

Retailers' Struggling to Adapt to the Changing Consumer

Theodor PURCĂREA

Abstract

Recent research reconfirmed retailers' struggling to continuously improve the retail shopping experience in brick and mortar stores, balancing the brick and mortar and online presences, including considering the contribution of the click-and-collect services. There is no doubt about retailers' need of better understanding consumer shopping decisions by learning the difference between macro and micro journeys. Going beyond "Amazonification of Commerce", it is worth taking a look at Amazon's valid plans for the future, Walmart's Omni channel push, the expansion of the D2C retail, and merchandising's approach within the significant "Idea to Doorstep" process suggested by FitForCommerce, considering the lessons to learn.

Keywords: Retail Shopping Experience; Click-and-Collect Services; Amazonification of Commerce; D2C Retail; "Idea to Doorstep" Process

JEL Classification: L81, L86, M31, Q55

Shopping in Brick and Mortar Stores. Balancing the Brick and Mortar and Online Presences

Recent research reconfirmed that before exposing consumers to the very forefront of technological development retailers need to adequately approach the in-store basics, getting shelving, inventory, and cleanliness to high standards, so as shoppers to return to brick-and-mortar stores. (Selbie, 2019) According to the ServiceChannel's May 2019 report on the state of Brick and Mortar retail, the majority of U.S. consumers (86%) still make more than half their purchases at physical stores, and many of them (70% of shoppers) had a recent negative CX (52% of shoppers leaving after one bad experience without making a purchase).

At the beginning of September this year Sammy Nickalls, the Departments Editor for the reputed Adweek, made reference to the consumer intelligence company Resonate whose new research (Resonate Insights 2019) also revealed that shopping in Brick and Mortar stores at a regular rate is still commune across all age groups and income levels (beyond the growth in online shopping and direct-to-consumer brands), shoppers caring about: duty (48%), conformity (27%), creativity (23%), influence (19%), dependability (19%), authority (17%). (Nickalls, 2019) Compared to average consumer, these shoppers are: using coupons (11%), shopping at mass merchants (11%), using a prewritten list (10%), making impulse purchases (7%), shopping at a warehouse/club store (7%), buying online and picking up in-store (3%). Resonate's

recommendation for retailers underlines the imperative of further adequately segmenting their audiences and customizing their messaging.

On the other hand, within this framework, we also have to take into account the contribution of the click-and-collect services because of the speed and convenience of the retail shopping experience:

- according to the “2019 Global Shopping Trends: Essential Insights for Retailers survey report” (online survey conducted by iVend Retail with research firm AYTm from December 2018 to January 2019; 2,750 respondents around the world, including both males and females, ages 18+) the main motivators for click and collect/buy online pickup in store (BOPIS) – which experienced an increase in adoption of 30% over last year – were saving money on shipping charges (47.4%) and saving time (44.4%);
- in U.S., because they wanted to get a product in their hands quickly, 59% of Gen Z shoppers ages 18 to 25, surveyed in May 2019 by mailbox tech company Package Concierge, used BOPUS within the past month, while the last-minute shoppers (30% of respondents) used BOPUS because they needed something immediately (as shown in the figure below); (Kats, 2019)



Figure no. 1: What are the most common reasons that US Gen Z Internet users use Buy Online, Pick Up In-Store (BOPUS)

Source: Kats, R. (2019). Gen Zers Are Turning to BOPUS for Instant Gratification, eMarketer, Aug 19 (work cited)

- speed and convenience are also very highly valued by Starbucks' customers, for example (beyond the pickup-only location tested in 2017 at its headquarters in Seattle), Starbucks' inspiration for a store (handling only pickup and delivery orders) in Manhattan, New York City, coming from the Starbucks Now locations operated in China as express pickup locations for customers placing orders on their mobile devices; (Anderson, 2019)
- a further rise in click-and-collect was illustrated also in the case of Back-to-School (BTS) shopping (the second-busiest shopping time of the year in U.S.) by results from ICSC's 2019 BTS survey illustrate a further rise in click-and-collect, confirming the increasing use of click-and-collect benefits Omni-channel retailers; this survey revealed that: 41% of these U.S. shoppers (July 2019) purchased (or said that they will purchase) using BOPUS (see the table below); 68% of BTS shoppers reported that before shopping at a store location for the desired items they do research online (compared to 65% in 2018, and 60% in 2017).

