
The Digital in Store and the Re-Enchantment of the Customer Experience: What Impact on the Immersion in the Experience of Consumption?

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Henceforth, the retailers estimate that the digital transformation of their enterprises manipulates two levers of performance notably: the customer's relations and the turnover. They use some digital technologies to personalize the consumer's experiences and to offer to the customers the possibility to make the self-service and to dive in an exceptional experience. The demonstration of the relation nature between this digitalization of the point-of-sale and the re-enchantment of the customer's experience made the objective of this research. Through an exploratory study conducted with a dozen customers from certain quarters to distribution in Tunis, we have tested this relationship. The results of this study show that today a digitalized point-of-sale promotes the stimulation of purchase, reinvents the experience of shopping and leads, therefore, to an immersion in an experience of consumption.

Keywords: *Digitalization; technology; point-of-sale; re-enchantment; immersion; experience of consumption*

Introduction

After having long decried the negative impact of the development of e-commerce on the security of the physical networks of points of sale, the specialists are now aiming to find between the two channels real synergies. They believe that the digital transformation of their businesses operated

including two levers of performance: customer relations and the turnover. Thus, the statistics show that the sales by the e-commerce do not cease to increase. If several enterprises adopted Internet completely like channel of sale, they try today to capitalize their experiences and to determine new levers of creation of value to differentiate them, to increase their commercial performance and to increase the satisfaction of their customers (Fabrice, 2012; Henri, 2013). They essentially concentrate on the coupling between virtual and real in order to capture their customer's attention and to transform the window-shopping into real and authentic (Lubomira, 2013, Christophe, 2013). Indeed, in this universe, the picture is a queen; the sharing of videos and photos became a crucial activity. The customer is no more alone, he can take a rest on the opinion of hundreds of millions of consumers. It may in turn do listen to his voice as never before (Christophe, 2013, Henri, 2013). Through the e-commerce, the consumer has access, in recent years, to offer a very broad and even bloated and is not compelled by the out-of-stock. It has become extremely spoiled and capricious (Fabrice, 2012). He therefore searches the same diversity, the same pleasure and the same speed in-store. But, it remains a necessary condition and not sufficient (Henri, 2013). In fact, beyond these benefits provided by the Internet to trade, the client seeks, now, a human contact, a board of a salesman, a direct conversation, etc. , even if the client has prepared its purchase on the web (Ratchet, 2013).

The consumer of today, then seeks an atmosphere he cannot regain elsewhere (Roederer, 2008). Where comes the idea of re-enchant and to reinvent the concept of the store through a dichotomy between the real and the digital, between the physical and the digital (During, 2010). This can be done by such devices to accompany the customer at every stage of its purchase: reception, information, orientation, presentation of the catalog of offerings, selection of products or services, order and payment, withdrawal, after-sale (Henri, 2013). The use, for example ,of the immersive giant screens, of tablets for consulting and sharing the opinion, of the geotagging to the inside of the shop of smart phones to place orders, etc.

Consequently, it becomes interesting for the retailers not to disregard this channel and to refine their strategy marketing to succeed the interconnection of their strategy of points-of-sale with their digital strategy. It is also fundamental for these specialists to succeed in valuing the impact of the digital on the performances of their point-of-sales: the traffic

generated in point of sales, the accompaniment in the decision of purchase and the enrichment of the consumption experience are for example important indicators to follow to evaluate the success of this strategy.

Our main objective through this investigation is to understand the process by highlighting the role of this digitization (scanning) of points of sale in the re-enchantment of the experience of customer consumption and therefore the immersion in the experience of consumption experienced in-store.

We found interest to deal with this subject because of the fact that previous research having studied this theme is rare, even in our sense; this field of research is still unexploited. Thus we have had the enthusiasm to explore this field while stressing the difficulties encountered such as the poor theoretical outcome, the number of the digitalized points of sale in the Tunisian context is reduced as well as the limited number of technologies used.

Thus, our fundamental question in this investigation, which form the object of our problem, is the following: to what extent the digitalization of a point of sale allows you to re-enthrall the customer experience and therefore the immersion in the experience of consumption.

