

# Ace the Aisle

## Four Best Practices to Stand Out



An average retailer has 47,000 products for a consumer to choose from according to a Consumer Reports study.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, consumers are exposed to more than 5,000 brands and advertisements on a daily basis, but only 153 are remembered by the consumer and 12 ads make an impression.<sup>2</sup> These statistics help illustrate how the increasing number of products and advertisements are overwhelming to customers and pose a challenge for brands. Consumers no longer differentiate brands based on product features or functionality, but on customer experience. According to Harvard Business Review, customers who had a great past experience spend 140 percent more than those who had a poor past experience.<sup>3</sup>



And, the changes in consumer behavior trends, namely the proliferation of the smartphone, is further complicating a brand's ability to stand out. How many times have you gone into a store and used your mobile phone to check the reviews or to find information for a product you were considering? Well, you are not alone. According to a survey by DMI, 77 percent of consumers have used their smartphones while shopping in-store and 74 percent said they would shop at a retailer that offered an improved mobile in-store experience.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, 46 percent of outdoor equipment customers preferred to buy products in-store, according to a PwC 2016 study.<sup>5</sup> This suggests consumers are still making in-store purchases, but are expecting mobile experiences to assist in the purchasing process.



77% of consumers have used their smartphones while shopping in-store.

So, what can you do to make your brand stand out? We recommend you take advantage of these four best practices to help your brand stand out in the aisle.

1. Don't dwell on the things you can't control
2. Make the product the hero
3. Engage with your customers early and often
4. Take advantage of in-store mobile behavior

## Don't Dwell on the Things You Can't Control

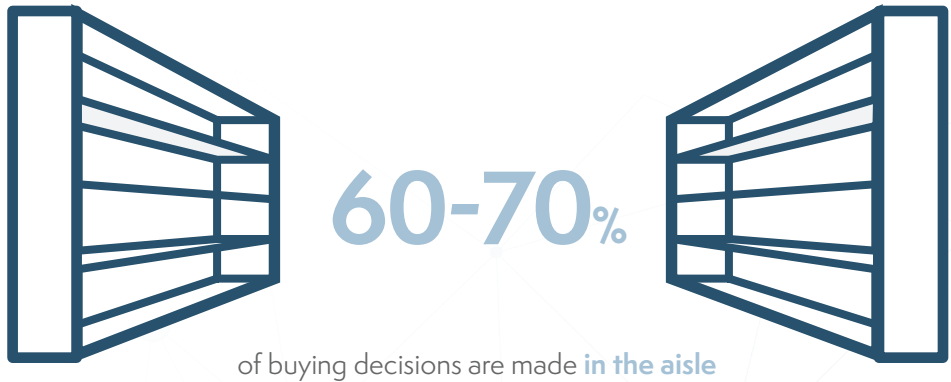
There are a number of things that brands can't always control, such as product placement in the aisle, your competitor's offering, or the launch of new products. While all of these can influence how consumers perceive your brand, it's important to know that wasting time worrying about things you cannot control won't help your product sales. Instead, you've got to take stock of what you can't control regarding your product, let it go, and focus on the factors within your control. Think of it like the old adage, don't cry over spilt milk. Accept it and move on.

Factors like customer experience, packaging, brand name, and price are more easily controlled within a brand and have an enormous impact on customers' purchase decisions. 59 percent of consumers prefer to buy new products from brands they trust.<sup>6</sup> 52 percent of consumers state they would likely return to a business for another purchase if they received a product in premium packaging.<sup>7</sup> By focusing on the things you can control, time and energy will be better spent on strengthening your brand to stand out from the competition.

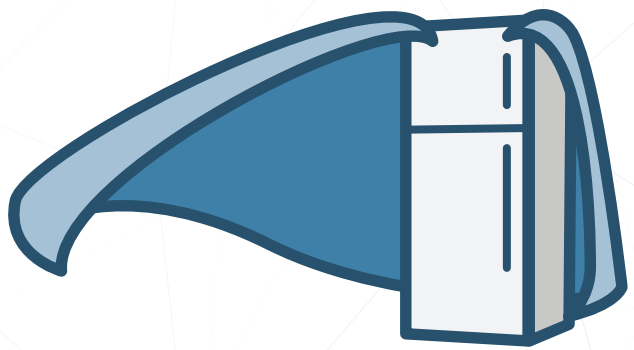


# Make the Product the Hero

Consumers are extremely busy and simply do not have time to read a ton of content about each product they purchase. According to LabelValue, 60 to 70 percent of buying decisions are made while the customer is in the aisle.<sup>8</sup> This leaves an enormous opportunity for brands who have clear and concise messaging about their product on their packaging and in any other in-store materials to impact a customer's purchase decision.



Product packaging plays a bigger role in purchasing decisions than you may think. When done well, it can generate more purchases than television ads, online reviews, and personal recommendations.<sup>9</sup> It is also an important tool to visually convey your brand. Effective product packaging should be simple and clear, honest to the nature of the product, practical for the consumer, and, most importantly, it should relay important product information.