Table no. 1: Shares of BTS Shoppers and Expenditures by Retail Format

Retail format	Percent of BTS shoppers		Percent of total BTS expenditures	
Physical stores	87%	95%	51%	76%
Online from retailers with stores	50%		25%	
.....Ship to home/office	38%		10%	
.....Pick up in store	41%		15%	
Pure online retailers	52%		21%	
.....Amazon	49%		18%	
.....All other pure online retailers	22%		3%	
Other sources	20%		3%	

Source: Early Start to a Promising Back-to-School Shopping Season. Increasing Use of Click-and-Collect Benefits Omni-Channel Retailers, ICSC, Industry Insights, Consumer Series, August 5, 2019 (work cited)

- according to the ForwardPMX's annual Back to School U.S. Trend Report, BOPUS continues to grow in popularity in U.S., and retailers are getting additional foot traffic from BOPUS customers (while being in-store a good percentage of BOPUS customers make another purchase). (Schembri, 2019)

Allow us to underline within this framework that in Romania, at the beginning of the BTS shopping time, Auchan, for instance, launched an invitation to a Back to School mega event (between 6 and 15 September 2019) to meet and to interact with Pilot robots (Meeting sessions with the "Technology of the future", interactive moments with the Robots of the 21st century, 3-5CU, 3-L3-NA și N33-COO; VR glasses; Magic mirror). This made us recall that two years ago, in the Retail 2017 Trend Report of MonarchFx, a Tompkins International Company, was showed, among other aspects, that: *"In November 2016, French supermarket chain Auchan announced that it will trial robots that follow customers in stores, carry, and check out groceries"*. (Marino, 2017)

Better Understanding Consumer Shopping Decisions by Learning the Difference Between Macro and Micro Journeys

In May 2019 Deloitte's representatives attracted the attention on the fact that parameters such as convenience or value are likely to be constantly changing in the mind of a consumer, who is changing because: the environment around him is evolving; of the economic constraints he is operating under and his spending pattern impacted by his income (which it is especially true in the case of the low-income, middle-income, and millennial categories); of the proliferation of competitive options in the market. (Lobaugh et al., 2019) It is also well-known that Deloitte's representatives demonstrated how income determines where people shop, and how income or financial position influences what people purchase. (Lacks Kaplan and Cornfeld, 2019)

At the beginning of August this year the reputed American Marketing Association (AMA) recommended the newest eBook of Luth Research entitled "Macro and Micro Journeys: A Window into Consumer Shopping Decisions", within the context of the *trends driving today's path to purchase (fragmentation of consumer attention, blurring lines between digital and physical, contentions between direct to consumer, mass retailers and the rise of content driven commerce vs. planned shopping)*. Made up of two distinct components (ZQ Macro Journey and ZQ Micro Journey), the so-called ZQ Macro Journey & Micro Journey analysis allows not only to both influence channel and market level players by using macro level insights, and to control micro level insights at retailer level or publisher level and different specific activities, but also to both examine and effect shoppers' touchpoints (the behavioral patterns: of using the macro touchpoints; on a retailer website for a product category), and to measure the magnitude for each consumer activity (ZQ Macro Journey) and to quantify the magnitude of effect for each consumer activity (ZQ Micro Journey).

And with regard to these consumer shopping decisions it is also worth mentioning that:

- according to "The Future of Retail 2019" report of Walker Sands (based on data from a survey conducted in March this year among 1,600 consumers in the U.S.) consumers are buying fewer things because they have become more conscious of keeping a clean organized lifestyle; but they are also purchasing more big-ticket items online, and continuing to shop primarily in brick-and-mortar stores for things like food and other daily necessities; (Nanji, 2019)
- as revealed in an article published on September 12 this year by SteelHouse (an AI-driven, self-service advertising software company for brands of all sizes) shoppers' excitement for Black Friday and Cyber Monday is dispersing into the rest of the week (Cyber Week), making them buying everything on their shopping lists (not only the gifts) considering this period of time as being the best to get a deal;
- as shown by eMarketer, social shopping is made fun and engaging by discovery (as is reasonable brands wanting to convert that excitement into action), (Kats, 2019) while after they click "buy now" shoppers expect almost immediate delivery (CX being really influenced by the delivery speed); (Koch, 2019)

