

SO-LO-MO Central

A roundup of **social**, **local** and **mobile** marketing activity at retail



Dan Ochwat, on the So-Lo-Mo beat since 2011, served as an editor of *Shopper Marketing* for nine years. Send comments and So-Lo-Mo news to solomo@p2pi.org.

SOCIAL

There were more than 7.5 million downloads of the Pokemon Go app in the United States as of late July. Developed by **Niantic Inc.**, that app has seen daily usage that has rivaled that of Twitter, with more than 60% of people who downloaded the app using it daily, according to online research company SimilarWeb. And people have used it to the tune of 43 minutes a day on average, says SimilarWeb, surpassing users on Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook Messenger. It's obvious why brands and retailers would seek ways to get involved, but Niantic itself announced in a *Financial Times* article that it would be rolling out sponsored locations, giving brands a chance to pay to be a location inside the augmented reality game and get charged on a cost-per-click model. Already, organic yogurt brand Stonyfield Farm has delivered targeted ads to users who were near a PokeStop. The brand worked with Aki Technologies, Orlando, Florida. An option for retailers is to "Lure" users to a store for a short amount of time to catch Pokemon. GameStop has been doing that for nearly 200 stores.

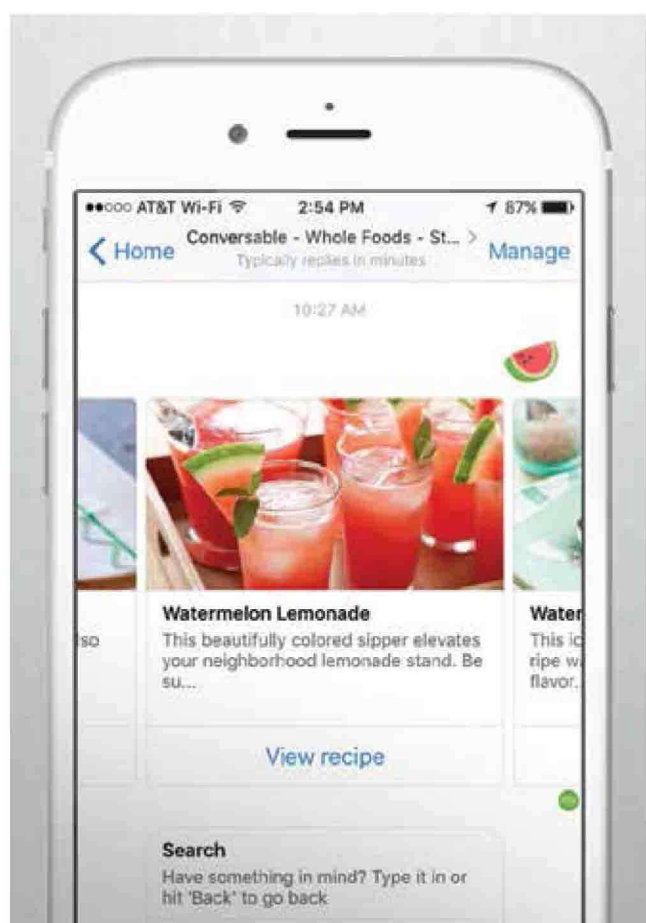


... sponsored locations.



... playing president.

Adding to this year's election fever, **Toys "R" Us** executed a fun, social campaign looking to elect a child between the ages of 9 and 14 to be their "President of Play." Parents nominated their child with a short video at ToysRUs.com/PresidentofPlay, and three were to be selected as semifinalists to then compete in a public vote for the title of President of Play. The winning child holds the title for one year and is used to play, review and recommend toys throughout the year. The gig will help fuel the retailer's social efforts throughout the year. In addition to Twitter posts and social media outreach, Toys "R" Us promoted the contest through email, on its homepage and with a national and regional PR effort.

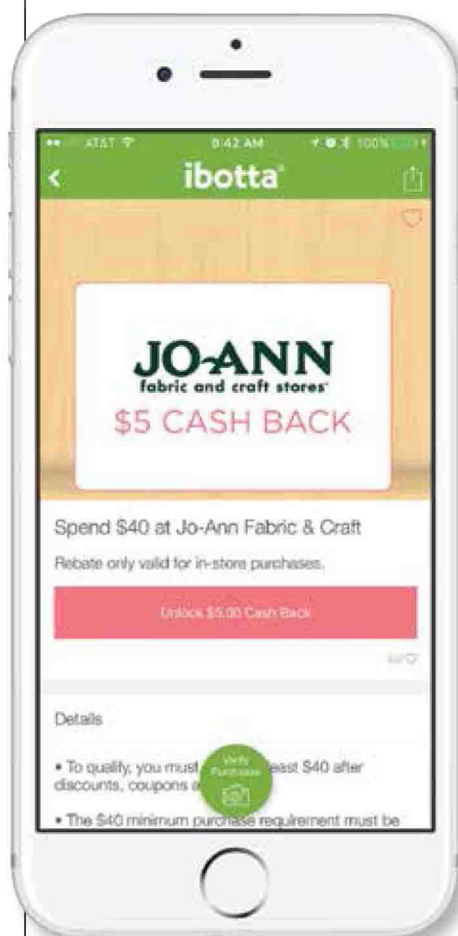


... artificial intelligence.

