

FOCUS

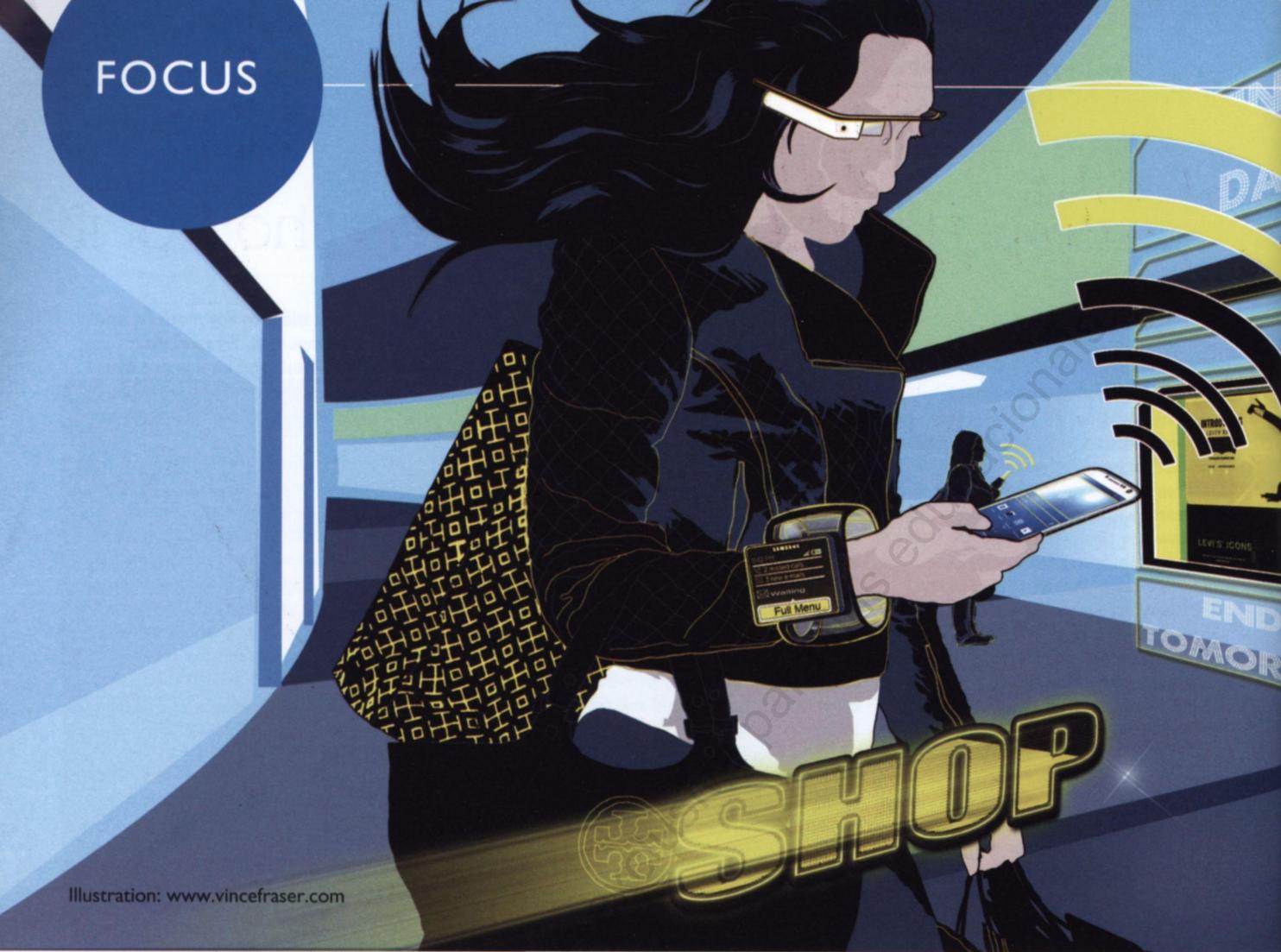


Illustration: www.vincefraser.com

Connect with the

Full integration of physical and digital store formats, the proliferation of mobile device usage and the blurring of the 'researching consumer' with the 'buying shopper' will transform the way that brands engage with 'shopsumers' and attempt to influence their purchase journey

