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Bringing The Power Of The Blockchain To The Thanksgiving Table



By PYMNTS  

Posted on November 22, 2017



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Consumers increasingly want their food to be locally sourced and ethically raised, including (and perhaps especially) on Thanksgiving. The market has been eager to respond to that need. This year, Amazon decided that an organic turkey could be the central player on any American's table tomorrow by making the bird more affordable (especially for Prime members) to pick one up without breaking the bank.

But for some consumers, the knowledge that the turkey was raised up to the standards of organic, that it managed to avoid antibiotics for its lifetime or even that it spent its days roaming free in a pasture before being dinner is not enough.

Cargill Protein found a way to use to the blockchain to help those customers.

This year, as part of a pilot program, every turkey Cargill sells will come with a tracking code powered by blockchain technology. Upon receiving a turkey and scanning that barcode, the buyer can learn all kinds of things about their new poultry acquisition — including information about the farm where it was raised, pictures of the turkey before it was on its way to being dinner and even data about the farmer who raised the turkey.

“Blockchain is one of those technologies that will disrupt in a lot of ways,” **Debra Bauler, Cargill Protein’s chief information officer**, said in a **Shop Talk** interview. “There are things that are compelling about it in food: It’s secure, distributed and irrefutable; there’s a lot in it that made sense to play with in the food space.”

And, Bauler said, there’s a lot more potential for blockchain than just giving consumers a chance to get to know their food on a more personal level. For example, the technology helps food manufacturers track their fresh produce from the truck to the market to the customer’s table. Although it’s only a pilot running on a limited number of Cargill’s Honeysuckle White turkeys today, the program could be the future of the food industry.

Food manufacturers see blockchain as an efficient way to track fruits, vegetables and even turkeys from farm to truck to supermarket to table, adding a layer of consumer safety and accountability to the food supply chain.

Notably, Cargill isn’t alone in recognizing blockchain’s usefulness. As of August, IBM announced that it will be working with several major food producers — Dole, Walmart, Tyson and Nestlé, for example — to roll out a blockchain system that makes it easier to find tainted food that makes it into marketplace, and figure out exactly where it came from.

“It’s a bit of a Big Data problem,” Brigid McDermott, IBM’s vice president of Blockchain Business Development, told **BuzzFeed News**. “You want a complete view of all the foods that are out there.”

The blockchain, she noted, offers the food supply chain a chance at transparency that heretofore has not existed and an ability to target problems much more efficiently when food safety issues arise. And those issues are serious: 400,000 people are killed by food-borne illness every year, and billions of dollars are lost in product recalls in retail.

“There’s a cost to the business of doing recalls of foods that are perfectly fine, but you don’t know until it’s too late,” McDermott said. “Something like that can decimate an entire industry.”

Moreover, Cargill’s Debra Bauler noted, the ability to leverage the blockchain opens up new doors in communication channels between Cargill and their customers — in a way that is fairly seamless and intuitive to access. The project, she explained, has the ability to create a chance for consumers to have a more direct link to the farmers and other producers who actually bring their food to market.

Consumers can read that a product is organic or free-range on its packaging, of course. But, as one farmer stated, the ability to really track the entire story and see the entire lifecycle of the product

can “add confidence to the consumer” and let people see “where their birds are coming from, and get them a little more knowledge about how we do things and why.”

So, will it make the Thanksgiving meal taste any better for the participants at the dinner table this year to know where exactly the turkey came from? Probably not — except for perhaps the most dedicated foodie purists.

But, a future in retail where consumers no longer have to hear of vague food recalls — for things like “broccoli” — and then wonder if their fridge contains tainted food?

That could taste pretty delicious to the average grocery shopper.

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Amazon And CVS Leverage Pinterest’s Secret Santa Toolset



By [PYMNTS](#)  

Posted on November 22, 2017

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In an attempt to make it even easier to get the right gift this holiday shopping season, [Pinterest](#) has announced news of a personalized Secret Santa gifting tool designed to help customers get inspired to buy custom Christmas gifts for their friends and family.

The new tool has managed to attract some high-profile partners for the launch, including Amazon,

Bed Bath & Beyond, Coca-Cola, CVS and Universal Pictures. The tool works by leveraging the Pinterest API to create customized idea boards for friends and family based on the types of things they are pinning themselves.

But what if your friends and family aren't on Pinterest? Not a problem: Users can create boards for persona types — travelers, pet lovers, etc. — to get an idea of what people with similar interests are coveting this holiday shopping season.

The move allows Pinterest — once thought of as the most natural home for social commerce and marketing — to wrest back that opportunity from Facebook, which has since become social commerce's top ranking power player.

An Open Influence study from last month found that Facebook was far and away the leader among platforms for last-clicked social commerce, with about 48 percent of users noting they'd made their last purchase via Facebook. A mere 2 percent chose Pinterest.

The Pinterest Secret Santa tool, however, is a nice chance for Pinterest to push contextual commerce on consumers already engaged and pinning. And Pinterest users are a valuable group to tap, as they are 35 percent more likely to buy gifts than non-pinnerers. They also spend more — 45 percent more when they convert.

The gift recommendation tool plays well with Pinterest's other moves to up its commerce game of late, including its new visual search feature "Lens Your Look." Lens Your Look allows consumers to snap a photo of their current wardrobe and then get style recommendations. The social platform has also rolled out Pincodes, a similar tool to QR codes, which takes users to branded Pinterest boards after using smartphone cameras to scan the codes.

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7-Eleven Makes A Surprise

Discount Cosmetics Play



By PYMNTS  

Posted on November 22, 2017



When getting ready for a night on the town — complete with perfectly done makeup — the average female shopper doesn't usually say to themselves, "Shoot, I have to get to the 7-Eleven."

But that might change, if **7-Eleven** can convince customers that, more than a location where they most naturally expect to get a slurpee and a hot dog, it's also a natural location to pick up some discount cosmetics.

The makeup line the company is hoping will carry them there is called Simply Me Beauty. The budget-friendly line of makeup is pitched at millennials who want to look good but can't afford to spend more than \$5 a piece for cosmetics.

The line features what has been described as "a surprisingly wide variety of options" — all for under \$5.

So, what can you grab at the 7-Eleven?

Pretty much any product — concealer, brow powder, blush, lipstick, fake eyelashes, eye liner, lip crayon.

"If the price is right, that makes it easier to justify. For a millennial working woman wanting to refresh her makeup while grabbing lunch at 7-Eleven stores, Simply Me Beauty is a welcomed offering and is priced just right for her," noted 7-Eleven Category Manager Elizabeth Joy Pico.

The Simply Me Beauty makeup line has already started rolling out to 7-Eleven stores and should be available everywhere soon for beauty lovers on a budget. No word as to whether they will have a free makeup day à la national Free Slurpee Day.

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