- according to the multi-phase study “The Great Divide” launched by Alliance Data’s Analytics & Insights Institute, “Digital First” consumers are more open to trying new technology and prefer to engage with brands over digital channels (via website, email, app, text, social, or online display ads), shopping online frequently, and tending to shop more frequently, their view of the store appearing to be very purpose-driven, convenience and ease being more important to them than other consumers (they don’t want a situation causing difficulty or trouble in store, which has to be as easy to shop as the site or app);
- results from a June 2019 study of Pymnts.com and LISNR revealed recently (August 2019) why US mobile app users (ages 18+) aren’t interested in downloading shopping apps: too many apps on their mobile device (46.3%), data security concern (34%), no features of interest (22,6%), unappealing coupons (18,8%), difficult to use (13,6%); and this while the most convincing features to download merchants’ apps were as follows: coupons or deals (87,6%), loyalty/rewards programs (79,7%), product search features (56,7%), reviews and ratings (44,9%), wish lists or registries (40,7%), lower fraud potential (36,1%), payment options (32,1%), product recommendations (25,2%). (Lipsman, 2019)

And the last but not the least, as it is known that 96% of customers don’t buy an item on their first search or visit to a site (as confirmed recently by Mark Irvine, Director of Strategic Partnerships at search marketing company WordStream), marketers are challenged to also understand how these customers’ later decisions and journeys are influenced by ads. (Lacy, 2019) For instance, in order to help Amazon’s advertisers better understand the impact of their spend on consumer behavior the Internet giant is developing clean room technology (in a privacy-centric way, such a clean room allows platforms and brands to combine, analyze and attribute aggregated first-party data and platform-side audience data), as AdExchanger first reported.

Beyond “Amazonification of Commerce”

Two years ago, while approaching the topic of “Amazonification of Commerce”, Bruce Tompkins, COO, MonarchFx, argued that: (Tompkins, 2017) *“Amazon seems to know what to do and how to do it before it becomes clear to the market... Amazon continues to lead the marketplace with innovations, new approaches to sell products, and satisfy consumers. It is that relentless drive to satisfy and even exceed expectations that pushes them to the next good idea. Amazon is also highly focused on their supply chain and rapid fulfillment of consumers’ orders... Research indicates that Amazon has roughly 300 fulfillment operations with 39 more on the way. This distribution network fuels their growth by giving today’s consumers what they want, when they want it. Amazon is utilizing the network effect to leverage supply chain assets to their fullest and get economies of scale no one company can match... Expect private label products to continue to be a focus for Amazon... Grocery is a major category for Amazon’s future. They will extend their reach in online grocery, using Whole Foods as a starting point for other grocery initiatives... As well as being a product company, Amazon is a technology company... We believe*

they will continue to push the boundaries of what is possible to optimize their supply chains, operations, and transportation, reducing the cost of service and delivery speed”...

As it was recently reconfirmed, Amazon has valid plans for the future, continuing to succeed in spite of the constant market change:

- Amazon is continuing experimenting to attract social media influencers and their followers, see for instance Rihanna’s (Rihanna has 93 million Twitter followers) second Savage X Fenty lingerie show (streamed exclusively on Amazon Prime Video globally); (McLeester, 2019) on the other hand, it is also interesting to note that in July this year Abe Eshkenazi, the CEO of the Association for Supply Chain Management (ASCM), made reference to: Amazon’s annual global shopping extravaganza, Prime Day, a sales event (exclusive to Prime members) featuring lightning deals which last only until items sell out; Amazon’s human capital management policy with regard to help its workers gain new skills within the context in which the new technologies are transforming the workplace (citing an article written for “The Wall Street Journal”). (Eshkenazi, 2019)
- The e-commerce giant is supporting its growth by powering a smart revolution with regard to smart homes (in partnership with one of the largest home construction and real estate companies in the U.S., Lennar – using built-in smart home capabilities powered by Alexa, and showcasing a smart home experience through the intermediary of model homes outfitted with Alexa-activated technology), smart offices and smart buildings (with the help: of in 2017 launched Alexa for Business, and also of its cloud computing platform AWS; its partnership with the largest residential real estate services company in the US., Realogy – thanks to Amazon’s TurnKey initiative, a home buying program allowing using its smart home products and Amazon Home Services within this partnership). (CB Insights, 2019) With on Amazon site DIY tiny-home kits offered by sellers (capitalizing on the tiny-house movement), Amazon is also preparing to both venture into prefabrication and modular construction (by partnering with well-known investors), and to its future incursion into building actual homes.