By Ken Madden, *Geometry Global North America*

Laura is at the mall. As always, she has her mobile phone in her purse. We know she is at the mall. She checked in. We know she is near the local Gap store. She has the Gap app and it is accessing her location. We know she is a size 6, loves blue and has her eye on a new skirt. We have her purchase history and she has that skirt on her wish list. Her friends liked the skirt on Facebook and our inventory system tells us that her Gap store, 50 feet away, has the skirt in stock. Her phone vibrates, she pulls it out and looks at the screen. She's just been notified that the skirt she loves is in stock, nearby, and, because she is a valued customer, it is 10% off just for her right now. She walks in, swipes her phone, taps 'buy' and a sales rep walks up to her and hands her the skirt, bagged and ready to go, payment already processed, with a nice personal note printed on a blue card. I mentioned blue is her favourite colour, right?



Mobile Shopsumer

Okay. Maybe she tries the skirt on first. But you get the point.

It's like *Minority Report* without the invasive retinal scan. Mobile provides a real-time window on these fleeting moments. Mobile provides the constant connection to the relationship you build with your consumers and shoppers. This is the Future of Shopper Marketing and it's already happening.

For brands across categories, this is coming to life in many ways. Mobile has flipped a switch. Brands will no longer be constrained by the traditional notion of the marketplace, and retailers are moving quickly to adapt. The line between physical and digital is rapidly blurring, giving brands and retailers a chance to rethink the relationship they have with consumers and shoppers. Let's just call this person a 'shopsumer', as the distinction between the two is arbitrary when every moment is a potential commerce moment.

The path to purchase has not necessarily

changed, but digital and, in particular, mobile, has changed the way we need to think about the path and how we communicate with shopsumers. Shopper Marketing has already moved out of the store. Now we have to think about the shopper at every touchpoint. A purchase is never more than a tap away.

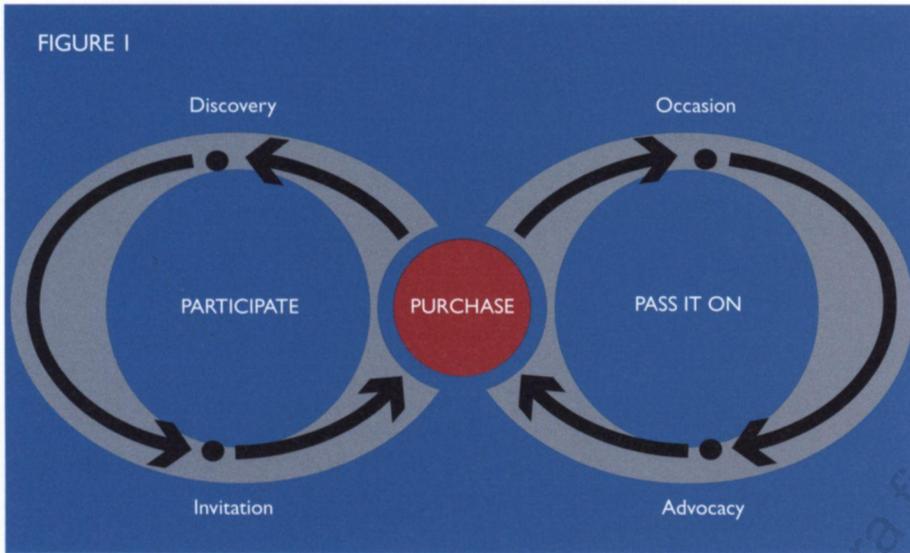
So what makes mobile special? Well 60.7% of the world's population uses a mobile phone. About a third of those people are using smartphones. That varies by region. In the US, the smartphone is expected to reach 50% of the population next year, according to eMarketer. What's really interesting is how this is affecting the shopping experience; 79% of smartphone owners are smartphone shoppers, meaning they use their smartphone to assist with shopping. And 84% of those people are using their smartphones to aid shopping while in physical stores (Mobile In-Store Research: how in-store shoppers are using mobile devices).

