Point of sale just takes too long

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Retailers should implement a headless framework to gain control of their digital and in-store commerce stack and meet customer expectations

Before the pandemic, competitive threats and shifting buyer behaviours challenged retailers who were dependent on robust but constrained legacy store systems, including point of sale (POS). However, when the pandemic forced POS to go from traditional in-store queues to the kerb, the doorstep and beyond, only the largest retail innovators were equipped to respond. Why? These innovators were armed with years of technology proof points from testing, learning and iterating that guided their response to customers.

What can those without years of experimentation to lean on glean from examining these leaders' strategies? Possibly the most important insight is that customers don't wait for a legacy response to digital expectations. Instead, retailers win by creating experiences that align brand strategy with customers' fast-evolving preferences.

While underlying commerce functions such as building the basket, calculations and adjustments are critical to completing transactions, they don't generate digital value. Leaders like US-based supermarket chain Kroger take digital market share by embracing a headless framework that gives them full control of their digital and store commerce stack and enables them to curate every customer engagement. By adopting a retail framework's single commerce engine, retailers can build uninterrupted journeys that include the store, online, consumer devices and more. This control eliminates the constraints of tightly coupled legacy functions by enabling retailers to extend experiences without disturbing the legacy footprint until they are ready. Since winning in today's highly competitive market is dependent on how fast a retail team can test an idea, learn, iterate and then scale the final solution, giving control to the digital experience teams is now a critical differentiator.

To date, the high cost of test and learn at scale has challenged the broader market to remain competitive on the same field as the leaders. These player now have a powerful opportunity to now reallocate investments that would have been used to extend legacy systems, like POS, and instead arm their teams with a headless retail framework that delivers relevant digital experiences without legacy disruption. From there, they can execute viable, hands-on proof of concepts to confirm the value of every investment in the context of their unique business challenges.

Retailers who are not yet convinced it's time to act should look at how digital leaders achieving massive gains in this segment are benefitting from the incrementality of this revenue stream. Unless retailers take action now, these digital leaders will continue taking the market share without looking back. ∎

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