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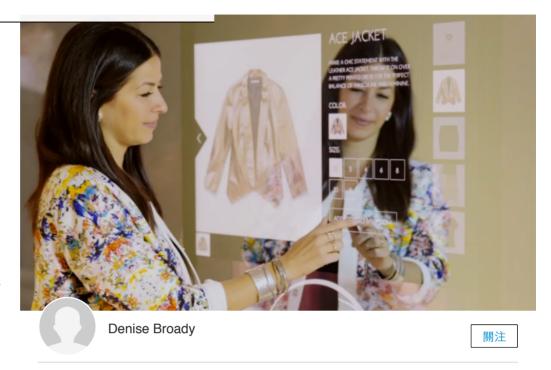
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Reimagine the Shopping Experience with Internet of Things

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It's a sunny Saturday afternoon. You stroll into your favorite fashion retailer and walk up to a mirror to order a cup of coffee with a swipe of your fingertips.

Drink in hand, you select clothing you want to try on. Upon entering the fitting room, the silk blouse and trousers you've picked are automatically detected and appear on the mirror. As you button up the blouse, the mirror in front of you doubles as a touch screen and shows potential ways to style the top with matching accessories.

While you try the items on, you have a few options: Doesn't fit? Request a new size with the touch of your finger. Not sure what size you are? You can even have the system detect what size would fit you best.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the new retail experience – powered by the Internet of Things, where anything is possible. In fact, it's only going to get better. The Digital Shopper Relevacy report released at the end of 2014 revealed that 44% of the 18,000 respondents believe in the potential of the Internet of Things for shopping experiences.

What does this mean for the industry and for your business? Here are my top 3

#1 Brick and mortar stores are here to stay.

Remember the Great Mall Exodus – when ecommerce was the goliath that was taking over the retail space? Well, it looks like brick and mortar stores have come back – and with style (no pun intended)! Retail locations are beginning to revolutionize the way they engage customers. Brands like Rebecca Minkoff in partnership with eBay are creating an "experiential theater" environment with touch screens around the store. Burberry converted its' London flagship location on Regents Street into a concert venue. Digital technology continues to push the boundaries on how retailers define a physical store and increase customer engagement!

#2 A personalized shopping experience like never before.

It's no secret that consumers now research on multiple devices before making the decision to purchase. At the same time, consumers also want a "human" experience and element with the technological advancements. With the new features of a physical store – a customer's preferences can be easily identified, streamlined, and stored in the cloud. This translates to better customer service as sales assistants have the history of the customer's activity at their fingertips to see what was brought last and make sales suggestions on the spot.

#3 Seamless, connected and endless possibilities!

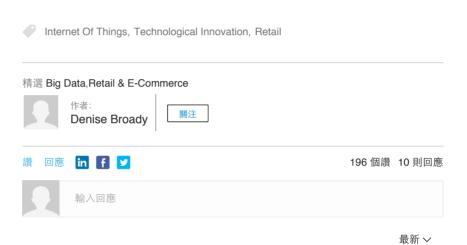
From laptop to wearables to tablet, we are more connected than ever. We can paint a portrait of a customer from the moment they walk thru a retailer's door. This information is priceless for retailers and opens the possibilities for creative ways to promote. For instance, Macy's has already leveraged Apple's iBeacon to help customers snag deals in the store by sending coupon deals to smartphones. In mobile, RedLaser, an application that allows users to scan items to do an instant price check, is driving possibilities with retailers on real time information.

For a self-proclaimed shopaholic, I couldn't be happier about the new innovations for the physical retail space...but to have a robot tell you what size you *really should* be? Now, that's a whole new battle!

Want to learn more? Check out the CEO Perspective: Internet of Things for Retail study which outlines the top priorities for businesses to develop a successful strategy.

How are you going to innovate your business to keep up with the retail industry's

innovations? Share your thoughts with me on Twitter @DVuBroady.





