



2023 Is the Year To Become a Marketing Consultant

You know the challenges everyone faces: inflation, an iffy economy, world events and a pandemic that won't quit. Despite it all, local businesses and retailers must still attract consumers and media sales reps must work harder to secure a maximum amount of local ad spending.

Many years of research have shown local businesses and retailers' primary and deeper need is to find a marketing professional they can trust. That need is even greater given the current economic challenges but also the rapid changes to the retail environment.

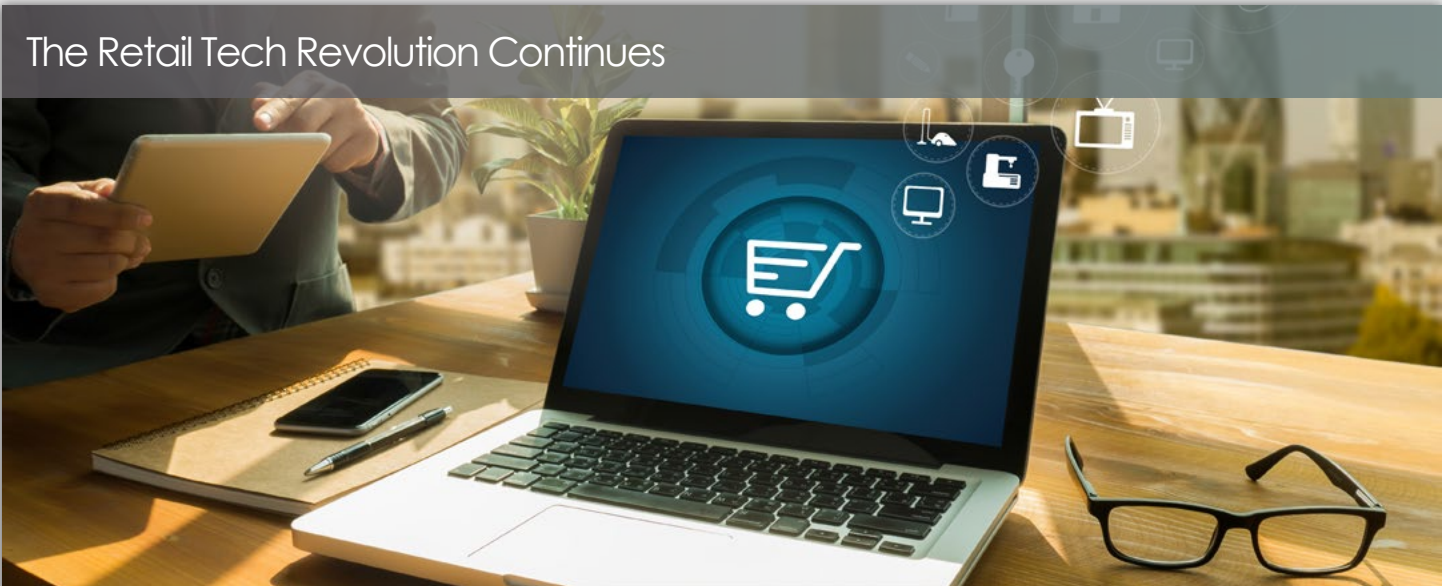
To become that trusted source of marketing expertise, it's time you transition from a seller of media time or space to a marketing consultant. Two strategies will help build trust with ad prospects and trust are the basis for long-term and successful business relationships.

Strategy #1: Instead of asking a prospect about his or her business challenges, offer important information they may not have, but will likely value, and value you provided it. Volunteer to share insights about their customers, competition and industry and the newest trends in media, consumer behavior and retail technologies.

By doing so, you show that you've done your homework and you have the knowledge most likely to help them overcome their challenges. It's the first step in building trust. Of course, you have to do your homework, which is why your Media Group Online membership is so valuable. We may not have all the answers but what you find in our many reports will reveal many other sources to explore for those nuggets of information.

Strategy #2: Learn to be a better listener. For years, this has been a central principle of sales training and it's never been more important. By establishing a beginning relationship with strategy #1, prospects are more likely to share their deeper challenges and needs. As a prospect is more forthcoming, respond to what you hear with more expert advice and how you can bring value to their marketing efforts – it's part of your winning formula for 2023.

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The Retail Tech Revolution Continues

Media reps can also project themselves as marketing consultants first by being in tune with the revolution in retail technology. Much like Websites, e-commerce and social media, the largest retailers are leading this trend "to digitize" their store/online environment.

The Pulse of Retail 2023: Next Generation Retail report jointly created by Mercaux, Commerce Tools, Fluent Commerce and Orium, surveyed 550 retail executives in seven countries, with almost 30% in the US.

A major finding is which retail verticals plan to increase or maintain their investment in e-commerce and brick-and-mortar technologies. Footwear retailers were first increasing investments in e-commerce technology at 76% and brick-and-mortar technologies at 71%.

Retail Verticals Increasing Their Investment in Technologies, 2022

| Vertical | E-Commerce | Brick-and-Mortar |
|-------------------|------------|------------------|
| Footwear | 76% | 71% |
| Electronics | 71% | 69% |
| Sportswear | 66% | 52% |
| Fashion & Apparel | 63% | 50% |
| Health & Beauty | 62% | NA |
| Department Stores | NA | 52% |

Mercaux, Commerce Tools, Fluent Commerce and Orium, December 2022

Eventually, local retailers, in these verticals or others, won't be able to avoid adopting many of these same technologies, especially the automation of supply chain/inventory to remain compatible with the brands they sell. Consumers are also heavily influencing much of the retail technology revolution. Research from many sources reinforces consumers' increasing demand for an outstanding shopping experience as well as easily moving from the online to the in-store environment and back again, seamlessly.

Interestingly, The Pulse of Retail 2023: Next Generation Retail report shows the surveyed retail executives view the store as "a fulfillment center for e-commerce and click-and-collect orders" first at 40% and as "a place for people to purchase products" second at 36%. The combined percentage of 76% indicates these retailers see the online/in-store environment as one like consumers.

Just as virtually all local businesses and retailers regularly use social media today compared to a few years ago, they will also be adding more automation to store operations and utilizing AI technologies. Media reps can't be technology advisors, but they can know enough about the trends to help educate their prospects and clients.

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Newest and Future Special Reports



2023 Calendar of Events
(December 2022)



Trends 2023
(January 2023)



Convenience Stores:
Moving Forward
(February 2023)

Full-Speed Ahead into the New Year

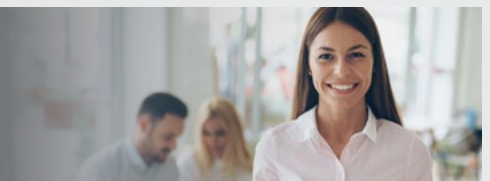
Online Shoppers Want More – Consumers' demand for a better online experience is growing. Read more about this trend in the December 2022 New Media Insights Report.

Auto Industry Across the Finish Line – The January 2023 Auto Update Report reveals which brands and manufacturers were able to finish 2022 on a high note.

Plan More Winning Pitches – Include the many promotional opportunities in the annual Calendar of Events (2023) Special Report in your prospecting pitch presentations.



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An Unbeatable Combination



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