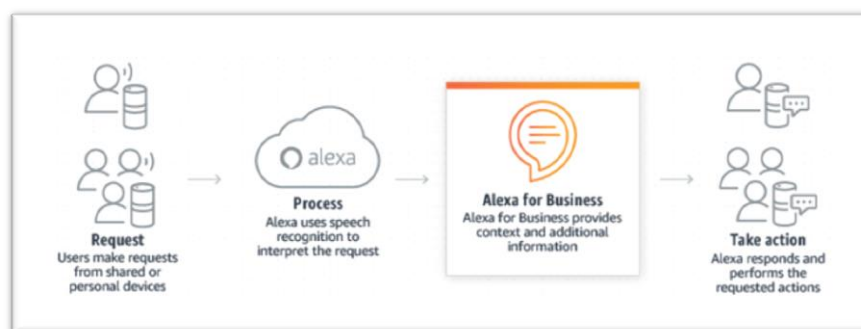


Figure no. 2: Organizations can choose among thousands of Alexa “skills”

Source: It’s Not Just Your Smart Speaker. How Amazon Is Coming For The \$50T+ Commercial and Residential Real Estate Industries, CB Insights, August 29, 2019 (work cited)

- Amazon (whose involvement in financial services it is well-known, see the figure below) is intending to launch in the coming months a biometric payment method to Whole Foods (for the beginning at a few stores), the use of this technology tested currently internally opening the perspective of bundling the hand-scanning payment method with Omni channel sales management tools, which could impact on consumers' conviction of starting using biometric payments (as consumers are shopping for groceries regularly), of course bringing clarity with regard to data privacy and security. (Keyes, 2019)

AMAZON IN FINANCIAL SERVICES				
	amazon pay	amazon cash	reload	amazon Lending
Launch	2007	2017	2017	2012
Functionality	Online buy button/digital wallet	Prepaid barcode that can be reloaded with cash to be used for Amazon purchases	2% cash back rewards program for Prime members	Business loans for Amazon sellers
Accessibility	- Amazon.com - Other e-commerce sites - In-store in India	Reload locations: 7-Eleven, Coinstar, CVS, GameStop, Canada - Canada Post - OXXO in Mexico	Reload balance through debit card or bank account	Apply online
Source: Amazon, TechCrunch				

Figure no. 3: Amazon in financial services

Source: Amazon, TechCrunch, cited by Keyes, D. (2019). Amazon is planning to bring a biometric payment method to Whole Foods, Business Insider Intelligence, Sep. 5 (work cited)

Walmart's Omni channel push while taking redundant costs out of the system

by integrating its supply chain and finance teams for walmart.com and its stores

In full battle with Amazon, Walmart is continuing improving its performance online and in stores, confirming its struggling to ensure their customers one seamless CX, context in which RetailWire launched recently a very challenging question for the traditional debate: *"Will Walmart have more success creating consumer direct brands than acquiring them?"* (Anderson, 2019) Within this framework, Walmart's focus to developing its own digitally native brands (by turning away from looking for acquisitions, within its well-known history: Bonobos, Jet.com, ModCloth, Eloquii etc.) was underlined from the very beginning, being cited not only Mr. Marc Lore, the person responsible for leading Walmart's e-commerce operations in the U.S. (who made reference in an interview with Recode to the success of the mattress brand "Allswell" created by Walmart to compete in the bed-in-the-box category), but also Walmart's CEO Doug McMillon (who wrote in an employee memo about Walmart's strategy). Significant comments were made within this RetailWire's debate, including supporting the idea of creating consumer direct brands: Walmart's private label ambitions will be made successful by the mix of value and quality, considering the benefits reaped by its digital native brands acquisition spree (according

to Brandon Rael, Director, Alvarez & Marsal); winning retailers will shift among the strategies of buying, building or bridging (retail's central question) when it makes sense (Carol Spieckerman, President, Spieckerman Retail); the out-brand idea testing by Walmart it was a valid attempt, being a valuable learning (Lee Peterson, EVP Thought Leadership, Marketing, WD Partners).