Mobile has infiltrated the fabric of our culture. It is location-aware. The devices have become deeply personal. The technology has disappeared; only the user experience matters. Your mobile device follows you through every moment of your life, helping you solve your daily challenges. And whether you are aware or not, mobile devices create a constant stream of data. We have developed an incredible bond with our mobile devices, which makes the mobile device the perfect place to build a deeper relationship with the shopsumer.

SHOPPER RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

We have watched marketing communications get more personalised over the years. Mobile has accelerated this evolution. We always have them with us and we pull them out anytime we have a need or simply a free

FIGURE 1



moment. The future of shopper marketing rests on our ability to help meet these needs, while providing value at these key moments in time and place. This will enable us to build deep relationships with shopsomers. The relationship is the key. Brands can engage with the consumer any time, any place. We can be part of their lives and we can invite them to be part of ours. And when we take the time and effort to build this relationship, we can focus a little less on trying to capture the next transaction. If we build an engaged relationship, we capture all the transactions.

So how do we reach this new mobile shopper? As we know, we have to think more holistically about our overall marketing efforts. But when it comes to mobile, we have to think a bit differently about the touchpoint itself; it becomes a very fluid notion. But there is a way to reframe your thinking. We have to think of the touchpoint as a moment at the intersection of three things.

1 THE PATH

The linear path to purchase has disintegrated. Planning may be linear for simplicity, but shopsomers no longer move in a linear pattern. So, if we accept this, any construct will work. I like the Infinity Loop (Figure 1).

This framework takes into account several, important factors. The path is infinite in nature. We put the purchase at the centre. On one side, it is about participation; we are helping people discover the brand story and inviting people to participate. On the other

side, we want our consumers to pass it on. We can engage at the usage occasion and then make it easy for advocates to spread the word. This construct takes into account that the path is fluid and shopsomers can come and go at any point along the path. Especially important is that none of these stages are connected to place. A consumer may discover and engage with the brand for the first time at the shelf and move through every point along this path while still in the store. Likewise, the purchase may not be anywhere near a physical store.

2 THE NEED

If a shopsomer's mobile device is helping them fill needs, we also have to shift our thinking to needs. We have to think about their daily lives. We have to engage with them in a way that meets a specific need at the time and place that is relevant to their lives. And it is not a product need, such as: 'I need some soap, deodorant or toothpaste'. It is a fundamental need, such as: 'I need to feel clean. I need to feel confident. I need to better understand what makes women tick so I can get a date'. When we fulfil a need and deliver value, it starts to build a deep, brand relationship. And that value is not just monetary. A brand can deliver value in many ways: we can provide exclusive content, special access, premium products and services, new or enriching experiences, deeper levels of customer service, alignment on causes or charities, and so on. We have many levers at our disposal.

3 THE SERVICE

Finally, we have to think about the universe of services that make sense for this shopsomer, in that place, at that time. The shopsomer journey must take into account the mobile services that individual shopsomers access and use. This is not about technology. When we think about technology, we chase shiny pennies; we execute a QR code because everyone is doing it. When we think in terms of a service, we see the QR code as a way to link the physical to the digital. It can extend the package or the shelf. It can quickly link the shopper to relevant information or content. It allows us to engage the shopsomer in a more dynamic way. We are no longer constrained by the limits of the physical space. We can engage at a specific, physical point and continue the conversation anywhere. And when we fill a need and provide value, the shopsomer will not only engage, they will truly appreciate it.

The new mobile shopper is a quantum shopper. I bet almost everyone reading this is a quantum shopper. From quantum mechanics, a particle of light exists in many states at once. It is not until we observe it that it takes a state. The mobile shopper is the same. From a marketer's perspective, shoppers exist in this strange multi-state. They exist all along the path to purchase with a multitude of needs, accessing mobile services that are changing all the time. This quantum shopper concept gives us a way to think about discrete points of intersection where we can use the right service to fulfil a need in a way that makes sense for that point along the path to purchase. Mobile doesn't change the path to purchase, but it certainly changes our approach to it.

