

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Five Essential Takeaways from RSR's 2010 Cross-Channel Benchmark Study

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What you don't know can hurt you – especially when it comes to building a winning cross-channel commerce strategy and implementing the core technology to unify sales channels. It's no small task to undertake – as a number of retailers who have tried and failed will attest. But the benefits of a well-designed strategy and a flexible technology platform that captures and leverages customer intelligence are enormous. Profits are higher. Customer satisfaction is greater. Sales are more personalized. Access to opportunity is faster.

In its 2010 benchmark report, Retail Systems Research (RSR) publishes a “wake-up call” that offers an up-close look at the state of cross-channel. For retailers or manufacturers thinking about going direct across channels, five essential takeaways can be gleaned from the study. The insights and recommendations that follow can empower retailers and manufacturers to deliver a more holistic brand experience across all channels. Real advantage and value are created by implementing a cross-channel commerce strategy and the technology platform enabling this game-changer.

Follow the Money – Profitability

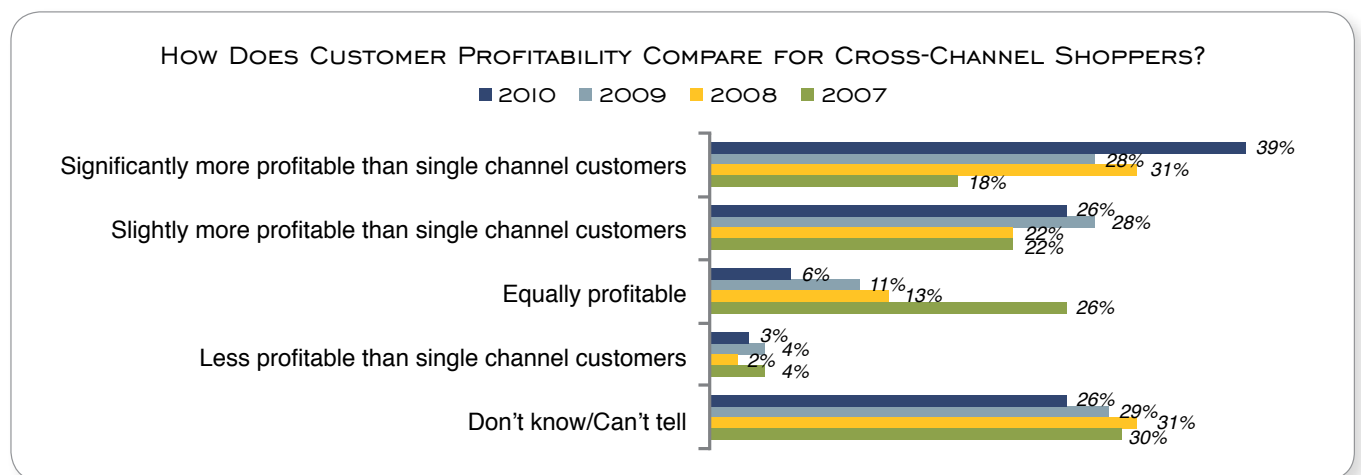
One word sums up why retailers are looking at cross-channel commerce – Profitability. Cross-channel consumers are more profitable than single-channel shoppers – this according to 65 percent of the retailers surveyed by RSR. And, over the last three years, that number increased by 25 percent. These

shoppers are more valuable for many reasons. They have greater access to products. They feel a deeper affinity for retailers willing to “go with their flow.” And, with a cross-channel platform in place, retailers can get more creative about targeting and engaging these customers with personalized promotions. The net result is more profit than what's captured by retailers ignoring the cross-channel imperative.

