The digital combo that can give retail stores a competitive edge

By Sarah Moseley   6 Jan 2023

By supporting real-time decision-making, combining **edge computing** with **digital signage** improves the customer experience and boosts sales.

Source: Pexels

Although in-store purchases continue to make up the bulk of retail sales, a tightening economic situation means it's essential to maximise every opportunity to make a sale once a customer reaches your door.

We also know that brick-and-mortar stores remain the heartland of retail sales in South Africa, even though 68% of local consumers are shopping more online since the pandemic. Deloitte has found that the focus will increasingly turn towards an omnichannel shopping experience to still cater for the sizeable 'offline' market in the country. It is therefore important for retailers to extract maximum value from every store.

A digital signage solution powered by edge computing uses real-time decision-making to attract, convert, and retain retail customers.

Grasp a competitive edge

Edge computing is transforming retail, one store chain at a time. Effectively, it keeps data processing closer to where the data is generated, and this reduces latency and delivers almost instantaneous results.

This means that stores can respond to customers in the moment – tailoring experiences, building loyalty, reducing friction, and proactively troubleshooting. Digital signage is flexible enough to support a customer who wants to be in and out quickly, as well as one who wants to browse and enjoy.

How to use digital signage to your advantage during peak shopping seasons
22 Dec 2022

Edge computing turns digital signage into a vibrant, responsive tool that makes central management and control easy, with the ability to change displays across the chain at the touch of a button. It also refines how you engage with customers, unlocking service capabilities that depend on rapid responses.

This is crucial in an ultra-competitive environment where customer expectations are sky-high. Research shows that South African retail customers are more price-conscious and value-seeking than many other markets. This results in them being less brand loyal as they shop for specials. To restore loyalty in this segment requires the retailer to identify meaningful touch-points that engage with customers in the ways they prefer.

Attract customers' attention

Digital signage powered by edge computing is an effective way to create an impact. Imagine a striking video wall of moving images in your window enticing customers in off the street. And why not bring video cameras into your edge computing solution so your displays can change to reflect the demographic profile of passers-by? Or respond to weather variations so, if it's pouring with rain, you showcase umbrellas, and if it's a sunny day you feature swimwear.

Once inside the store, digital signage can take on a guiding role, drawing customers towards displays and then providing interactive information as they touch the items. It's an opportunity to educate and influence by sharing product features, providing comparisons to cross-sell and up-sell, and telling your brand story.

Interestingly, the screens don't have to be large to be effective. Tablet-sized screens positioned strategically at key point-of-sale positions are equally as capable of moving a customer closer to a purchase – whether it's planned or not. All retailers want to increase basket size and this last-minute messaging can inspire people to buy products they may not have considered unless they saw certain signage.

How digital tech, ambience and sustainability drive in-store shopper behaviour
25 Oct 2022

Empower retail customers

Digital signage boosts customers' control over their in-store experience, removing the need to get a sales associate's attention. With the rapid flexibility that local processing provides, edge-based signage can signpost key areas like pay and information points – and react to real-time fluctuations in availability, highlighting the shortest queue, for example.

Backed by edge computing, digital signage can also support self-service functions, like check-ins for loyalty coupons and promotions, requesting order pick-ups or finding out the store's policies.

Plus, empowering customers is a proven way of building brand loyalty and a willingness to visit again. Digital signage lets you promote offers and discounts, capture customer feedback, and share relationship-building messages such as thanking them for their custom.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sarah Moseley is head of vertical solutions and business development, retail and consumer goods at BT.

For more, visit: https://www.bizcommunity.com