To deal with this problem, firstly, we will try, at the level of the theoretical part, to clarify the concept of digitalization of the point of sale through the study of certain technologies used in commercial spaces, their uses and their attractiveness for the customer. Secondly, we will examine the relationship between the digitalization of point of sale and the re-enchantment of the experience, such an experience that seeks the consumer during his visit to a point of sale (Holbrook and Hirshman, 1982; Bouchet and Pulh, 2006; Carton, 2004). The empirical part of our research presents a synthesis of data collected in the field. We will begin with a brief description of the methodology used in the collection of data, and then continue with a presentation of the main results obtained. Thus, given the exploratory nature of this investigation, we have adopted a qualitative research methodology based mainly on a set of interviews with a reduced sample (Andreani and Georges Conchon, 2002, Bourgeon-Renault, 2008). This means that the sample of customers studied (17customers) is not necessarily representative of the population. That is why we have chosen to present the results in the form of a synthesis. The reader should therefore take these results as of trends rather than as facts statistically valid (Andreani and

Georges Conchon, 2002). We will finish this work by certain limits and future tracks of the investigation.

Toward the conceptualization of digitalization of a point-of-sale

Digitize a point of sale (digital in store) means to transform into numbers. The digitalization of business is no longer an abstract concept. Many companies today have begun to develop this digital transformation: from the intention to invest in the full integration in the overall strategy of the company (Hannebicque, 2012). Thus, digitalization affected all departments within the company. It changed the objectives and organization of the marketing and communication services, but also transformed the functioning of other departments: computing, commercial, distribution ... It forms the core of a deep transformation of distribution networks. It is to implement digital tools allowing better discovering the offers and services on the place of sale. The digital is divided, up to this day, mainly into five categories of tools (Henri, 2013): smartphones, tablets, and kiosks, the furniture intelligent and interactive screens. The use of these technologies depends on the nature of the point of sale and of the services offered. Hence, a cultural point of sale, in competition with the e-commerce, privileges a lively and fun customer journey to encourage consumers to move.

A restoration chain used more the interactive terminals and smartphones to facilitate the taking of control of its customers and avoid a long waiting. A point of sale dedicated to electrical household appliances puts forward, normally, the intelligent furniture to test the benefits of the products and the interactive screens to promote the brand and the offer (Ratchet, 2013). In addition, in a point of sale-council, as a travel agency, the shelves are accompanying the salesmen in their role as advisors and screens animated font scroll through the offers of the moment. Thus, several professionals and researchers in this area(Ratchet, 2013 ; Fabrice, 2012 ; Hannebicque, 2012) consider that the digital in store is present in the three stages of the journey of purchase of the consumer: before-sale (orientation in the store, the discovery of the tenders and the universe of the brand, product testing, council), sale (convenience of payment, time-saving, standalone payment), after-sale (early accession to the after sales services,

subscription to new services, monitoring of commands). Operates in an appropriate and effective manner, the digital in store helped to reinvent the customer experience and to re-enchant the point of sale (During, 2010). In effect, as a result, the client can navigate in the catalog, discover, and detail the products, configure if necessary ... thereby reproducing in shop the usages of the e-commerce, without the constraints of storage and exposure. As well, several brands have equipped their stores of terminals that allow you to browse the catalog, compare and choose its products, with the ability to print a ticket of withdrawal goods. In the face of over informed consumers, the sellers also gaining efficiency: via tablets or even with advanced terminals, they are based on an enriched information product, up-to-date, and can focus on listening and advice. Better, in some networks, they have access to the profile and to the purchase history of the customer, thus adapting the speech to the function of the interlocutor. Integrated in the customer journey, these tools allow you to better guide the consumer until the act of purchase and thus improve the rate of transformation.

