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COMMERCE TRENDS 2022



The Future In Fifteen Minutes Or Less

Post-pandemic shoppers expect brands to be purposeful, relevant, convenient and quick.

The Mars Agency London presents seven key trends that should guide strategic thinking for marketers in 2022.

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COMMERCE TRENDS 2022

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① Cut To The ‘Quick’

One of the fastest-growing purchase channels in 2021 has been “Quick Commerce”, an expanding ecosystem of companies literally racing to accelerate their order-to-delivery promises from same-day, to same-hour, and now to a golden-moment 15 minutes or less.

This step change in last-mile distribution capabilities has been primarily driven by the intensifying purchase demands of shoppers around the world who are now more willing (if not compelled) to stay at home and let the store come to them. But an exponentially growing distribution infrastructure has so far been ready and willing to meet the challenge.

This demand for faster (and easier) commerce fulfillment will continue in 2022 as shoppers increasingly expect near-immediate delivery from retailers and brands alike — but cost will most definitely remain an object: fast and free will be the winning combination.



2 Proof Of Purpose

During the pandemic, shoppers have become more actively, more acutely aware of the products they're buying and the various shopping missions they're undertaking to buy them. They have new, consciously prioritised purchase triggers that place some of the greatest scrutiny on brand purpose.

In this environment, base-level greenwashing and me-too sustainability claims fall well below the hygiene factor evaluations of shoppers (or even their sniff tests, for that matter). They're making better-educated appraisals and rejecting brands that previously made the grade whose would-be purpose no longer rings true.

In 2022, brands that have carefully substantiated and curated a single-minded purpose strategy that clearly delivers on their promise of mass relevance beyond the bottom line can foster deep loyalty among current shoppers and win over new legions of buyers.

PLAN
EARTH



③ Selective Frugality

Lifestyles have been mindfully evaluated over the past two years, leading individuals to reassess and reprioritize what is more and less important for themselves and their loved ones in an increasingly entrenched new normal. This reprioritization has altered shopper decision-making, creating new barriers to old preferences and fresh pathways to new ones.

Running parallel to this activity is the desire to make more thoughtful choices about how to spend disposable income: trading down to acceptable basics in some areas to enable other purchases once considered “luxury” but now deemed essential — particularly when the end result is improved well-being.

Brands and retailers need to determine where they now sit on the priority scale and find appropriate ways to remain on the essential side of the equation.



4 Return Of Relevant Retail

Despite the explosion of digital commerce that's been reported (endlessly) over the past year, post-lockdown consumers around the world want to get back into the aisles of “real retail” and re-encounter the full sensory experience of physical shopping.

A craving among shoppers across all categories (food, apparel, electronics, homewares) to see, touch, hear and smell the products they need, and to experience the thrill of making new discoveries, are leading them back into stores — but stores that have modified their environments to provide safe shopping (now a non-negotiable requirement), more immersive browsing experiences, and must-have connected commerce opportunities.

Retailers and brands who can deliver on these three distinct, differentiated needs will be rewarded with aisles of satisfied shoppers in 2022. Those who make it their reason to exist may actually thrive.



5 The Self-Made Work Week

With the world having gone full cycle through the pandemic stages of complete lockdown, flexible at-home working and gradual reopening (with threats of another lockdown ever-looming), work-life balance has become more crucial than ever, with consumers everywhere step-changing their attitudes and reconsidering their work practices.

This change has provided an opportunity to rethink the classic work week in terms of dayparts and even actual days. Organisations across the globe are reevaluating their work-deliverable expectations beyond 9 to 5 and Monday to Friday, entrusting individuals with the freedom to fulfill their responsibilities with, in some cases, extreme fluidity.

This newfound flexibility gives brands and retailers the opportunity to identify and leverage a broader spectrum of solutions for consumers who will need to redefine both their consumption occasions and their shopping behaviour to better fit the new work “week.”



6 More Mindful Eating

One clear macro-outcome of the pandemic has been heightened awareness about the importance of both mealtime and snacking occasions to healthy living and, subsequently, an increased scrutiny of the foods consumed during these ever-prevalent moments.

This focus has inspired deeper thinking around meal preparation and the shopping missions needed to provision appropriately. Snacking, too, has become a less passive consumption behaviour that also requires healthier choices and premeditated shopping intentions. And, escalating this awareness among individuals are social and political pressure around the globe to develop credible, healthier food standards.

With shoppers now consistently choosing healthier eating options, brands and retailers in all related categories must prepare for an expanding wave of front-footed decisioning in 2022 by ensuring they not only have the right messaging but also the right products.



7 QR Code's Day Has Come

Some know that ahead-of-their-time QR (quick response) codes have been around forever (about 25 years to be more accurate). The rest of the world discovered them more recently as their popularity grew concurrently with our increased reliance on mobile technology in daily life.

Growing adoption of QR codes by marketers for commerce-fueled applications is significant in two ways: They provide an intuitive, language-agnostic global standard for triggering next-step action, creating propulsion all the way through the purchase funnel. And, since they don't require any updating on the front end, they let marketers commit to more sophisticated, longer-term shopper experiences that can be fluidly changed on the back end as needed.

With smartphone cameras now simplifying usage for consumers, QR codes give brands and retailers a relatively easy way to have more relevant, evolving and connected communication with increasingly comfortable shoppers.



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