

## Multichannel motivation for a global Gen Y

No shopper segment is demanding more from retailers today than Generation Y (Gen Y). Perpetually connected, fiercely independent and immune to traditional media, Gen Y shoppers use technology as their lifeline. What were once seen as incremental shifts in behavior have become an evolution, forever changing the way retailers must communicate with shoppers. This “on demand” lifestyle has significant implications for retailers, requiring a more sophisticated and controlled approach to storytelling that relies on communication vehicles beyond the shelf. Likewise, brands that wish to resonate with Gen Y must develop cross-channel selling scenarios that transcend time and place. At Big Red Rooster, we have identified this evolved retail strategy as trans-medium storytelling and feel it is the key to motivating Gen Y both in the United States and across the globe.

As a segment, Gen Y shares more traits globally than any other previous generation. While the defining events of previous generations have revolved around wars, political and economic events, and health epidemics, Gen Y has been shaped by the advent of the Internet, as well as other digital technologies. Their immersion in personal technology since birth has created a global generation with many shared experiences. It is common to observe a teen in a store “checking in” to their current location, sending product photos to friends for advice, comparison-shopping with the latest app or texting others the details of their latest purchase. This is true whether you are in Paris, Tokyo or Los Angeles.

This multichannel, multimedia way of life is so engrained in the psyche of Gen Y that collectively they are redefining the retail shopping experience. They are all about connections, learning from each other about what’s hot and what’s not. To connect with this dynamic and influential group, retailers must



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enable word of mouth in the retail environment, where the brand experience is strongest. This requires that a retailer or a brand provide the shopper first with a story worth telling, and second, with the capability to share this story through new and emerging media integrated into the in-store experience. To begin to capitalize on this phenomenon, Loblaw’s Presidents Choice brand in Canada has incorporated the use of ratings and reviews in-store, and Starbucks has launched a geo-location-based loyalty program that rewards consumers for checking in from any eligible location around the globe.

Gen Y shoppers also are defining new standards within the shopping journey. For example, when surveyed, a majority of Gen Y shoppers expressed a significant angst over wait time. For this generation, who is maturing in today’s environment of multitasking and interruption technologies, idle time is a very unnatural—and therefore uncomfortable—phenomenon. To address this, solutions such as handheld scan-as-you-go devices are prominently used in the United Kingdom’s Waitrose, France’s Auchan, and are becoming commonplace in other European countries such as Sweden. Gen Y shoppers love having the control over bagging their items as they go, as well as the running tally of their spend. And most of all, they love avoiding the wait time associated with unloading and scanning goods at checkout.

Think about it in terms that everyone can relate to—two years ago, you were just reading a paperback book, now your choices to receive that same content are endless. The e-reader revolution has transformed the publishing world, and the same dynamics are at play in retail—but on a much broader level. Leading retailers understand that they can no longer tell their story in a linear, one-dimension approach. At Big Red Rooster, we have been working with our clients on a global basis to define and create solutions that facilitate this trans-medium phenomenon. **DDi**

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