

Trendzilla alert: Tech builds tailor-made trust

By  Daniella Shapiro

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The hyper-connected multiverse of tomorrow is today. Brands can get washed away, overwhelmed by the virtual trend wave, or they can surf the possibilities in this era of omni-channeling.



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Once you dive into the Internet Of Things (IoT), there is no looking back. It is imperative to keep up with evolving consumer expectations. The digi-retail revolution is a brand's best friend in getting to know your customers and giving them what they want.

Customers want unique, tailor-made experiential packages, that are relevant and authentic. Ironically, it is technology, AI and virtual realms that are the most cutting-edge tools in keeping things real (and running smoothly on a practical level).

Omni-potent

Big ol' shopping malls are becoming redundant. Why trudge around and stand in queues, with no guarantee of getting your desired item, when you can instead place an order online and take delivery at your convenience? Streamlining requires slick omni-channeled stock and distribution procedures.

Online and offline work in tandem to maximize customer service satisfaction. Job descriptions are morphing into hybridized new age roles. A pragmatic, flexible approach is necessary in response to shifting practical requirements and consumer expectations. The more customer convenience, the better. Mobile apps such as 3D store maps allow shoppers to do their business remotely. Cutting out the middleman is cost and time efficient.

At least two birds...

Bridging the gap between offline and online realities is what IoT is all about. Connected smart devices allow brands to pull data that adds layers to their understanding of consumers' real needs. This, in turn, helps a brand to keep delivering on point.

Multi-functional devices are practically convenient and also helpful for market research; for example, theme park tickets that

also serve as hotel room keys and user IDs, which allow insights into consumer preferences. This info can be linked to vending machines which will automatically serve you your favourite coffee blend with a swipe of your card.



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Trippy

Augmented reality is virtual reality's cool cousin. Perceived reality is enhanced by layering additional features and attractions, even your favourite celeb, over a setting. The implications of this technology are vast, for marketing and medical research alike. There is now room for cost-effective experimentation, without the commitment. Shop various interior design combinations in AR, or meet Elvis. Your choice.

Auto Individuation

AI does not stand for algorithms and insights, but it should. Because thanks to our friendly AI, we are now able to find the meaning in huge data sets. We are able to join the dots (via bots), in understanding and catering for individual preferences. AI makes around-the-clock personalised service commonplace. And let's not forget those hard-working drones. AI has so many permutations and possibilities for consumer customization. Those 3D printed sweaters or chopsticks that talk back are no longer even surprising.

Solid sells

It is extremely gratifying to have technology that celebrates the individual. This is, after all, the key to it all. What matters is a brand's ability to let people know they are seen for who they are as individuals. Connection, engagement, relationship building with customers is facilitated through technological means.

We want customers to trust in our brand. We want to give them experiences that are personalised, that make them feel special, unique and alive. The core which gives life to this techno multiverse is humanity. It may seem easy to get lost in the maze of virtual attractions. But authentic brands know that as much as things change, the more consumers need to know they can rely on personal qualities such as ethics and integrity.

ABOUT DANIELLA SHAPIRO

Daniella Shapiro is Founder and CEO of DaniellaShapiro.com, a consulting company on the front lines of marketing, social media and branding strategies. Daniella recently launched the Oolala Collection Club, an e-commerce proudly South African, unisex, cutting-edge skincare and lifestyle brand. 100% Cruelty-Free. 100% Paraben Free. 100% Vegan. 0% Questionable. Oolala Collection Club stands for respecting our planet and affordable luxury.

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