

On the Mark



Shoe brands must boost their overall marketing initiatives. One expert reveals why.

Footwear retail is changing — and its subsequent marketing strategies need a facelift, too. Heath Wells, co-founder and CEO of NuOrder — a cloud and mobile B2B e-commerce solution provider — weighed in.

What marketing benefits does NuOrder offer footwear brands and retailers?

Heath Wells: “NuOrder allows footwear brands and retailers to discover each other, connect and transact through its comprehensive B2B e-commerce platform. The resources and tools NuOrder offers enable footwear brands to market more effectively to their wholesale buyers. For example, with NuOrder, footwear brands can present personalized offerings to wholesale buyers based on the products the buyer is most likely to show interest in. Sales reps used to do this by arranging piles of shoes for buyers on the floors of showrooms and trade shows. With NuOrder, they can do this through orderable digital catalogues, which helps both the brand and the buyer save time.

“NuOrder makes it easy for brands to leverage data and insights to drive sales. Using NuOrder, brands can quickly uncover trends in styles and colors that will drive sales.

“Finally, NuOrder helps brands visualize the buy for wholesale buyers through its Whiteboard tool. Using a Microsoft PowerPoint-like drag-and-drop interface, brand marketers and sales reps can create a visual representation of how their products should be merchandised in retail stores.”

What are the top trends in consumer behavior right now?

HW: “A key trend in consumer behavior is the expectation of instant access to the latest and

greatest footwear trends. In footwear, and in retail across the board, consumers are expecting access to styles and products they see on the runway, worn by a celebrity or on TV to be in stores the next day. We live in a society where instant gratification is the new normal. If brands can’t keep up with these consumer demands, customers will move on to the next brand to get what they want.

“Technology allows footwear brands to streamline business operations and improve communication with manufacturers and retailers, reducing the lead time between buying and delivery. Traditional footwear brands typically sell product preseason, often at trade shows or showrooms, but this doesn’t work for this new retail model.”

Why is it important for brands and retailers to focus on boosting marketing initiatives?

HW: “Retailers are becoming much more selective with the products they carry in their stores. They’re carrying less product overall and partnering with fewer brands. They want to present a curated portfolio of product to their customers that represents their unique point of view, rather than carrying a little bit of everything. In this more discerning environment, it’s easy for retailers to carry less footwear or drop footwear altogether.

“Now more than ever, footwear brands must aggressively market to their wholesale buyers — both existing and potential new buyers — to grow their businesses. They cannot rely on product alone for marketing. They must infuse their products with great storytelling, powered by trend and insight data, to show their retail buyers why their products are a good fit for their stores.” ■

Social Savvy

Stephanie Cartin and Courtney Spritzer, co-CEOs of social media marketing agency Socialfly, agree that this year will be the beginning of many changes for brands and retailers.

“In 2018, we predict brands and online retailers will increase their use of chatbots to address and resolve customer service issues. Chatbots are self-learning and can change the way consumers interact with their favorite brands on social media. From quick questions about the sizing of items to larger requests about the status of an order, we predict that as social platforms begin rolling out chatbot capabilities, brands will adopt the technology as a form of customer service.”

— Stephanie Cartin

“Technologywise, 2018 will be about experience. What is customer experience on your Instagram feed? Can they shop your posts? When they get to your website, are they able to upload a photo of themselves and test products or try on outfits? Consumers are looking for e-commerce retailers that offer them an in-store experience from the comfort of their homes. Shoppable posts on social media are also essential to brands in this day and age. Over the next year, brands and retailers need to expand their offerings across mobile devices. Whether that means allowing customers to make payments through their cellphones or offering personal-shopping services online, consumers are looking for a seamless online shopping experience.”

— Courtney Spritzer



Stephanie Cartin (L) and Courtney Spritzer



IN HIS WORDS: Jason Grunberg, vice president of marketing at personalization platform Sailthru, gives a first-person account of the interplay expected between marketing and technology in 2018.

“Over the last few years, startups and emerging companies have been the ones to adopt new tech solutions and redefine what the marketing tech stack looks like. This is

a behavior that will continue in 2018 among enterprise companies. However, in order for these legacy companies to advance, many have turned to ‘acqui-hiring,’ also known as

hiring through acquisition.

“Retail enterprises recognize the need to shift in order to adapt and advance their tech capabilities. That’s why companies like Wal-Mart Stores

Inc. are hiring talent through corporate acquisitions (think: Wal-Mart’s acquisition of Jet.com Inc. or when Amazon bought Whole Foods). With this, you’ll see a far greater rate of change in organizations than in the past decade.

“Additionally, providing quality client service and strategic guidance will take center stage in 2018. More retail companies will look for tech partners that coach, augment and provide real strategy on

how brands can achieve their goals this year. The biggest disruptor in 2018 is applied predictive analytics in campaign management. Predictive analytics used to be a buzzword, but it has finally taken root in recent years. As retailers are becoming more open to adapting predictive analytics, we will start seeing a major impact in revenue generation, improved efficiency across the organization and better customer experience.” ■