



CHAPTER 3:

## **Bringing your value proposition** to life through marketing

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In Unified Commerce, everything revolves around the customer. Marketing, therefore, plays a central role: winning the customer's consideration through differentiation, then delivering on it with a seamless, engaging customer experience. From promotions to brand perception across every channel, marketing sets the tone. Unified technology and infrastructure means nothing if the customer experience falls short of expectations.

Customers see brands, not channels. Today, a disappointing store experience isn't an isolated issue. It's a permanent dent in the brand perception. And, despite the approach of many marketing departments,

customers evaluate brands based on how they fit in *their* lives, not how they fit into a brand's target segment or persona. To succeed in the retail market now, marketing must craft holistic, integrated and personalized brand experiences — orchestrated across channels and touch points.

But with Unified Commerce, that's hardly a thankless task. Marketing departments who answer the call are rewarded with real-time, deeply detailed customer intelligence collected at every touch point and transaction. Unified Commerce, then, turns marketing processes into flywheels, with each successful customer interaction building the brand's momentum.



## Making sense of modern customers

Omnichannel customers tend to interact with retail brands more than single channel customers, opening the door for higher spend and deeper loyalty. And because omnichannel experiences encompass more touch points, customers are often much more likely to recommend brands with unified brand experiences over single channel brands.

But with more opportunity comes more competition. With the early stages of the customer journey moving to the mobile internet, customers have more exposure to your competitors than ever before. Modern customer journeys take shape in an overwhelming range of ways. And retailers face an unprecedented amount of obstacles, competition and chances to drop the ball.

So what can you do to appeal to the modern customer?

It's imperative for marketing to **set and maintain a high standard across the omnichannel ecosystem**, with extra eyes on **the store**. Whether the customer is considering your products, purchasing a product, or picking up an online order, the store will likely play a vital role in their journey.

The retailers that can capitalize on the personalization gap get a head start on customer acquisition, plus greater opportunity for customer retention.

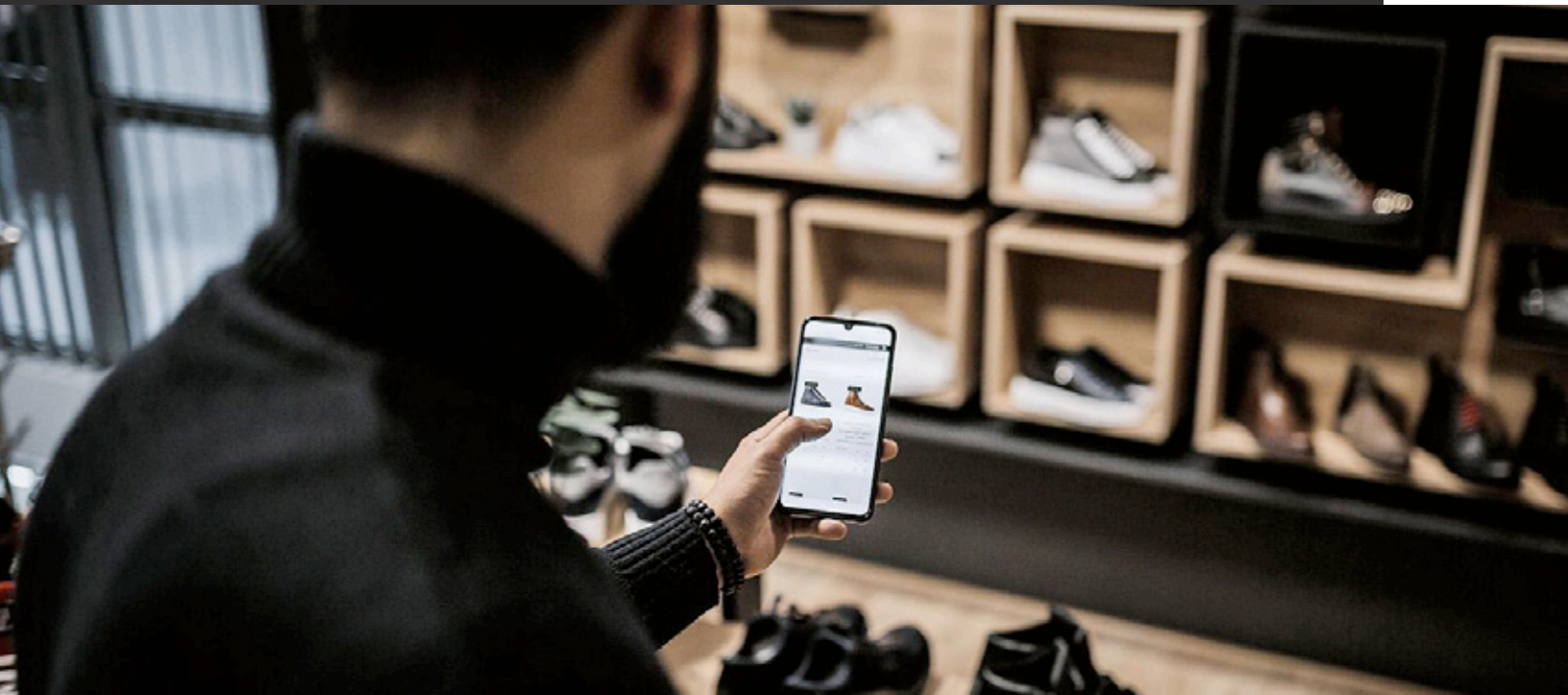
Customers want a personalized experience. And retailers see the need. According to recent research by McKinsey, 100% of retailers in the top quartile of revenue growth "cited omnichannel personalization as a top five priority, but only 15% of retailers have implemented it across all channels."<sup>1</sup> Retailers recognize the high demand for personalization, but the vast majority have yet to catch up to the leaders in the market. The retailers that can **capitalize on the personalization gap** get a head start on customer acquisition, plus greater opportunity for customer retention.

