

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Ecommerce Trends



Spotlight On... Ecommerce Trends

Consumer behaviour has been shifting online for many years, driving retailers of all kinds increasingly towards digital platforms and touchpoints, as well as opening ecommerce up as a channel to an even greater range of organisations who may not previously have operated in the space.

Today, consumers expect to be able to access and acquire products and services when, where and how they want to - requiring an ecommerce experience that:

- Is easy to use and trustworthy
- Offers a wide range of competitively-priced products
- Provides a seamless journey from purchase to fulfilment

In this ebook we'll take a closer look at the major trends and opportunities in the ecommerce space right now - exploring how these will shape the future of online shopping experiences as well as digital strategies and business models, to maintain pace with the rapid rate of change.



Consumer behaviour has been shifting online for many years, driving retailers of all kinds increasingly towards digital platforms and touchpoints.



EBOOK | SPOTLIGHT ON ECOMMERCE TRENDS

Consumer-Centred Commerce.



Consumer-Centred Commerce.

The ever-more sophisticated experiences being delivered by ecommerce leaders have raised consumer expectations, who will no longer settle for online offerings that are confusing, effortful and not centred around their needs. As retailers shift to a consumer-centred strategy, we're seeing this manifest in a number of ways:

ALWAYS-ON EXPERIENCES

Consumers are turning to digital channels to complete a growing range of tasks - and they're using an increasingly diverse set of devices to do so. Retailers must meet these consumers where they are, and consider how effectively their websites and applications serve shoppers across different screen sizes and devices of varying capabilities.

Mobile Commerce

Mobile commerce in particular has seen a huge rise in popularity with the UK market alone expected to reach £105.28bn by 2024, a growth of 109% on 2019 figures (source: [Statista](#)). It's imperative for retailers to keep the mobile customer journey front-of-mind, and consider how mobile-specific capabilities - for example wallet payment options such as Apple Pay - can help streamline the process.

The importance of the mobile experience was also brought into focus last year with the rollout of Google's Core Web Vitals update, which rewards sites that are quick to load



It's imperative for retailers to keep the mobile customer journey front-of-mind.

If your site isn't up to scratch, you not only risk a negative impact on conversions and revenue, but organic visibility, rankings and traffic as well.



and deliver information to users - with a particular focus on mobile performance. If your site isn't up to scratch, you not only risk a negative impact on conversions and revenue, but organic visibility, rankings and traffic as well.

Search And Marketplace Integration

It's also important to remember that, in a world of increased competition, many consumers will not come directly to your site to make their purchase. The majority will instead begin with an online search, so it's vital that your offering is optimised at every level - from technical structure and performance to the way your products are marked up to integrate with Google's shopping feeds.

Indeed today, potential customers may not interact with your site at all when exploring and purchasing products, with a growing number of retailers turning to alternative options such as social shopping to put their products in front of consumers. We're also seeing a rise in the use of established marketplaces to manage more of the purchase journey, particularly by retailers looking to rapidly launch or scale their offerings, led by solutions including Fulfilment By Amazon (FBA).

Frictionless Omnichannel Experiences

Across all these disparate channels, retailers must never lose sight of the omnichannel journey, as consumers are likely to travel across and between multiple touchpoints as they browse products, compare prices and specifications, make a selection, and place an order.

Implementing the right technology will help you drive your digital strategy forward.



This requires investment to align data, technology and the customer experience, yet the potential benefits are significant; it's been predicted that by 2025, organisations offering a unified commerce experience by frictionlessly moving customers through journeys will see at least a 20% uplift in total revenue (source: [Gartner](#)).

At its foundation, maintaining a single, holistic and complete picture of customers requires the careful capture, analysis and application of data across your full ecommerce ecosystem. Mapping the different systems and touchpoints - and using plugins, APIs and custom middleware to connect these - will enable real-time behavioural information to be communicated and shared across the entirety of the customer journey, and combined with other explicit and implicit data points for deep, actionable insight.

Armed with this insight, you'll be able to provide customers with the information, content and tools they need, when they need them, and add valuable personalised touches to their interactions, for a high-class experience that maximises engagement, satisfaction and loyalty.

Platforms To Power Success

Implementing the right technology will help you drive your digital strategy forward, and can open your offering up to a larger and more diverse audience.

We're seeing a growing number of organisations adopting headless solutions, which separate content from its front-end display to provide increased flexibility of delivery. This enables organisations to make products available via a greater range

of channels such as the marketplaces mentioned earlier, as well as rapidly integrate new touchpoints as they emerge (for example voice assistants, in-app purchases and out-of-home displays).

Flexibility has also become a watch-word in the world of online payments, particularly for organisations that operate across a number of territories, where standard payment methods may differ. Many modern payment gateways accommodate a wide range of options to enable consumers to pay via their preferred method, and it's also important to stay on top of emerging trends, such as the current interest in buy-now, pay-later services such as Klarna and PayPal Credit.

VALUE AND RELEVANCE

Whatever touchpoints your customers use to interact with your brand, delivering a great experience is of paramount importance. This starts with clear and intuitive purchase journeys that provide the right information at the right time to guide customers through the process (and maximise conversions for your business), with a growing number of tools available to add further value at every stage of the journey.

