



# Customer intimacy: Give your employees insights to seal the deal

How can retailers empower employees to serve customers who expect you to know what they want before they walk into your store.

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**A**fter a few weeks in any new relationship, there's an expectation that you know what your partner likes, at least that you can pick a movie they'd enjoy and know if a turmeric latte or black chai is how they start their day. Fail at this and the relationship flounders. Somewhat similarly, in retail, there's increasingly a high expectation that we know what our customers want, before they walk into the store. Fail at this and you may lose the sale.

The internet gives customers access to mountains of information about every product – including functionality, performance and whether it comes in rose gold or not! So when a customer does walk into a store, they've spent time getting to know the staff and products and they expect employees to reciprocate this. When they don't get the service they expect it may result in the customer voicing their complaints on social media, which can potentially have disastrous outcomes.

Sales assistants can know as much as possible about a product – but that knowledge alone simply does not cut it! They need to get personal. Intelligent data combined with a solid customer experience (CX) interface is the key. Data driven insights allow retailers to empower their teams with the power to predict the customer's needs and guide the buying decision with confidence and panache.

Technology can assist in capturing the sales journey from start to finish, so if an important opportunity is missed, the retailer will still have a handy alert to prompt them to take follow-up action. A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution which is the single source of truth about prospects and customers can be a powerful data treasure trove. From here you can garner valuable insights such as buying behaviours, communication preferences and engagement patterns.



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Further, when a CRM solution is integrated seamlessly with point of sale (POS), marketing and buying teams can slice and dice data and become more intimately aware of customer demands. For example, when a consumer has visited a website or interacted with a chatbot through a phone conversation, this data can be combined to build a very detailed profile of consumer preferences.

When sales assistants can access and review data about customers quickly they are fully aware of their preferences and able to offer outstanding service. The key is to have an interface that allows your employees to easily quantify what the consumer is looking for, based on hard data.

Sales assistants are also more empowered to solve problems and direct sales straight from the floor. For example, a customer may come into a store to get a feel for a camera having completed their

research online at the company website or other sites. When they come into the store, a sales assistant should be able to pull up the customer's buying and search history and then talk to the customer about the relevant product's specific functionality and features.

If there happens to be no stock for that particular model available in store, the sales assistant should be equipped to order a delivery of the product to the customer's home or, for delivery to the store for a later pick up. This should be completed on the spot and based on the customer's preference. They can also share exclusive promotions or special offers applicable to the customer that they may not have been aware of. The end result is a satisfied and loyal customer who is more likely to recommend the retailer to their friends and family.

While some pundits claim that bricks-and-mortar stores are floating into extinction, the data does not quite agree. A recent survey from TotalRetail revealed that younger shoppers are more likely to visit physical shopfronts frequently and value insights from retail staff. It was found that 56% of surveyed millennials, 44% of Gen Xers and 27% of baby boomers shop in a physical store at least once a week.

Using data, and in particular CRM integrated with business intelligence technology, enables marketing and buying teams to discover meaningful correlations, patterns and trends in large volumes of data, all of which relates to their prospects and customers. This is the promise of omni-channel retail, allowing you to combine the power of online data with the expertise of your sales assistants on the floor. As this occurs, online and in-store experiences comes together to create something completely new and puts sales people at the epicentre of the buying equation.

Arguably the biggest thrill in any relationship is when you realise the other person has taken the time to get to know you really well. The retail relationship is no different. Learn how to leverage your data to seal the deal in 2019. 🍷



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