

Apparel **Executives.com**

Smart Retail: Mobile Apps Lure Shoppers In-Store

Shopping therapy has always been one of retail's most powerful weapons—since the dawn of the department store, and probably before. New research from mobile-retail gurus Swirl suggests that retailers should be targeting therapeutic shoppers on their smartphones.

Swirl's study, which surveyed 1,000 women, found that 53% have between one and five shopping apps on their smartphones, but only 24% said they prefer using the apps to shopping in-store. Half of the women said they're more than happy to share personal information with these stores, but only if they're getting a special deal—even for a very small value, like a \$5-off coupon. For most retailers, that kind of data is worth the money.

Lastly, the study found that women are nearly twice as likely to appreciate a personalized offer when it's delivered to their smartphones—the alternative being a reminder from an in-store sales associate.

So even when shoppers aren't buying on their smartphones, a successful retail app can lure them into the store. As Swirl CEO Hilmi Ozguc said, retailers can use mobile to “create value for shoppers,” by “delivering personalized content and offers, where and when they matter most— while they are shopping in their stores.”

<http://www.apparelexecutives.com/smart-retail-mobile-apps-lure-shoppers-in-store/>

The Omni-Channel Effect: John Lewis Hits \$1.5 in Online Sales

UK retailer [John Lewis](#) just hit the £1 billion-mark—or \$1.5 billion mark, on this side of the pond—but the chain remains all about bricks-and-mortar.

With 39 stores in the UK, new online director Mark Lewis told *The Telegraph* not to view their e-commerce and in-store sales separately. “That's not how we view them internally,” he said.

What Lewis is talking about, of course, is “omni-channel” retailing—the idea that customers can shop fluidly across formats, whether they buy online, in-store, or with their smartphones. A shopper might look up an item online, compare it to other products using a mobile app, and then pick the item up in-store—all seamlessly, all with what Lewis calls “a single presentation.”

So far, John Lewis’s multi-channel approach has been paying off—statistics show that the presence of physical John Lewis department stores directly correlate to upticks in local online sales. “Customers don’t view us as a store or a website,” Lewis explained. “They view us as John Lewis.”

<http://www.apparelexecutives.com/the-omni-channel-effect-john-lewis-hits-1-5-in-online-sales/>

Bloomingdale’s Goes Hi-Tech with Me-Ality Digital Sizing Booths

Jeans shopping is a nightmare for many woman (and plenty of men), but [Bloomingdale’s](#) hopes their new, high-tech sizing booths can transform the experience into a dream.

The department store has introduced [Me-Ality Sizing Booths](#), which aim to match women with their ideal denim. The measurement takes only 10 seconds—a woman steps into the booth, the booth scans her body and records 200,000 measurements, and then spits out a list of brands and sizes.

“Fitting denim can be trying,” Bloomingdale’s VP Marissa Vitagliano told [Adweek](#). “We felt that these booths would improve the shopping experience.”

Brick-and-mortar retailers are working harder than ever to compete with online shopping sites, and innovations like Me-Ality, which requires the customer’s physical presence, are certainly one way of emphasizing the in-store experience.

“Anything that can streamline the process and make it easier and faster and better will help them,” said Marshal Cohen, an industry analyst at PD Group. “Retailers need to get into the 21st century.”

<http://www.apparelexecutives.com/bloomingdales-goes-hi-tech-with-me-ality-digital-sizing-booths/>

Can Fashion “Incubator” Revitalize LA?

Look for a new kind of start-up this summer, when 26-year-old designer/ marketer/consultant Leah Garvin will launch [FactoryLA](#), a for-profit “fashion incubator” in LA’s historic garment district.

FactoryLA aims to foster emerging brands who manufacture their clothing in LA, and who ensure that their workers are legally documented and fairly paid.

“We will be a full-service agency, from concept to customer,” said Garvin. Along with a group of expert fashion consultants, they will help brands develop strategies—from promotion to production. The building will also house a showroom, where clients can display their wares to retail buyers. The emerging designers will pay a “project-management” fee to FactoryLA, on top of the fees to individual consultants.

LA’s apparel manufacturing sector employed 45,000 workers last year; this year, that number is down to 44,500. Garvin, and FactoryLA, want to change that. On the company’s website, the group writes: “We believe that we can invigorate LA’s garment industry and return our city to a thriving manufacturing hub.”

<http://www.apparelexecutives.com/can-fashion-incubator-revitalize-la/>