Visual Commerce

Enabling potential customers to see how their prospective purchases will look in specific situations helps drive interest and increase trust in your offering. To support this, there has been a rise in visual commerce including an increased use of imagery and videos, as well as innovative Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR / VR) tools that allow customers



Whatever touchpoints your customers use to interact with your brand, delivering a great experience is of paramount importance.

The demand for personalised experiences is increasing across the board, drawing on explicit and implicit data.



to visualise products on their own bodies and in their own homes. With the additional emergence of Extended Reality (XR) and the metaverse, this is surely only going to continue as consumers seek as much information and reassurance as possible prior to purchase.

User Generated Content

User generated content is another powerful way to increase trust, and some retailers and marketplaces (such as Etsy) are combining this with visual commerce by rewarding customers who provide photos and videos of their purchases in action. Ratings and reviews of course remain valuable indicators of quality, and can be used in a wide range of ways, from general feedback on products to confirmation of important information such as sizing, fabric and fit.

This kind of content is even more compelling when potential customers can connect with reviewers, through shared demographics, interests and use cases. The demand for personalised experiences is increasing across the board, drawing on explicit and implicit data to tailor the products being offered, as well as wider behavioural insights to recommend products commonly bought together.

By making it easier for customers to find and purchase the products they need, you'll be driving better value and results for your business - increasing satisfaction and loyalty for additional purchases, greater order value, and more repeat visits.

FLEXIBILITY THROUGHOUT THE PURCHASE PROCESS

Digitising The Supply Chain

Crucially, the customer experience of your offering doesn't end with the purchase. You may have a well-crafted, high-performance ecommerce website, but if consumers aren't able to get the products and services they want quickly and easily, they're unlikely to return to your brand for future purchases.

Digitisation will play a key role in ensuring smooth delivery and product accessibility, with [Shopify reporting](#) that 33% of merchants are planning to digitise legacy manual processes within the supply chain, and highlighting a growing interest in Third Party Logistics (3PL) solutions across retailers of all sizes to manage this crucial stage of the product lifecycle.

New Offerings And Business Models

Retailers are also exploring new models to increase convenience for consumers, while also controlling delivery costs (another key factor in the customer experience). There has been a marked increase in Click and Collect / Buy Online, Pick Up In-Store (BOPIS) options, which more than doubled in 2020 in the US and are expected to sustain double-digit growth through to 2024 (source: [eMarketer](#)).

The disruption of recent years has also led many retailers to review, augment and enhance the business models underpinning their offering, to adjust to changing consumer behaviours and preferences. This includes more subscription-based models, which have continued to expand beyond



Looking ahead, the variety of products available for purchase is only going to grow, driven by Extended Reality and the Metaverse.

traditional areas such as food, beauty and flowers to encompass household items, petcare, technology, and more, alongside a shift among Business to Business (B2B) retailers into the Direct to Consumer (D2C) space.

Looking ahead, the variety of products available for purchase is only going to grow, driven by Extended Reality and the Metaverse. Expect to see more and more digital items incorporated into offerings and experiences - taking the lead from online brands such as Fortnite and Roblox - as well as continued interest in innovative technologies like blockchain, cryptocurrency and NFTs.

BRAND VALUES AND CULTURE

As sophisticated ecommerce capabilities and engaging shopping experiences become the norm, it's more important than ever for retailers to stand out from the crowd and truly connect with their audiences.

Sustainability and ethics

Today more than ever, consumers are likely to shop with brands that align with the same values as them, with 32% of consumers saying they value sustainability more than practical factors such as cost and speed (source: [Retail Systems](#)). Values such as ethical consumption, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) also play a large part in informing purchase decisions, particularly among the Millennial and Gen Z buyers that are coming to dominate the retail market (source: [Smart Insights](#)).

Brands can't simply pay lip service to these values, as 86% of consumers say authenticity is important when deciding what brands they like and support (source: [Stackla](#)). Meeting the values challenge therefore needs to be considered at every level of operations, from supply chain and logistical choices to brand positioning and messaging.





EBOOK | SPOTLIGHT ON ECOMMERCE TRENDS

Your Consumers Have Evolved. So Must Your Brand.