Whole Foods is working to merge emojis and chatbots to help shoppers in its stores figure out what to make for dinner. When a consumer looks up Whole Foods in the Facebook Messenger app, she can send a message to the chatbot to get recipe ideas. A user can send an emoji of an ingredient and receive recipes with those elements included, too. Whole Foods is using a platform from Conversable, Dallas, to manage the artificial intelligence communication.

LOCAL

Denver-based **Ibotta** has struck a partnership with **Jo-Ann Stores** and its more than 850 stores to provide cash back rewards for Ibotta app users. Jo-Ann will use Ibotta's new Dynamic Segmentation platform and CRM data to run personalized content that is targeted based on how shoppers interact with content and their previous buying behavior. The partnership is interesting, too, because Jo-Ann's specialty crafts stores have a bit of a reputation as a "grandma quilting store," according to a rep at Ibotta, but crafting has actually become popular among Millennials, per Mintel. A multiyear partnership with Ibotta is part of a growing effort to reach Millennials by Jo-Ann.



... crafty Millennials.



... proximity notifications.

CVS/pharmacy reportedly was one of the first retailers to test **Google's** Nearby beacon technology, which enables the retailer to send notifications to CVS app users when they're near a store, not just inside near a beacon. The example used by Google in a blog was that CVS could send a notification to an app user, telling them to print photos from their phone at a CVS that's close. The Nearby feature also sends notifications of apps an Android user may want to download that could be useful as they approach a location. For example, download the United Airlines app before boarding a flight.

MOBILE

Introducing “Beaumoji,” featuring more than 130 new emojis from **L’Oreal USA** to give mobile users a more animated way to talk about style trends. Users download the Beaumoji keyboard in the app store. Emoji looks are categorized by beauty trends, lifestyle trends and also brands such as Urban Decay Naked or Maybelline New York Great Lash. In accordance with the launch of the emoji board, L’Oreal ran a social contest asking consumers to design their own beauty emoji. Selected by a panel of beauty advisors, the winner was sent to the Beautycon festival in New York to have her Beaumoji revealed at an event on stage.

... animated style.



A Canadian outlet mall used the popularity of virtual reality technology to bring in shoppers for the back-to-school shopping season. **Dixie Outlet Mall**, Mississauga, Ontario, set up what they called a “VR Adventure Lounge” that existed for a few weeks from August to September. The lounge gave shoppers a chance to try out a Samsung Gear VR headset. Each week participants would be taken into different themed explorations like a deep-sea exploration, for example. The idea

behind the lounge was to exhilarate and bring some fun energy to the mall since the back-to-school season can be stressful and expensive. Guests who visited the lounge were entered into a drawing for a \$500 back-to-school shopping spree.



... VR lounge.

China-based **Alibaba** has taken another step toward opening a virtual reality shop through its e-commerce site.



... VR shop.

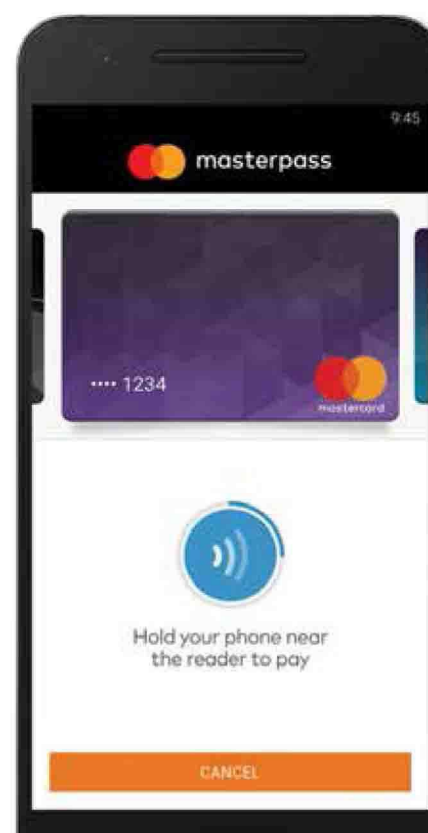
In the spring, Alibaba launched its Gnome Magic Lab to look into VR, then in July demoed for select media a VR shop where online buyers wearing a VR headset with their mobile phone could browse and shop a virtual store. In the virtual store, a robotic store associate guided shoppers through the store and recommended products, according to an article in *Internet Retailer*. Reports say the e-commerce company is looking to make VR shopping accessible by the end of the year.



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MasterCard launched what it calls an omnichannel digital payment service because it is linking users to buy within a mobile app either online or in-store. The new digital payment service called Masterpass includes the ability to tap a phone to a reader in a store such as BJ’s Wholesale Club and a range of food-service locations. The system also gives users the ability to pay through partnering online merchants like Lord & Taylor or by linking up within mobile apps like the Exxon Mobile Speedpass for quick purchases. Masterpass is said to be available in more than 5 million retail stores where shoppers can tap, pay and leave.

... tap, pay and leave.