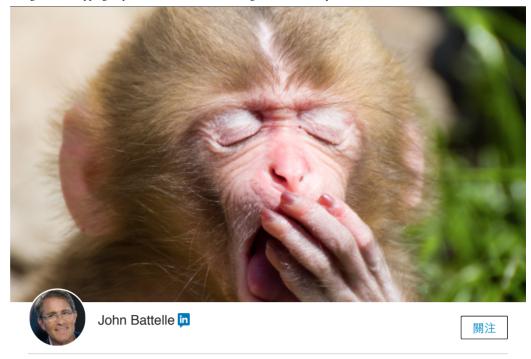
Stacy Ries

Global Media Relations for Consumer Industries at SAP

Interesting point about stores being more important than ever - this was also featured in a recent Forbes op-ed by the CEO of Fifth & Pacific, which includes Kate Spade, Lucky Brand, Juciy Couture and other leading brands - "Clicks And Mortar: Why In-Store Experience Matters (Now More Than Ever)" http://onforb.es/LvL2dA

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Has Tech Gotten Boring?

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Finishing up my reading for the evening, I came across this serendipitous tweet.*

Intrigued (well done, Mr. Rosoff!), I clicked the link, noting it was to *Business Insider*, a publication for which I have decidedly complicated feelings**. In any case, the story was great, if single sourced. A reporter wandering the halls at CES found a desultory Accenture booth, manned by one Charles Hartley, a "company representative." A quick Google search (done by me, but I digress), tells us Mr. Hartley is a PR executive focused on analysts and global media—an appropriate resume for manning a booth at CES, to be sure.

In any case, what Mr. Hartley shared with the BI reporter was rather counterintuitive to our esteemed industry's current view of itself, and the reporter's subsequent writeup made no bones about it. The headline: "Consumers are bored with today's tech and nervous about tomorrow's."

In short, Accenture has released the results of a comprehensive (*one imagines, 28,000 respondents worldwide, after all*) study of consumers' views about the tech currently on offer—mobile phones, VR, wearables, you know, all the stuff CES is on about. And it concluded that, well, consumers kind of think mobile phones are good enough, and the new stuff—VR, wearables—are interesting, but...they seem rather creepy.

The BI article doesn't give us a link to the actual study that is being quoted, so I put in triple-time Google duty (it took one Google search plus two clicks to find).

Here it is. Did I download the full report? Yes. Have I read it? No, but I did give it a thorough skim. Nevertheless, I can sense a clever marketing campaign when I see one:

Step 1: Gather insights. In this case: The most important industry in the world is poised for a boring year with slow growth and no consumer excitement. That sucks!

Step 2: Pick them lemons! Issue a report noting the preponderance of bad news, garnering the attention of the Wall Street Journal, Business Insider, and VentureBeat, among others (we hope—it's only been two hours since the first piece went up!).

Step 3: Make the lemonade! Create a landing page that promises insights that just might fix the problem.

I'm loving this in ways that would take 1,000 words to explain, but that's orthogonal, and my original story is not finished. Almost, but not quite.

Just yesterday I wrote my predictions post. I've not really admitted this before, but my predictions are nearly always based on gut feelings, slow baked with conversation and whiskey over several months, then composed in one two-to-three hour sitting***. So when I wrote prediction #8: "Apple Endures a Boring Year"—I had no idea Accenture was about to release the aforementioned study.

Man, what luck! Had I tarried even one day, I'd have been branded derivative. But even more, I wish I had really taken my gut feeling to its logical extreme. It's not that Apple's going to have a boring year. It's that the entire industry may well be heading into a Cycle of Boring. Not that boring is terrible—great work is done during boring times, entire industries take root and prosper. Perhaps, in fact, we've already been in a Boring Cycle—I mean, what really changed your life in the past few years? Slack? SnapChat? I love em both but...they ain't the iPhone.

I guess my point is this: When the most exciting thing you can imagine happening next year is VR from Facebook, or another Apple Watch—well, that's just kind of disappointing.

I didn't go to CES this year, but I've been to about 20 or so over the past 25 years. Perhaps by not going, I'm missing something Big, something that will truly Change the Game.

I sure hope so. What do you think?

Cross posted from Searchblog. Follow stories like this with the NewCo Daily.

- * (serendipitous mainly because I tend to not read my Twitter stream, rather I depend on surrogate algorithms to cull it—this tweet just happened to be at the top after Chrome crashed and restored my tabs).
- ** Admiration, fondness, nostalgia, and some others.
- *** "one two-to-three hour" just seemed too wrong to not write.

