

## Delivering the Boutique Experience for Your Brand





Shoppers gravitate to the big brand experience for a variety of reasons including being enamored by the attractive merchandise, the breadth of inventory, the easy accessibility through multiple channels, and the appealing pricing.

Shoppers who frequent smaller, boutique shops are also attracted to the merchandise, but they value the knowledgeable, consistent, personalized shopping experience that they have come to expect from the shop owner who knows what they like, knows exactly what inventory is available at what price, and can suggest complimentary items to complete a look right on the spot.

The obvious evolution is to take the best of both to create the ultimate hybrid shopping experience. The concept of providing a personalized, informed, consistent experience to the customer has been a glimmer in the multichannel retailers' eyes for some time but has remained out of reach for most.

With the never-ending introduction of technology that allows customers to take greater control of their shopping experience and with the proliferation of channels to market, it might seem like a more daunting feat than ever before. But actually, this very shift in behaviors, technology, and channels makes the new hybrid experience a reality.

### **Today's Cross-Channel Shopping Behavior**

The days of single-channel shopping, from start to finish, are quickly being replaced by multichannel hopping. While this adds complexity to the selling process, it actually can be good news for the bottom line.

It is well known within the retail industry that cross-channel shoppers are significantly more valuable than single-channel shoppers with estimates ranging in increased profitability from as much as 30 to over 80%. According to research presented by business advisory firm Deloitte in December 2010, multi-channel consumers spend 82% more per transaction than a customer who only shops in store.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Deloitte.com [Website] accessed May 2012 [http://www.deloitte.com/view/en\\_GB/uk/industries/consumer-business/857689e24cacc210VgnVCM3000001c56f00aRCRD.htm](http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_GB/uk/industries/consumer-business/857689e24cacc210VgnVCM3000001c56f00aRCRD.htm)



Based on the Retail Systems Research (RSR) 2010 benchmark report, these shoppers are more valuable for many reasons. They have greater access to products. They feel a deeper affinity for retailers willing to “go with their flow.” And, with a cross-channel platform in place, retailers can get more creative about targeting and engaging these customers with personalized promotions. The net result is more profit than what’s captured by retailers ignoring the cross-channel imperative.

Attracting and keeping this profit-multiplying customer engaged and satisfied requires the ability to provide a boutique experience across all touch points—a seamless transition between online, call center, and in-store channels—and for the customer to feel that they have remained in control of the shopping experience.

This shopper is likely to initiate their shopping experience by first conducting research on the web (referred to as pre-tailing) to check out new products, color and style trends, product reviews, and price comparisons. Further influencing information might be acquired by contacting their social networks for insight on purchases being considered. As the shopper moves closer to making a decision to buy, they might call customer service to find where the merchandise can be found locally, especially if they are concerned about verifying fit and color trueness or want to avoid shipping charges.

This kind of shopping is exactly where the cross-channel ecosystem has a chance to champion the sale or fail miserably. When your call center takes the customer call, are they aware of what that person has done to date and that the buying process is already in play? If the sale is completed during the call or later completed in-store, will your ecommerce site still be emailing the customer about an abandoned shopping cart?

### **Marrying the Small Shop and Big Brand Experience**

In order to deliver a consistent boutique experience across all channels, retailers need to address the inherent cultural barriers, evolve the infrastructure, and tap into customer behavior and brand interaction in its totality.

#### ***Addressing Cross-Channel Cultural Barriers***

Delivering a consistent experience across channels from the shopper perspective is a daunting task operationally, technically, and even culturally. A consistent experience



requires retailers to stop managing each channel as if it is a country unto itself and start thinking of these channels as integral, interdependent parts of an ecosystem.

Today's retailer mode of operation is often based on different systems, processes, and people for the various channels, which can include any combination of

- ecommerce
- call centers
- brick and mortar stores
- mobile devices
- social networks

As a result, there are inherent cultural barriers to operating as a cohesive cross-channel ecosystem, such as how the various channels receive credit for sales or how individuals are compensated for those sales. This challenge frequently occurs when a customer wants to research a product online and then purchase in a store.

To develop a cohesive operating environment, retailers need to make changes in their compensation plan that encourage cross-channel selling and, in turn, make it easier and more organic from the customer's buying perspective.

