

DO YOU NEED TO ACCELERATE YOUR OMNICHANNEL OFFERING?

Over the past few months our lives have been fundamentally changed as each of us faced our own challenges and experience of COVID-19. One outcome included making digital natives of us all, with even the most technical luddite getting to grips with being an online nation.

This demand for online shopping, collaboration and engagement, coupled with the fundamental necessity for businesses to stay open and protect their customers and workers, has meant digital transformation has become a necessity to survive and indeed support our nation.

These online businesses have been delivering vital services, equipment, sustenance and indeed, joy to us all.

HOW COVID-19 HAS ACCELERATED DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ACROSS OUR SUPPLY CHAIN

The virus didn't put digital transformation on the agenda, but it did force it up the priority list – fast. Supermarkets spun up new e-portals and connected complex supply chains to address demand and alleviate fears of shortages. Counter queues were quickly replaced by QR (quick response) codes that turn your mobile into a personal scanner. Buy online pick up in store (BOPIS) sprung up across the country. What had only been planned for now became reality, and in days and weeks not months or years.

Smaller businesses are also embracing digital platforms to innovate and find unique ways of supplying their customers as high streets remain shut. We have seen an upsurge in localised purchases, with people keen to support their local butcher, florist and pub, taking advantage of the new click and collect services. Farmers markets may have left the village green, however community collaboration is rife with ecosystems of small suppliers pulling together to continue to bring local produce safely to their customers.

SO NOW IT APPEARS WE ALL EXPECT A PERSONALISED OMNICHANNEL EXPERIENCE

As more people start to incorporate online engagement in their lives, the winners will be those that make the experience as easy and frictionless as possible. You will have heard the term omnichannel retail strategy - creating a personalised and fully integrated customer experience that is consistent and seamless across mobile, tablet and physical stores. Indeed, even when in an actual shop, people don't just shop. Price checking, product comparison and reviews on social media all take place within the aisles and that brand experience needs to be consistent from sofa to shop and back again.

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SO, HOW DO YOU BUILD AN OMNICHANNEL STRATEGY?

Each organisation will have their own strategy to get started, tailored to their business, however there are some enduring themes that prove useful to consider.

- **Know your audience and put them at the heart of everything you do:** you need to deliver what your customer wants, when and how they want it. This means putting them in the centre and building products and services around their needs. Do your homework, deep research that means you really get to know them. Don't assume, ask. Understand the different types of people who make up your audience and have empathy for their individual needs.
- **Break down silos - communicate, collaborate and celebrate:** make sure teams work together and clearly communicate common goals and decisions so that everyone understands the key part they play. From sales and marketing through to the development teams, each has a key role in delivering a seamless integrated experience, therefore pulling together means faster, leaner delivery of projects.
- **Drive an agile mindset:** successful digital transformation occurs through continuous innovation. Drive agile development that enables you to launch, learn, and re-launch so that you can adapt and quickly react to changing market conditions and customer needs. Iterate, iterate, iterate.
- **Make data king:** early insights allow you to adapt to market changes, resonate with customers and feedback to your development teams the key themes and customer behaviours that will support innovation of new products, services and ultimately revenue streams. Embed data capture and quality as a core ethos into a master framework that recognises data as a strategic asset from day one.
- **And finally - keep it simple:** with multiple channels to access customers you will only be successful if the quality is consistent across all points of interaction. Prioritise - better to launch one thing right rather than multiple things badly. Focus effort on the customers you want to attract. Be true to your brand values.

In these challenging times, we are seeing the very best in people and the changes we are making today are not only for the short-term but will become the normal expectations of customers in the future. As businesses use digital strategies to adapt and innovate, they will not only survive but will emerge ready to take advantage of new channels to market and the increased customer base this offers them.

DO YOU NEED CHANGE EXPERTISE?

Project One is proud to be working with organisations across the UK and Europe, supporting the delivery of critical services and products and accelerating the digital agenda across many varied and complex supply chains.

If you're interested to hear more about the work that we're doing, please get in touch with:
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