The Expansion of the Direct To Consumer Retail

There is no doubt about the companies' need to integrate the transactional data from all their channels in order to improve the end-to-end customer journey, a significant role within this framework being played also by the direct and authentic engagement with their customers through the intermediary of the DTC model as part of the revenue mix, knowing that engaging with consumers on an ongoing basis being necessary no matter if companies are investing in Direct To Consumer (DTC or D2C) or not. We are witnessing an expansion of the companies' DTC channels, of the brands planning to open their own retail shops and invest in their mobile and e-commerce sites, this direct sales strategy becoming critical taking into account not only that consumers are demanding a better CX, but also the double opportunity of building a better brand relationship with customers, and of collecting customer data using this way. (Hopwood, 2019) On the other hand, this is also an opportunity for a startup D2C brand (considering the relatively low barriers to enter the market), but it is crucial to have a good strategy in place (considering the competition against the retail giants). And in order to get started in D2C it is recommendable, for example, to: *identify an everyday item, making it affordable; focus the product and marketing efforts on customer's pain points; develop a subscription-based model; simplify choice; take a content-first approach, then ask customers to make content; offer easy, no-fee returns; make use of celebrity influencers; incentivize your customers to spread the word; create a viral video; create a virtualize experience; use micro influencers; implement an aggressive SEO campaign; disrupt social media with infographics and memes; deliver on end-to-end CX; start or join a community; Facebook marketing; Instagram and YouTube ads; utilize fulfillment companies; go headless and reach consumers everywhere.* (Core dna, 2019)

Very recently, CB Insights analyzed some of the biggest D2C success stories and concluded with regard to the future of retail that despite the continuous dominance over traditional retail by Amazon, Facebook and Google, there is still an open playing field for entrepreneurs (such as: Casper, Bonobos, Harry's, Allbirds, BarkBox, Chubbies, Bombas, Glossier, The Honest Company, Soylent, Dollar Shave Club, Warby Parker, MVMT, Everlane,) with ideas for products (and ready to build new, powerful retail brands) wanted to be used by people. CB Insights showed, among other aspects, how D2C companies (which manufacture and ship their products directly to buyers) sell their products at lower costs than traditional consumer brands (maintaining end-to-end control over the making, marketing, and distribution of their products), open pop-up shops by partnering with physical retailers, rethinking both the product, and the retail model (CB Insights identified four broad areas of this rethinking approach: in design, how they launch, the build CX, and the way of marketing themselves).

Better Understanding Merchandising Within the “Idea to Doorstep” Process

A FitForCommerce Report – entitled “FROM IDEA TO DOORSTEP 2019: Everything you need to know to achieve digital commerce success. Retrieved from FitForCommerce-Report-From_Idea_to_Doorstep-2019” – highlighted the need of traditional retail to both improve use of data, and to put a greater focus on connecting and blending in-store and digital experiences, considering that the so-called “Idea to Doorstep” process (see the figure below) is no longer linear, like the path-to-purchase. FitForCommerce recommends traditional retailers to both introduce new digital in-store technologies bridging online and in-store shopping experiences, and to provide better training and tools for store associates (so as to ensure better and more personalized customer assistance, enhancing the shopping experience, engaging and guiding shoppers by using customer data insights, inventory visibility, and access to merchandising content), meeting this way today’s digitally-savvy shoppers’ expectations. Within this framework they also insisted on other aspects such as retailers’ need: of reducing shopper frustration with line busting (waiting in long lines being known as the biggest frustration with shopping in physical retail stores): Self-checkout, Mobile POS, Pre-order online, Scan & Go (Amazon Go), Pay in App; of driving traffic to stores and elevate in-store experiences by better understanding how their customers are using mobile devices (looking up info, comparing pricing, checking reviews, getting advice from friends etc.), building programs accordingly (including by going beyond digital signage, touchscreens, kiosks etc. and trying to experiment with interactive and intelligent mirrors, digital pricing, robots, and VR/AR applications).



Figure no. 3: FROM IDEA TO DOORSTEP process

Source: FROM IDEA TO DOORSTEP 2019: Everything you need to know to achieve digital commerce success. Retrieved from FitForCommerce-Report-From_Idea_to_Doorstep-2019 (work cited)

From the very beginning this significant FitForCommerce Report attracted the attention, among other aspects, on retailers' need of identifying the right tools (Product Assortment Management, Product Content Management, Advanced Analytics Platforms, Catalog Management / Taxonomy, Searchandising, Product Recommendations, Algorithm-Driven Recommendations, E-Gifting, Competitive Pricing & Promotions, Price Optimization) to optimize their merchandising, of how to develop a differentiated merchandising strategy, and of how can data help inform their merchandising strategy.

