

hybris highlights key trends that will help retailers boost sales in 2009

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hybris recommends nine online and offline strategies for the retail trade to counter the recession

London – 22 January 2009. According to hybris, a leading multi-channel commerce and communication software vendor, retailers can counter the economic downturn by successfully deploying the right mix of online and offline strategies. Ariel Lüdi, CEO of the hybris Group, is convinced that: “If retailers play it right, their turnover will increase despite the economic crisis. Retailers should examine their existing strategies with a view to maximising flexibility in 2009 so that they can respond quickly to fast changing customer practices and market demands.”

hybris has identified nine trends which will impact the retail trade – both online and offline – in 2009.

Trends in 2009:

Cross-channel – get your information online, purchase offline or vice versa

Behind this concept lies the challenge and the sales guarantee for 2009: it is no longer just a question of showing presence across multiple channels and applying it to distribution. Merchants must link up the different channels already used by consumers to meet the requirements of different buying patterns. Only with a cross-channel approach can they reach their customers where the purchase is made –whether in the shop, the Internet or by browsing a catalogue.

Collaborative shopping – from customer to customer

In 2009, personal interaction will become the must-have in the online retail trade as shopping clubs and integrated customer communities continue to gain in importance. Jointly setting trends, evaluating designers and new products, and exchanging experiences is what collaborative shopping offers are all about.

Mobile shopping – mobile through all channels

Mobile Internet turns mobile phones into complete shopping guides. Many merchants are already offering the option of mobile shopping – webshops optimised for mobile devices and faster exchange of information using the ‘tell-a-friend’ function tap into this customer segment. In terms of promotions, too, the mobile phone has become an invaluable marketing tool. Immediately upon entering a store, for example, discount vouchers can be sent directly to a mobile phone – it’s already happening in Japan and South Korea.

Social commerce – consultations make a comeback

Top priority in 2009 is the active participation of customers, personal relationships and communication among customers, all under the motto “consumers advise consumers”. The exchange takes place by customers posting their shopping lists with their favourite items on the web in blogs or social-commerce portals. These independent portals are used for the evaluation of dealers and product evaluations –

well-known examples are ciao.de and billiger.de.

Shop optimisation – at the click of a button

This trend will set the course for online sales in 2009, and shopkeepers will have to consistently and continuously improve their offers and image. Buzzwords such as behavioural targeting, searchandising and shop personalising dominate the industry. Individualised offers and buyer-friendly content based on sales statistics and calculated product recommendations make a shop the first choice among many.

Online shopping B2B – the merchant as customer

Retail sales of electronics in Germany have been growing steadily, particularly in the B2B sector. The trend will continue in 2009. An excellent example is the Coca-Cola Beverages Award Shop for B2B customers. Using a multi-client basis, the company's various target groups – consumers, retail trade and catering – can be approached individually, without the need for a duplicate data management infrastructure.

Security – safe shopping on the web

Security on the web is a hotly debated topic, with supposedly vulnerable methods such as Internet payment services (PayPal or ClickandBuy) only slowly gaining acceptance as alternatives. Even now, many online stores are open to the theft and manipulation of their sensitive data through simple attacks such as SQL injections. Placing their trust in the expertise of professional shop software, web stores should make a concerted effort in 2009 to prove their payment options are secure and that they have clearly defined settlement processes in place.

Customer self-service – reducing costs and raising service levels

The economic crisis is also threatening online retail profits in 2009. Unfortunately, cost savings are a solution that often involves the loss of quality customer service. Integrated self-service functions are an economical way for online merchants to prevent the loss of service quality, while at the same time increasing the efficiency of their business relationships. Web stores can provide excellent customer service without incurring the expense of call centres by providing a knowledge base or Ask&Answer portal on their website.

The long-tail catalogue – sales through product mix depth and breadth

A portal for everything – as amply demonstrated by Amazon: ranging from books to CDs and consumer electronics, the range includes everything the customers could want. In 2009, merchants should use cost-effective ways to expand their range, as an extensive range promises higher sales. A PIM-based data storage improves content administration of content and integration of external data sources such as suppliers and service providers, and customer-generated content is also easy to integrate.

About hybris

hybris is a leading vendor of multi-channel commerce & communication software. Its clear vision about the need for consistency, co-ordination and personalization of information across all channels and throughout all phases of the customer lifecycle has resulted in the development of an integrated solution which supports the industrialization and automation of communication, sales and support processes. It is spearheading innovation in this field, enabling businesses to communicate and sell across all channels in a consistent and effective way.

Established in 1997, hybris has a proven track record of profitability and growth, with ambitious expansion plans for the future. Headquartered in Munich, it has offices in the UK, Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden. Its international presence is extended via a dedicated network of business and technology partners across Europe and the USA. It has over 150 customers worldwide running more than 1.500 websites “powered by hybris”. Customers are global brands from retail and manufacturing industries, including Toys ‘R’ Us, Zavvi, Norgren, TUI, Lufthansa, Puma, Ulla Popken, Reebok, Grundfos, Demag, Sika, Bunzl UK & Ireland, Phonak and Bechtle.

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For further information please contact:

James Cooper or Mel Oxford
Ascendant Communications
Tel: +44 (0) 208 241 6226/ 07515 632065
E-mail: jcooper@ascendcomms.net / moxford@ascendcomms.net