

Shopper Back

BY KARUNA RAWAL

ARC WORLDWIDE

The advertising industry espouses many points of view on the best way to win shoppers and buyers. The 30-second television commercial was once considered the best avenue. More recently, employing former Procter & Gamble CEO Alan G. Lafley’s “First Moment of Truth” concept, agencies have focused on the in-store environment to heighten the appeal of products at that key moment when a consumer makes a buying decision at the shelf.

Then, as the Lafley concept evolved, it generated the notion of *store back*—when an idea is executed first in the retail environment before focusing on other communication touch-points. Today, we need to recognize the enormous impact of technology and how it can create many interactions between a consumer and a brand before the consumer ever sees a product on the shelf. Shoppers simply aren’t limited any longer to what’s on any retailer’s shelf because now everything is available online.

Even shopping for something as mundane as grocery products isn’t as simple as before. Many shoppers now add the steps of collecting online coupons and perusing product reviews written by other consumers before heading to the store. They

turn to Facebook for recommendations by friends on various products and services. We need to evolve our thinking again beyond *store back* to assimilate this new world that faces shoppers and our brands.

Enter *shopper back*. It’s a philosophy that begins with a holistic view of the shopper and her behavior, and works back from there. It puts her on center stage, starting with an individual shopper and her very personal shopping journey. Understanding who that shopper is, what she values and what she expects from the shopping and buying processes is the foundation.

Shoppers expect brands to meet their needs anytime, everywhere.

This approach requires understanding her as a human being, a consumer *and* a shopper. It’s about her behavior, including shopping and buying triggers as well as the barriers and the joys she experiences—everything that influences her behavior on this journey.

From there, we must let our knowledge of the shopper and her behavior drive the role that various shopping channels and media touch-points will play. We must understand the role of each channel and touch-point in closing the sale—or bringing her closer to the sale—because we can’t expect shoppers to come to the channels where our brands advertise any longer.

Shopper Back

Recognize that the shopper determines how she interacts with the brand. Understand her points of “pain” and “joy” to help move her closer to the sale.

What is her goal or need?

- Exploration
- Product in hand
- Selection
- Service
- Purchase
- Return
- Validation

Where is she?

- At home
- At work
- On the go
- In a store

What are her available shopping channels?

- The web
- Vending
- Mobile
- Direct
- Store
- Catalog
- Kiosk
- In-home sale

How is she interacting with your brand?

- Through an ad
- Branded website
- Smart phone app
- Pre-shopping site
- Social network site
- Augmented reality
- Mobile code scanner
- With a person
- In the store
- At a display
- At the shelf
- Through the package

SOURCE: Arc Worldwide

With the knowledge of how the shopper evaluates and makes choices among her various channel options for buying, we can work with retailers to help them determine how best to meet and exceed the shopper’s expectations. Ultimately, the goal is to be able to engage a shopper across all of the shopping and buying channels with the right messaging and communication to influence her behavior.

EVERY SHOPPER IS DIFFERENT

While we can generalize to some level using segmentation models, ultimately every shopper is different. Arc Worldwide’s own research reveals six shopper archetypes based on shopping attitudes and motivations (“Precision, Passion & Prudence,” *The Hub*, Nov/Dec, 2009). Today, shoppers have heightened expectations of the shopping experience and desire a process that they can control.

For example, for the *efficient sprinter* shopper, who will readily pay more for convenience, a consumer packaged-goods online retailer such as Alice.com might prove especially appealing. Alice.com sells home goods such as toilet paper, trash bags and toothpaste directly from manufacturers. It even offers an iPhone app that provides a more convenient way to shop and save time, thus employing technology to take away the chore and hassle of household shopping—perfect for the *efficient sprinter*.

On the other hand, a highly discerning shopper who needs to experience products firsthand—a *quality devotee*—might prefer the experience of shopping offered by Swiss watchmaker Tissot. Recently, as part of an advertising campaign at London’s Selfridges on Oxford Street, Tissot made hi-tech touch screens available and store employees handed out wristbands with markers to passersby.

