

ENGAGEMENT

Multichannel shopping has radically changed consumers' relationships with retailers. A Retail Week report assesses how to meet shoppers' needs

How to reinvent retailers' relationships with customers



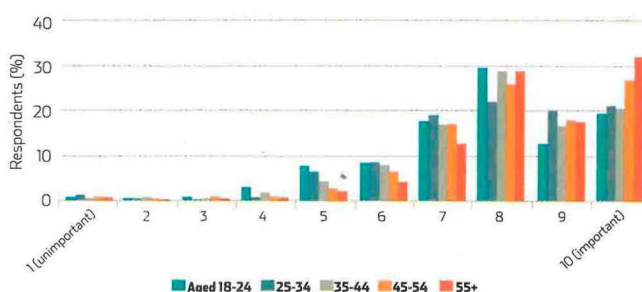
STORES

Consumers want store staff to be engaging and knowledgeable about products, according to *Retail Week* and Serco's survey of 2,000 consumers – a majority of 71% say it is highly important. That compares with 26% who are neutral and 3% who consider it unimportant.

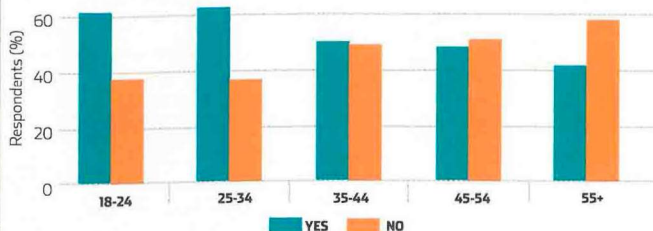
The research found 66% of those aged 18 to 24 want store staff to be more inspirational in terms of offering 'creative service'. That proportion dips 26 percentage points to 40% for those aged 55 and over. The findings validate the idea that generation Z shoppers – generally speaking those born in the 1990s – demand a level of service above and beyond that expected by their parents and grandparents.

Digital natives want more engagement with store staff. They want employees to advise, promote and validate their purchases.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it that store staff are engaging and knowledgeable about products on sale?



While shopping online, would you find it helpful to engage with a retail employee via a chat function when deciding on what items to purchase?



ONLINE

Multichannel retailers are constantly striving to better translate the in-store experience and, ultimately, a retail brand into the online world, particularly those operating at the higher end of the market.

What is clear is that employees can play a vital role in helping retail brands to transfer the in-store customer experience, or level of service, online.

Live chat functions allowing customers to ask staff questions on a retailer's website are one way to improve online brand engagement.

The panel of consumers surveyed are balanced in terms of their opinion on the benefit of live chat applications. 50% state they would find it useful and 50% say the opposite. But the split changes over the age range – more than 60% of younger respondents say it would be useful.

CALL CENTRE

When asked if they expect staff in call centres to be as knowledgeable about product as a store employee, 85% of consumers say that they should be, and more than 80% of shoppers across all age groups agree.

That implies retailers need to invest in training call centre staff on areas such as social media activity and product knowledge to ensure their message is aligned with the brand's customer communication strategy.

If you phone a retailer, do you expect the employee on the end of the line to be as knowledgeable about product as someone in the retailer's store?