For digital transactions, delivery times are interwoven into the buying decision. And while most products demand fast fulfillment, customer expectations change based on the product and brand. **Treat delivery times as a marketing function** as much as an order management one. For example, a niche, specialty or luxury product may actually *benefit* from a long delivery time, as it may create the perception of exclusivity or personal touch.

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That's the flip side for retailers: figuring out what is worth the wait and making those experiences and products really treasured, because there's a magic to that in a world where you've got all of this instant noise.

**McKinsey:** Forecasting the Future of Stores



The modern customer puts their values behind their dollar. Diversity, inclusivity, equity and sustainability are the most in-demand values today. And the brands that take these values to heart will command more market

share: 57% of shoppers are more loyal to brands that take action on social issues.<sup>2</sup> Customers will even sacrifice experience to a degree if it means the brand is sticking to their values, particularly with sustainability.

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These steps will help your marketing team attract modern customers and deliver a Unified Commerce experience:

- ▶ **Track KPIs relating to customer experience**, including average delivery times, conversion rate, rate of return, revenue growth and satisfaction scores.
- ▶ **Incentivize and reward omnichannel behaviors** to create more opportunities to interact, engage and convert more shoppers into customers.
- ▶ **Establish consistent standards and expectations across the omnichannel ecosystem**, including pricing, promotions, policies and customer interactions.
- ▶ **Work with IT to integrate Customer Relationship Management (CRM)** into customer touch points, segmentation and marketing strategies.
- ▶ **Decide on any custom metrics** that you want to track, and, if necessary, create custom fields and automations to incorporate this custom data into your CRM.
- ▶ **Market order management capabilities** on store signage, receipts and invoices to build awareness for in-demand services like next-day delivery or cross-channel returns.
- ▶ **Break down silos within the marketing team** so previously unaffiliated channels (i.e., Store Operations and eCommerce) can work together to deliver a Unified Customer experience.
- ▶ **Ethically aggregate first-party data to personalize customer interactions** (via transactions and social media), making sure to be transparent to build trust.
- ▶ **Determine the most beneficial moments in the customer journey** to add value through differentiated experiences culled from customer, store and associate feedback.
- ▶ **Create ideal product-delivery fit** by bringing together key stakeholders in branding, pricing and operations as well as OMS and CRM data.
- ▶ **Communicate genuine diversity, inclusion, equity and sustainability values** at key customer touch points and across every sales channel.



## Why you want more in-store shoppers

Unified Commerce is as much about customer acquisition as it is about retention and experience. And while every customer is valuable, some retailers have taken their eyes off the *most* valuable customers: in-store shoppers. Around 85% of retail transactions are still handled in the stores, despite the proliferation of channels.

With an ever-growing list of sales channels at the disposal of the modern customer — many of which are more convenient or immediately available than the store — the very act of in-store shopping signals a more qualified customer. Purchasing intent tends to be higher, too, with the bulk of window shopping, browsing and consideration moving to digital channels like eCommerce and social media.

Stores also pose unique advantages to digital channels. The human element opens the door to increased customer loyalty, opportunities to upsell and richer CRM inputs. Stores don't have to compete as hard for attention versus digital channels and can provide

a more concentrated and interactive experience. And since store shoppers have a tactile interaction with your products, customers are less likely to return products, protecting your profitability.

Unified Commerce puts the power in your hands to create automated, sophisticated systems that deliver seamless and personalized experiences — tailored to a customer's unique preferences and behaviors — *while* increasing customer intelligence and earning key data; allowing you to iterate on customer experiences catalogued in your POS, OMS and CRM. *And* create a proprietary and ever-improving feedback loop to support marketing. **At scale.**

In other words, by putting your emphasis on the store, you can unlock an advantage even under the umbrella of Unified Commerce. The retailers who work with vendors that center their efforts on the store will have better insights, deeper customer bonds and a more solid foundation than those who focus on eCommerce or other in-vogue channels.

