers
- Improve customer engagement by delivering the interactive and immersive shopping experience

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## *Conclusion*

Retailers globally today are experimenting with technology to acquire and retain customers as also drive costs down, be they of technology, operations or real estate. However, adoption of new-age technology has meant taking a hard look at the present investment and portfolio. At the same time, companies are evolving in an inorganic manner, which has added complexity for the CIO organisation. In such a scenario driving synergy and building agility to meet ultimate customer engagement requirements are challenging.

Finally, companies who want to differentiate themselves in the digital age will need to undertake several responsibilities:

- Understand the rapidly evolving digital customer behaviour
- Understand how value is created in the digital economy in the value chain and ecosystem
- Adopt agile approaches to design, build and integrate enterprise-wide social, mobile and web solutions

Today, more than ever technology will drive this disruption and the IT organisation will need to evolve from a service provider to an organisation that leads business transformation be it using Twitter to provide post sales services or one-touch purchase to mobile in-store purchase and integration with m-commerce. Technology innovation is defining the way retail of the future will look and it is for the organisation to adopt it as part of its business model to create differentiation.





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## *About our Retail and Consumer practice*

Our India Retail and Consumer practice has worked with Fortune 500 companies. Developing the market entry strategy for global companies, location assessment based on the target audience, streamlining the supply chain and distribution system, deploying IT strategy, linking the customer data using analytics, managing the inventory and ensuring customer delight are among the gamut of services we offer our clients to help them in their journey to success.

Our clients in the R&C goods sector operate in different formats ranging from supermarket chains to food and beverage manufacturers and from luxury goods retailers to consumer packaged-goods manufacturers, and agribusiness companies.

PwC's globally renowned technical expertise, its unsurpassed tax capabilities, 19,000 professionals in 118 countries serving R&C companies, and the fact that it hosts the best talent worldwide makes it the best choice to help overcome every challenge and optimally utilise all opportunities.

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