From digital in store to the immersion and the re-enchantment of the experience of consumption

Beyond these functions of information and incentive to the act of purchase, the digitalization can play other roles and thus contribute to the improvement and the re-enchantment of the customer experience (Roederer, 2008 ; During, 2010). As well, the digital in store (digitalization of points of sale) contributed to reinvent the customer experience by improving the customer journey throughout its act of purchase, by optimizing the rate of conversation and passage to the cashier (Deniaud, 2012 ; Fabrice, 2012), by promoting the gain of time, etc. Otherwise in transposing the benefits of the web in the physical world to a more complete customer experience.

Similarly the digital in store promotes the dramatization of the point of sale and makes the sales' space spectacular. Several examples can be illustrated in this framework. Thus, "In the booth Citroen of the world car 2012, the cylindrical giant screen full HD and the 4D cinema which proposed a unique experience to the sides of Sebastien Loeb, have acted as a magnet to visitors. The spectacular side of the booth has been strengthened by the interactive soils with projections of holograms and intelligent mirrors

showing visuals of the new range in overprint. The blending of an image with product description to an object, via the technology of the digital glass, has made of the pedagogy, reflecting the universe and the know-how to the French of the mark ".

Today most merchant sites seek to mobilize the technologies that are considered as contexts in which customers can make the experience spectacular online without the fear of disrupting the external elements. They are now designed to allow you to live virtual experiments through the development of immersive technologies (Tabacaru and Cova, 2006). These sites are enclosed secure and thematised frameworks, (Carù and Cova, 2003, 2006,; Firat and Dholakia, 1998) where the experience of immersion can possibly take place. They dramatize the decor; put in stage the story told by the site, stimulate the five senses as well as the interactions between the consumers and their digitalized environment. The combination of these three tendencies leads the consumers to live rewarding and enjoyable experiences of immersive consumption (Filser, 2002).

The technologies deployed by these sites give meaning to the experience by the simultaneous production and interaction of the cognitive and emotional responses (Ladwein, 2004).

The consumer becomes both actor and spectator of the experience: "it is not outside the process, but the very object of the experience to visit; it is jointly acting subject and object of the transformation" (Hetzl, 2002).It cross reacts with the marks and the products offered by the companies (Cova and Cova, 2009) in the digitalized environments and contexts that are made available to him.

Considered as Interactive, searchable and can be viewed in real time, the digitalization of points of sales bring, therefore, more realism to the environment of the site by decreasing the major constraints caused by the lack of physical contact between the consumer and the online products (Suh and Lee, 2005).

Methodology of research

Given the exploratory nature of this investigation, we have adopted a qualitative research methodology based primarily on a set of interviews with a reduced sample (Andreani and Georges Conchon, 2002, Bourgeon-Renault, 2008). This means that the sample of customers studied (17customers) is not

necessarily representative of the population. That is why we have chosen to present the results in the form of a synthesis. The reader should therefore take these results as tendencies rather than as facts statistically valid (Andreani and Georges Conchon, 2002).

To check virtually this positive relationship between the digital in store and the re-enchantment of the customer experience, we have tried to collect the information by means of a qualitative research from a dozen (17) of clients in commercial circles in Tunis as well as from two retailers.

In effect, a preliminary review of the literature on experiential marketing has allowed us to formulate the interview guide (Andreani and Georges Conchon, 2002). This maintenance guide is formed of a set of questions divided into a set of themes. It has also been translated into Arabic in order to better communicate with certain customers. The people that we have had the pleasure to interview in the place of sale confirm that they have already used some digital tools on the place of sale prior to purchasing the product or services.

Analysis of the results

The analysis of the responses of the interviewed has allowed us to identify a set of essential points. First, it should be said that the customers interviewed are encountered in the places of sale of technological products (7 clients and a retailer), ready-to wear (5 clients and a retailer), restoration (3clients) and games (2 clients). The number of integrated technologies in these places is very limited. Moreover, the technologies adopted in the surfaces of sale in Tunisia are reduced. They are confined to interactive screens, wall-touch screen and control points. The analyses of the results of the interviews have allowed us to identify a set of points. First, the majority of customers encountered express their pleasure of visiting of the digitalized signboards "I am very happy to see this kind of technology in our points of sale here in Tunisia". "It is good to keep up the pace, it is interesting, it is amusing, it's a pleasure etc. ". These are expressions expressing the feelings of the customers by manipulating these technologies.

