

Fitting Room of the Future

Developments in retail technology are offering the potential to boost sales with targeted add-ons.

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Interactive Digital Signage Made Easy!

By Richard Slawsky
RetailCustomerExperience.com



One of the biggest opportunities for fashion retailers to create additional revenue is by targeting their existing customers via add-on sales. Although selling that expensive dress or pair of pants is a great way to add revenue, the profitability of that item is enhanced when combined with a pair of shoes, belt, a scarf or another high-margin item.

The benefits of add-on sales aren't a secret, but the challenge is finding a way to suggest items that are appropriate to the main purchase.

Retailers already employ a number of ways to suggest add-on items, but each method has its own weakness. Printed material generally can be used only to suggest the most generic items. Some shops are incorporating point-of-sale systems that suggest add-ons targeted to the items the customer is buying, but those solutions have the drawback of interrupting the checkout process; if the store is busy, the customer is likely to decline the hassle of holding up the line while he or she retrieves the additional items.

And while it would be great to have a sales staff that could commit the store's inventory to memory and the fashion sense to suggest appropriate add-ons, in reality that's just not likely.

Developments in digital technology are changing the way retailers suggest add-ons, offering the ability to target supplemental items specifically targeted to enhance the customer's main purchase. Technology companies are adapting the mirror in the store's fitting room as a way to drive additional sales.

Reflecting additional revenue

Retailers have been experimenting with using the fitting-room mirror as a sales driver for several years. At the 2015 International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, for example, Japanese technology giant Panasonic demonstrated an interactive mirror that offers beauty tips, showing what a person's face might look like with various types of makeup.



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— Mohamed Ghalayini, general manager for worldwide sales and operations at media mea LLC

Several companies, including Los Angeles-based marketing firm Zugara, are piloting technology that allows shoppers to try on items virtually by projecting an image of a particular item of clothing on top of their image in a mirror, selecting from a variety of styles and colors from the store’s inventory.

When shoppers try on apparel at some of the stores operated by athletic wear maker Puma, they can use the Puma Interactive Mirror to take pictures of themselves wearing Puma clothing shown from different angles. The images are archived for later viewing, allowing shoppers to order the items via Puma’s e-commerce site or go back to the store at another time to buy the items.

Atlanta-based media mea has introduced a slightly different take on the interactive mirror concept. When a customer enters a fitting room with his or her clothing choices, media mea’s interactive mirror detects those choices via RFID technology and displays information about those items on the mirror itself. The effect is similar to the heads-up displays that are a fixture of fighter jets and quickly are becoming popular in automobiles.

The information displayed on the interactive mirror can be determined by the store owner. Possibilities include price, color and size choices and matching accessories.

“There can also be added options where the person can interact with that information and have those items held for them for when they are done making their choice,” said Mohamed Ghalayini, general manager for worldwide sales and operations at media mea LLC. “The choices are held in a virtual shopping cart, and when the customer is done making their selection the salesperson can simply hand them over.”

Options for the interactive mirror include basic price, size and add-on recommendations to touch-capable systems where shoppers can control the displayed information via their fingertips. Tapping a particular item brings up additional information, while selecting a group of items can alert staff to have those choices waiting by the checkout counter.

A customer trying on a suit, for example, could be presented with suggestions from the store’s inventory for a matching pair of shoes along with a shirt and tie. Someone trying on a dress could be presented with suggestions for shoes designed to match that dress along with choices for a handbag or other accessory.

If the customer would like to try on those suggested items or see their choices in a different color or size, that information could be transmitted to the sales staff, who then could bring those items to the fitting room. Not

About the sponsor:

Atlanta-based media mea LLC is a digital media marketing development firm specializing in the fabrication of interactive indoor and outdoor LCD/LED digital signage displays. The company's distributors are spread all over the world, giving the end user total satisfaction and quality service while helping businesses achieve creativity in targeting the right audience with both indoor and outdoor interactive communication displays. media mea clients enjoy 24/7 customer support that ensures great ongoing services.

only do the chances of the store making that sale increase dramatically, the chances of the customer making additional purchases increase as well.

Possibilities for the technology include opt-in programs in which the retailer identifies the shopper by information entered by the shopper or by detection of an app on that customer's smartphone. The retailer then has the option of suggesting additional purchases based on the customer's previous visits.

Preliminary tests conducted by media mea indicate the interactive systems can increase the sales of a retail store between 10 percent and 30 percent, with an investment payback of less than nine months. For the customer, the systems improve the shopping experience by streamlining that experience, providing quick answers to customer questions and minimizing annoying experiences.

"If the customer likes what he or she sees on the screen, then the store owner has the ability to keep the customer in the store and add more value to their purchase," Ghalayini said. "It's great for both the customer and the retailer."

Five customer-service tactics to increase sales

By Shep Hyken for RetailCustomerExperience.com

Engage with a strong welcome. Whether on the phone or in person, this greeting makes your customer feel comfortable and appreciated. This "first impression" sets the tone for whatever interaction is to follow. Follow up the greeting with an open-ended question that is specific to the reason the customer is calling or shopping with you.

Ask why. Once you understand what the customer wants, ask why. Why does the customer need your help or your product? Knowing the answer may reveal other opportunities for you to help or upsell the customer.

Upsell. And, speaking of upselling, do so if appropriate. For example, if a customer is at an Ace Hardware store buying a can of paint, it is perfectly logical, and many times appreciated by the customer, to ask if he or she needs brushes or other items to complete a paint project. Imagine the customer getting

home and realizing that he or she forgot to buy brushes. Not upselling the customer when appropriate can be bad customer service.

Ask what else. Don't finish the customer interaction without asking what else the customer may be looking for — or what other area of help he or she may need. It may be something completely unrelated to the purchase or the reason for the original call. This may reveal other opportunities.

Say, "Thank you!" Don't forget, as this may be one of the most important tactics. Show appreciation and send the customer out with a strong last impression, which can be just as important, if not more so, than the first impression.