Shoppers tried on a range of Tissot watches by holding up their wrist to the camera and seeing each watch appear on it. This augmented reality-marketing approach provided an engaging interactive experience for shoppers who are motivated by the desire to try before they buy.

It’s All About Her Behavior. Next we must consider the shopper’s behavior, which varies by category and may involve shopping and buying across multiple channels. Shoppers now choose their information and product touch-points to suit their needs.

Unlike the past, when shoppers started with a retailer in mind, they often start now by “Googling”

a product or brand. They concentrate on getting what they need rather than on the channels or retailers that they shop. They move fluidly from one channel to another, and these channels simply serve as the tool for landing the brand or product of their choice.

For instance, a shopper may visit a drug store to pick up a newspaper so that she can review the ads and coupons. But she may never even consider going into the personal-care aisle to buy her hand lotion while there. Another shopper may select a jacket from a catalog but not make the purchase until she's tried it on at a store.

Follow Her Path. For each shopper, different needs emerge in different categories. The way she shops for shoes, for instance, will vary from the way she shops for a new washer and these needs dictate the channel mix she will use. It's rarely a direct path and it varies by category, depending on the risk/reward profile for that category. Her path may involve multiple channels and touch-points, all of which help her accomplish her shopping and buying goals.

Depending on where your category falls with risk/reward, your shopper may use more or fewer channels along her purchase path. A highly rewarding and highly risky category like skincare may drive her to consider and shop multiple channels (online, store, catalog, etc.) while a less rewarding and less risky category may limit her use of multiple channels.

For instance, let's assume your dentist recommends that you buy a power toothbrush and offers you the chance to buy one then and there. The cost, however, is higher than you expect, so you decide to shop around. You go to Target, but you are overwhelmed by the product options and decide you need to do some research.

You go to the Sonicare and Oral-B websites to learn more. Then you go to drugstore.com to read consumer reviews. Now you are ready to see the product before making your final choice. You return to Target to view the product, but decide to wait for a sale. You receive the Costco coupon booklet with a discount on a different toothbrush so you decide to switch to this product. You go to Costco to buy it. Now you keep your eye out for future sales on the product that you tried and liked.

What this example illustrates is that we must understand each step within that journey, including the barriers that prevent our shopper from purchasing as well as her joy and pain points. We must ascertain

how she views and what she brings to each step to best understand and influence her behavior. Reasons exist for why she buys and why she doesn't.

Put Her in the Driver's Seat. Savvy brands will use their knowledge of a shopper's behavior at the various points in her shopping journey to guide their creative and messaging decisions. To do this, they must determine what's required to communicate to her at certain points to get her closer to purchase or to close the sale. The goal is to engage with each shopper by delivering relevant information at key points and places in her journey.

It's also essential to understand who and what comprises a shopper's key influencers—those people and experiences that help mold her buying decisions, whether they emanate from word-of-mouth, professional and friend circles, or memories of prior brand experiences.

But while people want counsel from other shoppers and sources, they also want to share their experiences and look for validation before—or even after—making a purchase. That's where technology advances have had a huge impact. They have helped fashion a new shopper-defined path to purchase that truly puts her in the driver's seat.

For example, Diesel, the watch and accessories maker, created an interactive installation in a Diesel store in Spain that permitted users to share the moment of buying with their Facebook friends. The installation lets consumers take pictures and publish them directly onto their very own Facebook account.

The ultimate goal with *shopper back* is to provide a consistent and holistic brand experience for your shopper regardless of channel. Why? Because she doesn't have an online and an offline life—she simply lives her life and expects to shop fluidly across online to mobile to catalog to store and any other channel she may choose. Those brands that recognize this and best understand the shopper's journey will truly benefit by gaining her trust and loyalty. They'll close the sale. ■



KARUNA RAWAL is svp, retail strategy director, at **Arc Worldwide**, the marketing services arm of Leo Burnett Group, specialists in shopper, digital, promotion and direct marketing. She may be reached at karuna.rawal@arcww.com.