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Here are three simple yet powerful ways to concentrate customer traffic to your stores:

**1** Incorporate store-exclusive or store-first products and promotions into your marketing strategy to incentivize foot traffic, express your value proposition and expose customers to the benefits of shopping in store.

**2** Partner with the merchandise planning team during the experience design stage. Incorporate experiences that promote new assortments, add value to customers, foster community and build your brand.

**3** Leverage your CRM for analytics, segmentation and loyalty programs to get the most value out of your in-store processes; and to design promotions and merchandising decisions that maximize store traffic.




## How to create a value proposition for limitless customer journeys

Differentiation has become one of the biggest, if not the biggest, competitive factors.


The rules have changed. Expectations have expanded. It's no longer just about the products you sell or the story you tell, but the experience you create to put your customers at the center of the story, and how your products move *their* story forward. That comes with a lot of complexity. Not only are there a seemingly infinite number of possible steps in the customer journey, but there is a growing list of channels where they can take place. Marketing is tasked with a huge job: tell a singular, customer-centric story to a massive customer base, scattered across and jumping between channels without a common pattern.

Unique value propositions (UVPs) will have to adjust accordingly. Knowing exactly what customers want to experience, how they want each experience catered to them and how you implement that balance across channels and touch points may sound virtually impossible. Establishing a strong, defensible UVP with plenty of air to breathe for personalization sounds contradictory.

Honing in on a UVP fit for the modern retail market is still a challenge. But with the combination of real-time insights aggregated from every transaction and the agile infrastructure to shape experiences across channels and touch points, Unified Commerce makes it much easier.



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These steps will help you create or update your UVP to fit the modern market:

- ▶ **Work with key stakeholders to determine your differentiating qualities.** Every department has the potential to offer unique angles or advantages that siloes may have kept out of marketing's field of vision. Ask, "what do you believe makes our organization stand out?" Test these beliefs and assumptions against customer feedback and data highlighting your top performing products, categories and price points.
- ▶ **Research the market from a customer-centric perspective.** Some retailers may fall for the trap of creating a UVP that reflects how they *want* customers to think or behave, not how customers truly view the brand. To put the focus back on your customers, consider which differentiating quality will help you best achieve the most potent product-market fit.
- ▶ **Outline a strategy to roll-out your UVP to the market.** Which channels and touch points will you use to share your UVP? Where in your processes and your experience design can you bring it to life? How will it take shape to fit the context of your target customers' journeys? Where and how will it blend with personalization?
- ▶ **Audit your current technology relative to your UVP.** How does each piece in your tech stack help or hinder your ability to implement your strategy? For example, if speed and convenience are integral to your UVP, does your OMS help you consistently execute next-day deliveries? Work with your IT team to update inconsistencies in your tech stack.
- ▶ **Select a Unified Commerce vendor that can best implement your strategy.** Not all Unified Commerce vendors are created equal. Evaluate vendors for agility and the ability to adapt to current and future market shifts or changing goals. API-friendliness and an agile deployment approach will help IT support your marketing goals.





“You have to innovate or disappear. [But] you first have to get your house in order,” says Andy Laudato, Executive VP and COO of The Vitamin Shoppe. One of the major benefits of using Aptos ONE is that it **“allows us to interact instead of just transact.”**



[Click here to read about how The Vitamin Shoppe leverages Unified Commerce technology and human ingenuity to innovate and differentiate.](#)

## Craft a differentiated brand for modern customers with Unified Commerce

With Unified Commerce, marketing teams can boost their value proposition with cohesive experiences that are as personalized to the customer as they are distinct to your brand.

By working with departments across the enterprise, you can drive meaningful change through Unified Commerce — and help your organization lead the market despite dynamic conditions.



Visit the [Aptos Unified Commerce hub](#) to learn more or book a demo now.

### References

- <sup>1</sup> “Retail speaks: Seven imperatives for the industry.” McKinsey.
- <sup>2</sup> “Updating the trend: Authentically inclusive marketing.” Deloitte Digital.



[aptos.com](https://www.aptos.com)

Aptos is the worldwide leader in Unified Commerce. For more than 40 years, we have specialized in helping retailers deliver unified brand experiences by connecting customers in every channel to products across the extended retail enterprise. Our Merchandising, Inventory, CRM, Sales Audit, POS and Order Management solutions work seamlessly together to help hundreds of retailers always stay prepared for whatever shoppers will expect of them in the future. Aptos solutions are live in more than 125,000 stores around the world, where they

ensure that the store experience — still the centerpiece of the vast majority of omnichannel shopping journeys — remains relevant, empowering and engaging.

Our rich history as one of retail's leading technology solution companies ensures that every client, in every part of the world, is always prepared to thrive, no matter what the near future may bring. Learn more about how we can help your stores prepare for the near future of retail at [aptos.com](https://www.aptos.com).



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