



stores, this doesn't signal the much-lauded death of the high street. Instead, the report shows the extent to which the high street will impact overall retail sales and why it cannot be ignored.

As people shift from bricks to clicks, the relationship between online and high-street retailers is evolving as retailers create a world where experiences flow naturally between home and store, street and aisle, mobile and market.

Technology is breathing new life into the high street. With more and more people shopping on their smart phones and tablets, stores are no longer just about buying.

As online sales increase, the role of the high street store will evolve, provoking counter-innovation from brands and an increase in the "show rooming" trend where stores become experience rather than sales led.

The report shows that a quarter of all shoppers are hitting the high street, no longer to buy, but to socialise with friends and

family. Half (51 per cent) of us go to shops to be entertained, a third (33 per cent) to eat out and three-quarters to be inspired.

These results show there is a clear opportunity for retailers to continue to introduce social spaces and turn shopping into a source of entertainment – the latest form of leisure. As a result, stores will see an increasing focus on engagement, providing the shopper with tactile and sensory experiences which cannot be replicated online.

How can the sporting goods industry respond

If we look more closely at these conclusions and ask what impact this is likely to have on the sporting goods industry, one obvious link is the relationship between sport as a leisure activity and shopping.

In much the same way that cinemas and food outlets have grown the shopping experience, whereby consumers populate destination shopping centres

for the whole day and embrace multiple activities, can the sport and sporting goods retailers enhance the proposition?

On a recent visit to Dubai I found myself embracing this very scenario where, in one of the worlds largest shopping malls I skied in the morning, shopped in the afternoon and dined in the evening.

The sports retailers were clustered around the focal point of the indoor ski slope and in another part of the mall the ice rink.

As the definition of "shopping" becomes broader can the relationship between sport and shopping evolve and the sports brands and retailer be a part of this change?

Technology

Savvy sports retailers can certainly strengthen customer relationships, and increase interaction, by creating spaces and experiences which will inspire consumers to share their shopping experiences either by commenting, photographing or broadcasting their in-store interactions via their social networks and sport offers the perfect environment for this activity.

Whether it be testing a demo racket or golf club, shooting a football at a virtual goal whilst trying new boots or trying on the latest outfit whilst looking in an interactive mirror all these experiences will enhance your experience.

There are already some examples emerging in our industry, with Oxford Street's Nike store or Pro Direct's LDN19, and undoubtedly sports retailers who seamlessly connect the in-store and online experience will see the biggest gains with the savviest taking the opportunity to deliver timely, tailored offers and discounts direct to the palms of our hands.

The O2 report concludes that this seamless integration between online and offline shopping will continue to put the high street at the heart of customers' online experiences; 85 per cent of online shoppers return products in store and 75 per cent go to stores to collect products bought online. The

Girl Power – has it come of age?

TIA chair Mel Berry looks at the profile of women in sport and how their imagery is being used in the industry



Do you think you are a game changer in our industry? It seems that Girl Power is starting to come of age. I hope to think I am, and I have loved, and felt privileged, working with some of the women in our industry.

With the investment of substantial money from Sport England into campaigns such as This Girl Can and organisations like The Women's Sport Trust (www.womenssporttrust.com) we are starting to see a change in brand attitudes and the growth of the female market.

The Women's Sports Trust was started by Jo Bostock and Tammy Parlour with the ambition to raise the visibility and increase the impact of women's sport, through the promotion of diverse athlete role models, increasing media coverage and improving the funding landscape. They are supported by a board of trustees and athlete patrons such as Kate Richardson Walsh OBE, Kelly Smith MBE and Maggie Alphonsie MBE.

They recently launched this year's #BeAGameChanger awards that recognise those individuals and organisations which are doing the most to progress women's sport.

Voting is open until February 15 and there are a variety of categories such as Sponsor Partnership in Women's Sport. This recognises the partnerships between sport and business that has resulted in the most exciting current sponsorship.

The award highlights the vital role we play in sponsorship and in raising the profile and impact of women's sport. We need to get involved and support all of the categories as an industry and help change happen.

On reflection, imagery has a key role to play in the portrayal of women being active and it's interesting to see several campaigns the Women's Sports Trust has with Getty Images.

Sixty-seven per cent of elite female athletes asked felt the public and media valued the way a sportswoman looks above her achievements.

The partnership between Getty Images and the Women's Sport Trust was, and is, timely.

Figures released by Girlguiding at the end of last year showed that 93 per cent of females aged between 11-21 years agree that women are judged more on appearance than ability. In addition, looking at body image in sports specifically, a 2014 study by BT Sport revealed 80 per cent of female athletes feel pressure to look a certain way.

With that in mind, Getty Images are looking for an emerging female talent seeking a career in sports photography to take a paid intern position, based in their London office, which starts in July and runs for 12 months, and entries close on March 31. The successful applicant will experience all aspects of the sport photography business, spending time with the picture desk, assignments team, field editing team and will have the opportunity to hone their photography skills at sporting events with the guidance some of the best sports photographers in the industry.

The aim is of increasing the visibility of female athletes and women's sports while also challenging the way in which female athletes are portrayed in imagery.

Again we need to support this.

The High Street is here to stay

Retailers have to recognise that the high street store is here to stay but its role has fundamentally changed. As the distinction between digital and physical becomes increasingly outdated, the brands that truly embrace technology to create a seamless experience for all their customers, wherever they choose to shop, will ultimately win the greatest share of both sales and customer loyalty.

popularity of click and collect is expected to increase further to 2020, growing by 260 per cent to seven per cent of all retail sales by 2020.

Feilim Mackle, Director of Sales and Service at O2, comments: "Technology is breathing new life into the high street. With more and more people shopping on their smart phones and tablets, stores are no longer just about buying. They are becoming go-to destinations for social, inspiring and rewarding experiences that ultimately drive sales online."

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