

CONSUMER CHANNEL IS THE NEW OMNI-CHANNEL: THE FLUID FUTURE OF AUTOMOTIVE RETAIL

On-demand, anytime customization will be a future focus for customers. Services, technology, features, and entertainment will no longer be a one-time point of a purchase decision. In the future cars will continually react to their needs.

Erich Wohlmuth, program manager digital retail/digital sales, AUDI AG

More digitally connected than ever before, consumers are driving change in cities all over the world. As they radically alter the experience of shopping, automotive brands have to align to the new mindset.

Today's consumer is fluid, moving seamlessly from one channel to another and effortlessly connecting in the physical and digital world. They seek harmonized experiences that don't detract from their daily journeys but come to their fingertips.

As the result, purchase is no longer a linear process. New modes of shopping turn omni-channel on its head, as consumers demand fluid brand experiences that meet them wherever they are, whenever they want. How can automotive retailers embrace the fluid revolution and re-ignite the thrill of buying a car?

Blended Worlds

61% of Gen Z and Millennials believe online aesthetics have altered what their generation expects to see in the real world.

Spotify Trend Survey among 500 U.K. respondents 15–37, February 2019

From URL to IRL, the new generation is driven by emotion and meaning. In an effort to create serendipitous emotional connections, brands are placing products in unexpected places that blend digital and physical worlds, and turn retail into an always-on, anytime discovery.

Examples like [Mercedes-Benz Immersive Car Launch](#) with Virgil Abloh use augmented and virtual reality to bring the car into the home at the press of a button. Customers can walk around the car and look at it like it is right in front of them, recreating a dealership experience in the comfort of their home. Unexpected partnerships, such as [Travis Scott's Battle Royale concert](#) hosted on Fortnite, are fusing physical and virtual to create epic, globally connected live experiences that take people on a shareable journey.

Faced with a plethora of choices, consumers want more. By playing in uncharted spaces between physical and digital, car brands can forge unexpected connections with the next generation of fluid consumers.

Consumers don't think in channels;
they shop wherever they are in that moment.
They expect flexibility, consistency and
excellence, regardless of being on a mobile
device or inside a dealership.

Scott Lachut, partner/president of research & strategy, PSFK

Capsule Experiences

77% of luxury consumers would prefer to buy a product or service simply for the experience of being part of the community built around it.

Global Web Index, May 2020

While virtual retail is gaining traction, the always-on generation remains hungry for unique physical experiences. 67% of Generation Z prefer to make purchases in a shop as opposed to ordering online ([source](#)).

Paving the way for the era of nimble retail, future-forward pop-ups offer temporary but highly immersive brand moments that drive hype and awareness. Experiences like the [YSL Beauty station](#), show how snackable stores and thought-provoking experiences can pop

up in people's lives and create a moment people want to experience time and time again. Brands like [SSENSE](#) fuse online commerce and in-store experience with a 360, seamless product tailoring experience, fluidly merging digital and human connection to build trust.

As the race for consumers' attention results in never-ending digital content, brands can provide a welcome escape with unforgettable physical experiences and lasting human connections.

Access vs. Ownership

It's not about buying a car, it's about buying into your brand. We need to think beyond products and start to consider new services for a multi-consumer end-to-end user journey.

Seamus Walsh, enterprise sales manager automotive, LG Electronics

Beyond blended engagement and capsule experiences, the new consumer expects something more meaningful than a transactional relationship. Today the most successful brands leverage their communities to propel growth, inspiring them to share their story with like-minded people. As social status and wealth shifts from what we own to what we can access, the retail game is evolving. Access drives desirability.

Brands like Bodega are leading a new wave of hidden retail where only those in the know are able to find the exact location, creating a sense of exclusive brand community. [HYPR](#) is an app-based membership that combines customers passion for streetwear, music and art with hyper curated car rental.

Access and knowledge of brand experiences and spaces create loyal fans who feel more like a community of members than customers.

George Gottl, chief creative officer, UXUS

Looking into the future, ownership will become personal. As the relationships between people and products become ever more complex, brands can explore new models of ownership that allow people to participate in value creation.

What should automotive brands do next?

To leverage the future of automotive retail brands should ask, are we informing, are we engaging, are we inspiring? Because tomorrow, the emotional connection will drive the sale.

Jaime Bettencourt, SVP of global account management, Mood Media

In 2030, the consumer will drive the experience. Armed with the tools to purchase everything online consumers will expect brands to work harder. Future-proof your experience with three actions.

- (1) Embrace the fluid revolution and go beyond traditional channels.
- (2) Pioneer new models of ownership.
- (3) Prioritize lasting connections over short term wins.

This White paper is part of the Automotive Retail Recalibrated Webinar series.

Exploring the automotive industry's future and how the new high-velocity consumer is transforming its retail landscape.

SESSION 01

(Nov 2020)

The Death of Omni - The Rise of Consumer Channel

Omni-channel has been the driving strategy for brands to engage customers. With the high velocity customers' evolving lifestyles and mobility needs, it's about providing products and services at the right place, right time.

SESSION 02

(Jan 2021)

Driving Auto Brands with Purpose

Customers demand that brands engage with transparency, meaning and purpose. How's the Automotive industry doing?

SESSION 03

(Feb 2021)

Next Generation Auto Retail, Dealership 2030

In a time where brands need to continually reinvent their experience. How will automotive dealerships evolve over the next decade?

Developed by

UXUS is a global strategic design consultancy that re-imagines consumer experiences for the 21st century. We harness the power of retail, hospitality and experience to transform the world's leading brands – from creating the ultimate peer-to-peer education hub for Sephora to the new dining experiences for McDonald's. UXUS is proud to be recognized by the industry for its creative excellence.

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