### ***Evolving the Infrastructure for a Single View of the Customer***

With today's infrastructure, getting a brand-wide campaign to execute consistently can require a lot elaborate rituals to get everyone to agree to each component and how it is going to be managed within each channel application.

Even if this first hurdle is cleared, IT might still put a stop to it, declaring that it is simply not feasible to run multiple applications to accommodate each channel team within the planned promotional time frame. With all these limitations, agile is likely the last word to be used to describe the ability to execute on the brand promise.

For operational efficiency and holistic customer behavior visibility, data must be taken from the in-store point-of-sales system, the call center, and the web. This data collection involves massive integration and data mining.



The data must be reconciled to identify duplicates in name capture for each customer to accommodate changes in spelling, additions of initials, and abbreviations. Trying to do this with legacy systems is cumbersome.

To make this exercise feasible, scalable, and adaptable to ongoing change, multichannel retailers need to move to a single platform that can provide all channels with the following information:

- Customer data
- Catalog data
- Marketing data
- Customer behavior analytics

With a single platform, retailers can now create one customer profile that can be leveraged across a single-core commerce application.

A single platform also enables a single catalog that can be loaded once and leveraged across channels when executing a campaign.

The evolved infrastructure provides a holistic view of customer behavior and enables valuable conversations so that retailers

- Know whom they are talking to.
- Can easily identify the loyal customer.
- Can personalize the interaction.
- Offer what the customer most cares about.

### Enabling the Hybrid Shopping Experience

CrossView's Cross-Channel Commerce, built on IBM WebSphere Commerce and IBM Coremetrics Web Analytics, provides a single view of customers and the company across all channels.

Leveraging prebuilt features and plug-ins based on over 15 years in the cross-channel commerce space, the solution simplifies the development and deployment of new channel capabilities while delivering a unified and integrated experience across all customer touch points.



Key features that enable the boutique experience include the following:

- **Mobile Point-of-Sale (POS)**  
This in-store sales tool brings social content into the aisles by providing views into online product reviews to sales personnel, which allows them to influence conversion. The tool also allows personnel to check store inventory and process credit card transactions on the spot to supplement cash stations.
- **Call Center Integration**  
The customer care center integrates insight from multiple customer touch points for the often-ignored call center channel. With a single view into a customer's orders and shopping activity as well as the retailer's inventory, pricing, promotions, and marketing activities, customer care employees are ready to pick up and complete transactions started elsewhere.
- **User-Based Marketing Management**  
Management of cross-channel activities can be handled by anyone in the business—from IT to Sales to Marketing—to deploy website content, images, marketing promotions, and programs. The resulting pages are search engine friendly and fully optimized for all major Internet search engines to drive traffic to the site.

An integrated cross-channel platform allows organizations to transform from disparate integrated silos to merged channels. The ability to leverage integrations and manage operational information across all channels with a single integration drives down maintenance costs and reduces time-to-market for updates.

Marketers benefit from state-of-the-art analytics and from comparative benchmarks from their peer group and knowledge of how the best performers are actually achieving their successes. Retailers can execute precision marketing tactics based on real-time customer life cycle interactions across all retail touch points.

**For more information on how you can deliver the boutique experience across all touch points, contact:**

John Kulawiak  
CrossView Vice President of Sales  
Jkulawiak@crossview.com  
(216) 926-1888



## About CrossView

CrossView is a premier provider of cross-channel commerce solutions and services that enable a smarter, more personalized shopping experience. Our software is used by leading brands to unify the Web, stores, call centers, mobile devices, and other channels on a single, flexible platform. This Cross-Channel Commerce Platform empowers consumers to shift seamlessly between sales channels, and creates a consistent buying and brand experience. Advanced analytics integrated across the platform deliver intelligence and visibility into buying behaviors across all sales channels. CrossView enables clients to transform insight into action – in realtime. To learn more about CrossView, visit [www.crossview.com](http://www.crossview.com).



## About IBM Smarter Commerce

IBM brings a wealth of experience, leading solutions and platforms to drive smarter commerce for business. The company maximizes clients' investments by offering solutions in a modular approach to address key challenges today and into the future, with a full spectrum of strategy and implementation services, superior technical support and comprehensive educational offerings to ensure success.

### IBM Corporation

3565 Harbor Boulevard  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626-1420  
USA

For more information, visit:

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3565 Harbor Boulevard  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626-1420  
USA

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