This is where knowing your audience plays a big role. If a brand is well attuned to its customer base, it is more likely to target its audience with effective messaging and packaging, and in return it creates a more personal connection with the customer. Audience targeting allows for more focused and cost effective marketing strategies, providing faster results for marketing efforts and a greater return on investment.

A great way to ensure your brand is reaching its target audience is focus groups. Focus groups help your brand effectively gather customer perspectives on current and new ideas, products, and services. Our tip when it comes to focus groups: be sure to create multiple groups, each small in size with a diverse group of people. This will ensure your brand is speaking to your target audience in ways that resonate.

# Engage with Your Customers Early and Often

In addition to packaging, store advertisements, and promotional materials, brands should engage with customers using the platform they are already using most – smartphones. 97 percent of consumers say customer service is important in their choice of or loyalty to a brand,<sup>10</sup> which is why connecting with and providing service to your customers on mobile is extremely important.



The best way to reach your customers via their smartphones is to use QR codes or text-ins on product packaging and other in-store materials. 34 percent of consumers have scanned a QR code while shopping in-store.<sup>11</sup> This number is likely to rise as iOS



34% of consumers have scanned a QR code while shopping in a store.

11 will include a QR scanner in the native camera, further validating QR technology as a tool to reach consumers. QR codes and text-ins provide a pre-sales experience with product specific information to the customer, allowing for a hyper personalized in-store shopping experience. To be most effective with pre-sales experiences, your brand should focus on content that convinces the customer to buy your product.

This approach takes advantage of the proliferation of smartphones and the fact that consumers are most likely already using their phones in-store to make purchase decisions. Engaging with your customers by providing easily accessible information and unique mobile experiences allows your brand to stand out and can increase customer loyalty.

## Take Advantage of In-Store Mobile Behavior

82 percent of smartphone users consult their mobile device while in a store.<sup>12</sup> Customers who are using their mobile devices in-store are likely looking up product reviews to determine what product might be the best option. 74 percent of customers are more trusting of a local business with positive reviews, while 60 percent said that negative reviews made them less inclined to engage with a business.<sup>13</sup> In addition to product reviews, 54 percent of customers are using their smartphones to compare the competition's products and prices, and 48 percent search for product information.<sup>14</sup>



**74 percent** of customers are more trusting of a local business with positive reviews

These statistics illustrate that brands should make sure that relevant and recent product reviews and information are always available for their products. Seven out of 10 consumers will leave a review if they are asked,<sup>15</sup> which means that your brand should always take advantage of the opportunity to request a customer review. Try using an email campaign to ask new customers for reviews, and make the product review process short and simple by including an opportunity to write a review during product registration and onboarding.



**7/10 consumers will leave a review if they are asked,<sup>15</sup>** which means that your brand should always take advantage of the opportunity to request a customer review.

## Key Takeaways

While the retail environment and consumer behavior trends are dynamic, the best practices discussed are great ways to ensure your brand stands out from the competition in the aisle. We strongly encourage you to focus on the things you can control, make the product the hero, engage with your customers early and often, and take advantage of the in-store mobile behavior. Brands that take advantage of these best practices will stand out from the competition in the aisle of any retailer.

## References

<sup>1</sup> What to Do When There Are Too Many Product Choices on the Store Shelves?, Consumer Reports, January 2014.  
<sup>2</sup> New Research Sheds Light on Daily Ad Exposures, SJ Insights, September 2014.  
<sup>3</sup> The Value of Customer Experience, Quantified, Harvard Business Review, August 2014.  
<sup>4</sup> Mobile Maturity Model: 2016 US Retail, DMI, 2016.  
<sup>5</sup> They Say They Want A Revolution: Total Retail 2016, PricewaterhouseCoopers, February 2016.  
<sup>6</sup> The Impact of Brand on a Consumer Purchase Decision, MarTech, September 2015.  
<sup>7</sup> How Product Packaging Affects Buying Decisions, MarketingProfs, September 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Influence of Packaging on Consumer Buying Behavior, LabelValue.  
<sup>9</sup> If the Consumer Isn't Happy with Packaging, Nobody is Happy, Brand Packaging, April 2013.  
<sup>10</sup> Global State of Multichannel Customer Service Report, Microsoft, 2015.  
<sup>11</sup> 2014 Mobile Behavior Report, Salesforce, 2014.  
<sup>12</sup> Micro-Moments: Your Guide to Winning the Shift to Mobile, Google, April 2015.  
<sup>13</sup> Local Consumer Review Survey 2016, Bright Local, 2016.  
<sup>14</sup> More Than 90% Of Consumers Use Smartphones While Shopping In Stores, Retail Touch Point, 2015.  
<sup>15</sup> Local Consumer Review Survey, Bright Local, 2016.