As to the question on the added value of these technologies to the point of sale and to the customers, the respondents stipulate that they have completed what the sale online has not been able to do, in this case the customer's experience. In effect, these respondents consider that when the

client is waiting for a signboard that it is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to allow him to order everywhere, where he wants, when he wants, the store can no longer exist independently of the Internet experience. The point of physical sales becomes an extension of the digitally tangible, as far as it goes more and more boarding the digital on its walls.

Similarly the retailers who have responded to our survey believe that the digital transformation of their business operated two levers of performance: customer relations and the turnover. In fact, they already use digital technologies to customize the consumer experiences and offer the customer the opportunity to make the self-service. As well, the retailers interviewed analyze the digital data to better target marketing (understand the motivation of consumers) and to customize their marketing communications (adapt the speech, the media and the frequency of communications to the expectations of each individual). These traditional uses, characteristics of the sector, are essential, but not sufficient.

The customers interviewed stipulate that the integration of these technologies has allowed us to innovate the nature of relationship with the signboard and to give a new direction to the shop visit. Similarly, they consider that within a digitized point of sale, they can take advantage of both digital and the real through, on one hand, the Council, the assistance, information and guidance for sellers, and on the other hand, the immediacy, the demonstration and the speed and the technical nature of the technology. Similarly, the customers surveyed reveal that with the digitalization, the place of distribution becomes a place where one entertains, advises, accompanied, surprised, guided and share the know-how. It is a place where you will be re-delighted at each visit, an experience of choice and purchase and a place where you feel more involved, connected and touched. Otherwise, environments where we can immerse them in a profound, extraordinary and exceptional experience that would let you forget the outside world.

Conclusion

We have shown, through this investigation that the digital in store (digitalization of points of sale) contributed to reinvent the customer experience by improving the routing of the consumer throughout its act of purchase. Our study on this subject reveals that the digital in store is

booming. The shops are always more and more numerous to equip and multiply the strategies for the use of the digital to attract more consumers as much as possible and make them live beautiful experiences of purchase. These technologies are much more integrated in the industrialized countries than in Tunisia, our place of study. Nevertheless, we found some points of sale in different sectors of activities that have been digitized in order to introduce greater dynamism and attractiveness of the retail space and to facilitate the act of choice and purchase of the consumer.

Thus, the digital in store is present in the three stages of the journey of the purchase of the consumer: pre-sales, sales and after-sales. Operating in an appropriate and effective manner, the digital in store can contribute to reinvent the customer experience and to re-enchant the point of sale after immersing the consumer in a consumer experience which is pleasant and unforgettable. Hence, we can say that the place of sale is the single place or may combine the physical experience (try to touch the products, is reassured via the expertise seller) and a digital experience (will inform on the products, be reassured). Therefore, we can say that rethinking the role and the place of its physical store, valuing its differences, make tangible the intangible, dramatizing the place of sale to create the link and the emotion, it is also rethinking the operating accounts of its stores and their economic model.

Our contribution presents, without doubt, the limits on the plan both theoretically and empirically. Thus, the field of digitalization of the point of sale and its role in the stimulation of the experience of consumption is new and still untapped theoretically. This justifies the poverty of the theoretical basis of our research that is usually limited to writings from the round tables, seminars at the level of professionals or to press articles. On the empirical level, our study is limited to an exploratory study with a too small sample of customers in restricted points of sale that use reduced technologies (touch showcase, bar code scanner, a loyalty card, etc.). Studies with a larger number of customers to verify the relevance of these results, or a measure of the reactions of customers about these technologies will possibly new voices for future research.

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Annex: guiding questions

1. What are the points of sale you visited which use digital technologies?

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2. What are these technologies?

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3. What do you feel when you use these technologies?

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4. Do they add value to the visited points-of-sale? How?

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5. Does it enrich the experience of choice and sale?

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6. Do these technologies enrich the relation with the visited point-of-sale?

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