Seeing is Believing – Cross-Channel Customer Visibility

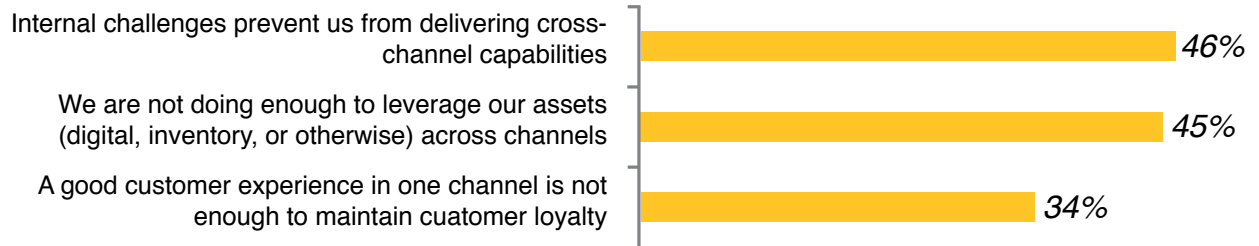
“The top most-valued cross-channel capabilities are customer visibility (followed closely by the marketing and promotions needed to target those customers), inventory visibility, and enterprise analytics.”

Visibility is everything when it comes to cross-channel. But the overwhelming majority of retailers surveyed said they don't have one view of customers across channels. A single view of customer transactions and preferences enables retailers to more precisely target valuable customers and create a more personalized, customer-centric buying experience. Enabling smarter shopping means investing in analytics and integrating intelligence into the cross-channel platform – at the point of sale, the Web, call centers and at every other customer touch point, including mobile. Retailers that leverage intelligence about customers and their buying behaviors are empowered to transform insight into action, turn questions into answers, and convert browsers into buyers – across every channel.



Source: RSR Research July 2010

TOP 3 BUSINESS CHALLENGES



Source: RSR Research July 2010

It's All About the Brand

Creating a single brand identity across all channels ranks high among retailers – more than 80 percent of those surveyed said it is very important in creating improved customer satisfaction across all channels. This, though, involves a transformation of the business model – a move from a company-centric identity to one that's focused on the brand. Cross-channel offers retailers and manufacturers exciting new opportunities to reinforce and promote multiple brands that co-exist under the same company "roof." The challenge is to implement a cohesive, brand-centric strategy and a technology platform flexible enough to support customers across all brands and channels.

Look in the Mirror – Inside Organizational Inhibitors

Cultural hurdles are among the top business challenges inhibiting cross-channel capabilities – this according to 46 percent of survey respondents. The obvious mandate is to look inside of your organization – realigning incentives, for instance, so that they reward sales performance, no matter where purchases are transacted. Organizational silos can kill a cross-channel strategy – regardless of the technology platform. Introspection is the first step toward the organizational flexibility needed to respond to fast-changing consumer demands.

Get Help

"Companies that struggle to understand how best to proceed should get some outside expertise to overcome this barrier."

Implementing a winning cross-channel strategy and technology platform is not for the faint of heart. Choosing a strategic partner with cross-channel expertise and solutions is essential – one that sees the big picture, understands the brand and culture into which the solution fits, one that can implement a flexible, converged platform that truly unifies all sales channels and business processes.

If 2010 is the year of the cross-channel wake-up call, now is the time to get moving.

About the Author

CrossView Chief Executive Officer Mark Fodor has nearly 20 years of experience in the IT industry that spans multiple industries, including retail, distribution, manufacturing, and insurance. Before joining CrossView, Mark was a Partner at Brulant Inc., where he provided counsel on delivering multi-channel solutions to increase market share by improving customer service, brand loyalty, and market reach. Prior to Brulant, Mark served as Director of eCommerce at Things Remembered, where he was responsible for the strategic business operations and technical infrastructure. He also served as Director of eBusiness for Cole National, establishing cross-functional partnerships between IT and business units.

About Retail Systems Research, LLC

Retail Systems Research (RSR) provides market intelligence on the business challenges and opportunities that drive retailers' technology investments. To access RSR's 2010 cross-channel benchmark study, authored by RSR Managing Partners Nikki Baird and Brian Kilcourse, go to http://www.retailsystemsresearch.com/_document/summary/1138.

CrossView is a premier provider of cross-channel commerce solutions and services that enable a smarter, more personalized shopping experience. Our software is used by leading brands to unify the Web, stores, call centers, mobile devices, and other channels on a single, flexible platform. This Cross-Channel Commerce Platform empowers consumers to shift seamlessly between sales channels, and creates a consistent buying and brand experience. Advanced analytics integrated across the platform deliver intelligence and visibility into buying behaviors across all sales channels. CrossView enables clients to transform insight into action – in realtime.

To learn more about CrossView, visit www.crossview.com.