

Use Digital Technology to Support Your Brand Story

Technology is not the end-all but a strong supporting player in creating your brand and customer experience

Digital technologies, particularly mobile, play an increasingly important role in retail, and other industries as well. According to a 2015 PwC survey, CEOs rank 'Mobile technologies for customer engagement' highest on their list of strategically important digital technologies.

However, in their race to be the first to adopt the latest technology, or just to catch up with innovators, companies are prone to focus too much on the technology itself rather than its role in the overall customer experience. 'We need an app!' is too often symptomatic of a mistaken emphasis on marketing tactics over strategy.



Organizations may think that hiring an app developer and a marketing coordinator trained in the tactics of digital marketing will cover the marketing bases. Sadly, they neglect the more foundational requirements of customer research, focus and differentiation.

Once determined, those fundamentals provide a solid base for creating your brand—why customers should care about your product—and determining how you are going to communicate it to them effectively.

To do that, marketing experts advocate developing a brand story and weaving it into all of your business activities, including every interaction with the customer. They often cite the Walt Disney Company as the greatest example of placing story at the center of the customer experience.

Disney designer John Hench famously said, "Story is the essential organizing principle behind the design of Disney theme parks." Details at each location in the park are carefully crafted to support the story. Hench went on to say, "Every element must work together to create an identity that supports the story of that place."

The Disney experience is thrilling to millions. So, the question for those who seek to thrill their customers becomes, 'What is our brand story, and what part should technology play in telling that story?' Technology for technology's sake will likely do nothing to enhance the brand and may prove to be a distraction to customers.

Consider these examples of technology used to advance a brand story:

- A regional Fresh Mex restaurant invites diners to, 'Go South of the border to enjoy some fresh food at the beach.' The restaurants use digital menu boards to highlight fresh ingredients and show surfing videos on oversized monitors to support the Mexican beach theme.
- An international retailer displays eclectic furniture collections at their high-end showrooms. The atmosphere is meant to inspire customers to create their own unique style. They removed distracting computers and monitors from the sales floor and replaced them with Windows POS tablets.

Associates carry the tablets with them to provide additional inspiration, look up product information and complete sales on the spot. The story details of style and convenience are strongly re-enforced, especially when customers complete the purchase sitting on the comfortable couch they are buying.

- Beacons to push deal notifications at sales events like Black Friday support a discount retailer's story of having the best deals.
- An outdoor retailer includes hiking, hunting and fishing adventures in addition to product information on a mobile app to say, 'This is what we love.'
- A financial services firm acquires and promotes advanced data security technology to enhance their story of providing financial security for customers.
- A law firm shares legal advice and client stories on a useful app so prospective clients can understand their specialty and relate to the legal process.



In each of these cases, the technology tells an important part of the brand story. Other details are supplied by the website, the store design, customer service, email and other interactions with the customer.

"Modern technology can do so much more than generate improved productivity," stated Carl Mazzanti, CEO, eMazzanti Technologies. "Whether it provides Wi-Fi inspiration or increased credit card security, technology is a key contributor to revenue growth and overall brand strategy."

- How does your technology currently support your brand story?
- What ways can you imagine using technology to make it more compelling?

A memorable, captivating brand story, drives revenue growth. Used thoughtfully in the right places, technology supports the story, creating a consistent, complete and delightful experience that customers will want to repeat and share with their friends.