Instead of Conclusions

Last year in March we noted that according to Deloitte, retailers are facing the so-called “the great retail bifurcation”, they needing to focus on either the luxury end of the market or on the bargain-basement end in order to succeed (because being in the middle means falling away). And as underlined by the Swinburne University of Technology's representatives: *“Arguably, the discount and premium retailers having success also happen to be stores, brands and categories more resistant to what's going on in e-commerce”*. (Pallant and Sands, 2019) In Deloitte's view, that change in the retail market is not the retail apocalypse: *“it is instead a renaissance—driven by huge shifts in economics, competition, and consumer access to options, all fueled by exponential advancement in technology. And in this renaissance, the winners appear to be those retailers that can capitalize on consumers' experiences of their economic well-being—or lack thereof—to offer a value proposition that aligns with consumer needs”*. (Lobaugh et al., 2018)

In the last two years, we showed among other aspects: how Amazon is putting more pressure on traditional retail than ever, how retailers are focusing on improving their stores' merchandising, their stores' value proposition, enhancing Omni channel CX, preventing friction in their customers' journey, making distinction between the initial consideration and the final consideration, having actionable data (pre-store, in-store, and post-store); (Purcarea, 2017) the evolution of better understanding, for instance, the reasons to implement AI-backed conversational commerce into the retail strategy, the need of further reinvention and modernizing of the retail business by new technologies, and the powerful link between emotion and CX and loyalty; (Purcarea, 2018) retailers' challenge of considering both marketing's hidden treasure of CPG companies, and the entrance of Amazon into grocers' industry and its true technological battle with Walmart, and retailers' imperative of creating a digitally connected environment, including by seeing shoppers as “Blue Dot” consumers, empowering both employees and customers, and continuously improving retailers' capabilities associated with customer engagement and their predictive and intelligent marketing capabilities; (Purcarea, 2018) how significant is the smartphones' role in improving the retail CX is rising within the constant disruption and transformation, retailers recognizing their need for harmonizing the digital environment with the in-store environment is clearly, improving the shopping experience accordingly, and ensuring this way the retail renaissance, including by considering mobile and artificial intelligence as disruptive forces in retail, and also taking into account the renewed interest in retail apps; (Purcarea, 2018) how retailers are rethinking CX within the new

imperative for customer obsession, within the context in which digital transformation, new shopping behaviors and values, Omni experience, in-store personalization, and retail's convergence are some of the current topics in retailers' discussion; (Purcarea, 2019) how retailers need to look carefully at Amazon's involvement in U.S. grocery ecommerce's fierce competition with Walmart, Kroger etc., a competition which stimulates the innovation, and how necessary is for retailers to prepare for the impact of automation and AI technologies across all core functions, taking into account the workforce implications and the shopping tendencies defined by generational gaps, the shopper behavior being reinvented by the digital revolution, and context in which the next-generation retail merchandising will be driven by analytics and digital. (Purcarea, 2019)

All these aspects mentioned above made us recall:

- another question launched at the end of July this year within the traditional RetailWire's debate: *"Has Amazon 'destroyed the retail industry' in the U.S.?"* Some comments drew our attention: the retail industry is pushed by Amazon in new directions, retailers being caused to compete accordingly (according to Mark Ryski, Founder, CEO & Author, HeadCount Corporation); compared to Amazon's stake in the U.S. market Alibaba has a much more significant hold on the Chinese retail economy... *"the retail competitive landscape is alive and well, with Walmart going head to head with Amazon, retailers evolving and adapting, along with DTC brands opening physical showrooms at a record rate"* (Brandon Rael, Strategy & Operations Leader, Retail Strategist, Trusted Advisor); *"Competitors do not put companies out of business, customers do"* (Richard J. George, Ph.D., Professor of Food Marketing, Haub School of Business, Saint Joseph's University); *"Retail is about birth, life, death and compost. The biggest threat to modern retail has been the distance between the decision makers and the changing customer..."* (Paco Underhill, CEO of Envirosell Inc., Speaker, NY Times Best-Selling Author). (Anderson, 2019)
- the recommendations made at the end of July 2019 by McKinsey's representatives (on the basis on their analysis of 2018 data) with regard to the actions retailers should take for this year's holiday season if they want to drive sales increases and be competitive with Amazon, by starting in advance with a laser focus on digital execution: *to focus on Black Friday for holiday planning; to plan for a strong and sustained holiday strategy which starts earlier in November and extends through December; to raise the bar on convenient shipping and fulfillment; to ensure perfect execution.* (Huang et al., 2019)

Allow us finally to express the opinion that retailers (and not only) also need to think about the well-known quote of Henry Ford: "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses".