Mobile touchpoints exist at the intersection of path, need and service. These are the new shopper moments. So in this new model, we have all these points in time and place where we can reach the shopsomer and give them something relevant based on context. And since all these touchpoint opportunities do not exist in a vacuum, it gives us a different way to approach the path to purchase.

SYNCHRONISE

Create a set of multiple touchpoints that carry the shopsomer along the path to purchase in an orderly fashion. Build the relationship by building value at each step. **Example:** Pull-Ups (potty training pants for kids) and Dial (soap) worked together to

create a simple, yet effective programme exclusively for Sam's Club shoppers. At the pallet, there was a QR code that directed the shopper to a mobile site that could help them help their kids start a healthy hand-washing routine as they started potty training. After your child uses the toilet, you encourage them to wash their hands.

To help with that, you use the Go-Wash-Go 'scanner' on your mobile device to show your child the germs on their hands. After they wash, you scan again and the germs are gone. It's a fun way to fulfil a parent's need to instil healthy hygiene at a critical time. In the store, they invited you to participate and purchase. At the usage occasion, they created a unique experience. They synchronised the path. And the services were simple: a QR code to link to the site and a very simple set of mobile web pages.

VAPORISE

Use mobile touchpoints to reach the shopsumer at one or more discrete moments in time and place. Build the relationship by servicing an immediate need through context. *Example:* Band-Aid created an augmented reality experience featuring the Muppets that integrated with the physical Band-Aid bandage. At the usage occasion, you and your child could use the Band-Aid app to scan the Muppet Band-Aid and bring the characters to life on the screen.

They vaporised this one moment in time to create an exciting experience at the occasion that helped mom fulfil her need to

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help her child feel better, faster. The camera and app were at the heart of the service.

REORGANISE

Use the flexibility of mobile to activate a purchase from any step along the path to purchase. Build the relationship by empowering the shopsumer.

Example: This is my favourite concept. There are several, similar examples emerging that reorganise the path. The most famous is probably the virtual store that Tesco set up in a South Korean subway station. On the subway platform, they used photos of products to simulate products on shelves. Using the Tesco mobile app, you could

purchase your groceries while you waited for a train. Peapod, as seen on the Long Island Railroad platform in New York, has been heavily exploring this space.

When we reorganise the path, we change our notions completely. Every touchpoint, physical or digital, becomes a potential commerce moment.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE FUTURE OF SHOPPER MARKETING

- The role of Shopper Marketing will continue to expand... rapidly. We have gone from focusing on in-store to a focus on pre-store, in-store, post-store. And now we have to think about no store, at least not today's notion of the store.
- Manufacturers and agencies alike should not tolerate work that is not integrated through the entire path. When every moment is connected, the conversation should be consistent and truly linked or we squander precious moments with the shopsumer.
- The pace of change in the retail environment will increase dramatically in the next few years. Physical location will become less important for actual purchases. Physical retail will become an important place for brand experiences. Mobile will drive, personalise and extend those experiences.
- There will be a very fluid relationship between physical and digital retail. Product delivery whereby you look what's in stock online and pick up in-store are already common. Concepts like the endless shelf (a digital shelf embedded in the physical shelf where stock is not confined to limited, physical shelf space) will change the retailer/brand dynamic.
- Shopsumers will be an integral part of the brand story. We have to build brands that encourage relationships with shopsumers. Let them be part of creating the narrative. Mobile allows the shopsumer to engage any time they want. That's how we build relationships in a mobile world. We have to be there. Those relationships, whether with product or retailer brands, are going to hold the true key to purchase.



Tesco: Shoppers on a South Korean subway platform could use their mobile phones to purchase groceries from a virtual store

more on the future of shopper marketing at www.warc.com