



Reflections from NRF

by Pat Riley

A couple weeks ago, I attended the 101st NRF “Retail’s Big Show” in New York City. For those who were able to attend, I’m sure you will agree with me that the show was well worth the trip. If you were not able to attend, I would strongly suggest you put next year’s show on your calendar now.

Almost every session discussed the opportunities that advancements in technology offer retailers – specifically how retailers have the opportunity to know their customers better. From loyalty programs to Facebook and Twitter, retailers have more data and more active engagement from customers than ever before—and customers have high expectations of how they want to be treated by your brand.

Today’s shopper expects you to know her name, what she commonly buys from your store, and how she wants you to communicate with her. And, she expects a great shopping experience whether in store or online.

But what does this mean for your POP program? How can your POP program better reflect what you know about your shopper? Is it possible to create a “local” feel in each of your stores?

While some retailers are working to incorporate this idea of localization in their store designs (Starbucks’ new store designs reflect the character of each store’s surrounding neighborhood), current economic pressures make it difficult for most retailers to conduct a mass remodel of all locations. But there are options available through the use of local POP.

Similar to the evolutions that retailers have seen with direct mail and email communications, POP is on the cusp of major reinvention. Just as marketers tailor offers made in emails and utilize different pictures on direct mail pieces based on the recipient, technology is making it possible for marketers to localize POP.

What do I mean by “Localized POP”? Instead of using stock photos of buildings, use a picture of a local high school. Instead of generic sports themes, use local college or pro logos and mascots. And wouldn’t customers enjoy seeing their trusted sales associate on an end cap?

Just as was the case with mail and email, there are several questions to be asked and answered before you devote a significant portion of your marketing concept to this idea. But the opportunity to better connect with your shopper should not be discounted or overlooked.

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