Anderson, G. (2019). Starbucks developing new store dedicated to pickup and delivery orders, RetailWire, Sep 06. Retrieved from <https://www.retailwire.com/discussion/starbucks-developing-new-store-dedicated-to-pickup-and-delivery-orders/>

Anderson, G. (2019). Will Walmart have more success creating consumer direct brands than acquiring them? RetailWire, Sep 11. Retrieved from <https://www.retailwire.com/discussion/will-walmart-have-more-success-creating-consumer-direct-brands-than-acquiring-them/>

Anderson, G. (2019). Has Amazon 'destroyed the retail industry' in the U.S.? RetailWire, Jul 25. Retrieved from <https://www.retailwire.com/discussion/has-amazon-destroyed-the-retail-industry-in-the-u-s/>

Eshkenazi, A. (2019). Amazon Invests in Potential, Association for Supply Chain Management, July 19. Retrieved from <https://www.ascm.org/ascm-insights/amazon-invests-in-potential/>

Hopwood, C. (2019). Why Direct to Consumer Is Becoming an Important Retail Channel, Vision Critical, April 10. Retrieved from <https://www.visioncritical.com/blog/direct-to-consumer-marketing-channel>

Huang, J., Kohli, S. and Robinson, K. (2019). How lessons from the record-breaking 2018 holiday season can inform retailers' 2019 strategy, McKinsey & Company, July. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/how-lessons-from-the-record-breaking-2018-holiday-season-can-inform-retailers-2019-strategy>

Kats, R. (2019). Gen Zers Are Turning to BOPUS for Instant Gratification, eMarketer, Aug 19. Retrieved from <https://www.emarketer.com/content/gen-zers-are-turning-to-bopus-for-instant-gratification?>

Kats, R. (2019). Consumers Are Influenced by Brands on Social, eMarketer, Sep 10. Retrieved from <https://www.emarketer.com/content/consumers-are-influenced-by-brands-on-social?>

Keyes, D. (2019). Amazon is planning to bring a biometric payment method to Whole Foods, Business Insider Intelligence, Sep. 5. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-bringing-biometric-payments-to-whole-foods-2019-9?>

Koch, L. (2019). Delivery Speed Can Make or Break a Customer Experience, eMarketer, Aug 25. Retrieved from <https://www.emarketer.com/content/delivery-speed-can-make-or-break-a-customer-experience?>

Lacks Kaplan, J., Cornfeld, S. (2019). The consumer products bifurcation Opportunities to accelerate growth and "future proof" in the face of a potential recession, Deloitte, 24 April. Retrieved from <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/retail-distribution/disruption-consumer-products-industry-bifurcation.html>

Lacy, L. (2019). What a Clean Room Means for Amazon Advertising, Adweek, September 2. Retrieved from <https://www.adweek.com/digital/what-a-clean-room-means-for-amazon-advertising/?>

Lipsman, A. (2019). Why Your Retail App Isn't on Customers' Phones, and What to Do About It Before the Holidays, eMarketer, Sep 13. Retrieved from <https://www.emarketer.com/content/why-your-retail-app-isn-t-on-customers-phones-and-what-to-do-about-it-before-the-holidays?>

Lobaugh, K.M., Stephens, B., Simpson, J. (2019). The consumer is changing, but perhaps not how you think. A swirl of economic and marketplace dynamics is influencing consumer behavior, Deloitte, 29 May. Retrieved from <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/retail-distribution/the-consumer-is-changing.html?>

Lobaugh, K.M., Bieniek, C., Stephens, B., Pincha, P. (2018). The great retail bifurcation Why the retail "apocalypse" is really a renaissance, Deloitte, 14 March. Retrieved from <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/retail-distribution/future-of-retail-renaissance-apocalypse.html>

Marino, N. (2017). Retail 2017 Trend Report, MonarchFx. Retrieved from <https://www.monarchfxgo.com/Insight/Articles/Retail-2017-Trend-Report>

McLeester, C. (2019). Rihanna and Amazon — Marketing Perfectly Together, Target Marketing , September 3, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.targetmarketingmag.com/post/rihanna-and-amazon-marketing-perfectly-together/>

Nanji, A. (2019). Shopping in 2019: Online and In-Store Retail Trends, MarketingProfs, August 14. Retrieved from <https://www.marketingprofs.com/charts/2019/41633/shopping-in-2019-online-and-in-store-retail-trends?>

Nickalls, E (2019). Infographic: What Brick-and-Mortar Shoppers Care About Most, Adweek, Data Points, September 2. Retrieved from <https://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/infographic-what-brick-and-mortar-shoppers-care-about-most/?>