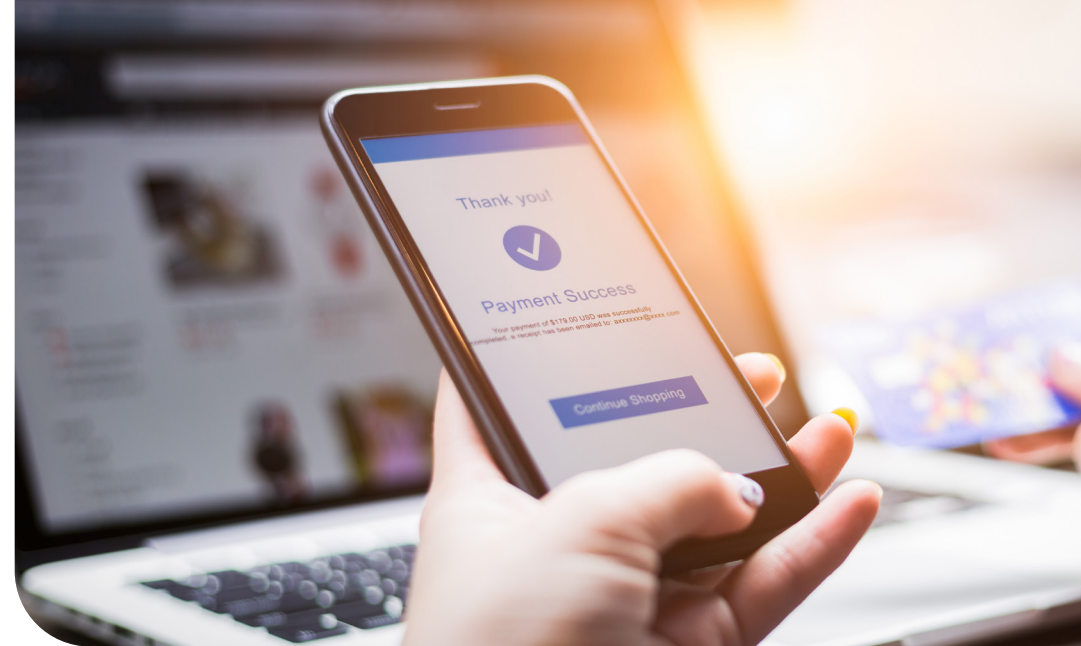
Your Consumers Have Evolved. So Must Your Brand.

Organisations that fail to grasp the ecommerce imperative, and deliver the exceptional experiences consumers are demanding, will likely lose out to more strategic, innovative and reactive competitors.

Putting the right platforms in place is a vital component of a successful ecommerce solution, but far from the only one. It requires a vast ecosystem of relationships and dependencies, a user-centred approach to delivery, and a complete picture of consumers across your various channels and touchpoints.

This enables the delivery of sophisticated experiences that reflect distinct online behaviours and preferences, and makes your organisation stand out in a highly competitive space, where there is more competition for consumer eyeballs and more that needs to be done to truly differentiate.

In a fast-moving digital landscape you can't afford to sit still; consumers are changing at a rapid pace and this pace is only going to get faster and faster. How you approach ecommerce is as important as what you do, with agility and flexibility key to taking advantage of exciting new opportunities, and staying one step ahead of the competition.



Want to learn more? At Box UK, we have years of experience in implementing the right digital solutions to help businesses adapt and evolve at pace. And that's not just your digital shopfront. We will look at every area of your business from backend systems and fulfilment processes, to marketing tools and CRM, and build the right ecosystem for your business to excel.

Right now, we're seeing huge potential with ecommerce and are well positioned to support any organisation looking to maximise their sales and revenue through digital channels. With frameworks already in place to support rapid adoption, our solutions can help any business implement cost-effective ecommerce solutions at speed.

Visit www.boxuk.com/our-work/ to learn how we have helped other businesses evolve, or get in touch by emailing info@boxuk.com or calling +44 (0) 20 7439 1900 to see how we can help you drive new growth through ecommerce.

How we've helped...



OKDO

Running seven country sites in six languages from a single installation, OKdo.com is a feature-rich, widely-integrated technology ecosystem that serves as a flagship example of enterprise WordPress and WooCommerce.

As OKdo's IT partner, Box UK delivered this project in just eight months, bringing to life a global ecommerce platform that would underpin the launch of their new business into two of the fastest-growing markets in the technology space.

"Box UK oversees our entire third-party ecosystem to ensure it delivers seamlessly against our business goals... giving us total confidence in the performance of our global ecommerce solution."

David Duffy, IT Delivery Manager, OKdo.com



RS COMPONENTS

Working fully remotely with regional client stakeholders, the Box UK team developed a new set of ecommerce sites enabling RS Components to target valuable new growth markets in Indonesia and Vietnam markets, delivering these in just 9 sprints.

Providing customers with access to over 50,000 products the sites accommodate multiple languages, multiple currencies, and a complex pricing structure, ensuring that customers are provided with a shopping experience that's both intuitive and convenient.

"Box UK navigated the extremely complex internal environment and was able to get the project fully implemented quickly."

Matthew Keefe, VP of Marketing & Strategic Projects APAC, RS Components

To learn more about our range of Ecommerce services, get in touch with our experts.



Box UK specialises in the design, development and delivery of large-scale digital platforms that are relied upon by millions worldwide, with a track record of success spanning more than twenty years.

Our multidisciplinary team act as partners to global clients including Jaguar Land Rover, Sodexo, the British Medical Journal and RS Components, delivering impressive programmes of work that elevate and accelerate their digital growth.

Across hundreds of high-profile projects, we've gained a reputation for quality that's recognised at the highest levels – with a host of awards from leading industry bodies, including the Webbys, Communicators and UK Digital Experience Awards.

www.boxuk.com

+44 (0)20 7439 1900

info@boxuk.com