Pallant, J. and Sands, S. (2019). "Death of the department store: don't just blame the internet, it's the dwindling middle class", The Marketing Journal, August 7. Retrieved from <http://www.marketingjournal.org/death-of-the-department-store-dont-just-blame-the-internet-its-the-dwindling-middle-class-jason-pallant-and-sean-sands/>

Purcarea, T. (2017). Competing, Connecting, and Winning in Today's Distribution and Merchandising, Romanian Distribution Committee Magazine, Volume 8, Issue 4, December, pp. 30-39

Purcarea, T. (2018). Conversational Commerce, New Marketing Tactics, CX, Loyalty and Emotions, Romanian Distribution Committee Magazine, Volume 9, Issue 1, March, pp. 30-39

Purcarea, T. (2018). Retail digital marketing strategies, Romanian Distribution Committee Magazine, Volume 9, Issue 2, June, pp. 30-40

Purcarea, T. (2018). The Future of Retail Impacted by the Smart Phygital Era, Romanian Distribution Committee Magazine, Volume 9, Issue 3, September, pp. 34-46

Purcarea, T. (2019). Retailers' Current Topics in Discussion, Romanian Distribution Committee Magazine, Volume 10, Issue 1, March, pp. 38-46

Purcarea, T. (2019). Retailers' Reinvention in Harmony with the Shopping Tendencies, Romanian Distribution Committee Magazine, Volume 10, Issue 2, June, pp. 36-46

Schembri, K. (2019). The Top 10 Tips for Optimizing Your Marketing Strategy this Back to School Season, ForwardPMX, July 17. Retrieved from <https://www.forwardpmx.com/insights/blog/the-top-10-tips-for-optimizing-your-marketing-strategy-this-back-to-school-season/>

Selbie, M. (2019). Low Operating Standards Causes High Retail Defection, Customer Experience Update, Sep 7. Retrieved from <https://www.customerexperienceupdate.com/edition/daily-feedback-consumers-2019-09-07?>

Tompkins, B. (2017). Amazonification of Commerce, MonarchFx. Retrieved from <https://www.monarchfxgo.com/Insight/Articles/Amazonification-of-Commerce>

*** New Report Reveals Significant Changes in Consumer Shopping Trends, iVend Retail, New York, February 19, 2019. Retrieved from <https://ivend.com/new-report-reveals-significant-changes-in-consumer-shopping-trends/>

*** Early Start to a Promising Back-to-School Shopping Season. Increasing Use of Click-and-Collect Benefits Omni-Channel Retailers, ICSC, Industry Insights, Consumer Series, August 5, 2019. Retrieved from https://www.icsc.com/uploads/t07-subpage/Back_To_School_2019_Consumer_Series.pdf

*** Auchan te invită la un mega eveniment Back to School! 4.09.2019. Retrieved from <https://romania.auchan.ro/auchan-te-invita-la-un-mega-eveniment-back-to-school/>

*** Macro and Micro Journeys: A Window into Consumer Shopping Decisions, Luth Research, AMA, August 5, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.ama.org/2019/08/05/macro-and-micro-journeys-a-window-into-consumer-shopping-decisions/>

*** MacroMicroJourney_ebook-062519_final

*** Beyond Black Friday: How to Build Revenue-Driving Holiday Campaigns, SteelHouse, September 12, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2019/41807/beyond-black-friday-how-to-build-revenue-driving-holiday-campaigns?>

*** What it means to be Digital First. Connecting to the Digital First consumer and their changing needs, Digital First_AllianceData, August 22, 2019. Retrieved from <https://knowmoresellmore.com/insights-news/what-it-means-be-digital-first>

*** It's Not Just Your Smart Speaker. How Amazon Is Coming For The \$50T+ Commercial and Residential Real Estate Industries, CB Insights, August 29, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.cbinsights.com/research/amazon-real-estate/?>

*** Direct-to-Consumer (D2C): 21 Ways to Get Started in 2019, Core dna, Dennis, eCommerce, Sep 10, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.coredna.com/blogs/direct-to-consumer>

*** We Analyzed 14 Of The Biggest Direct-to-Consumer Success Stories To Figure Out The Secrets To Their Growth — Here's What We Learned, CB Insights, September 19, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.cbinsights.com/research/direct-to-consumer-retail-strategies/?>

*** FROM IDEA TO DOORSTEP 2019: Everything you need to know to achieve digital commerce success. Retrieved from [FitForCommerce-Report-From_Idea_to_Doorstep-2019](#)