"Experience-driven commerce is the future of commerce," said Adobe's Executive Vice President, Brad Rencher[1] in 2018. It had been two years since an experience-driven commerce future was first predicted, and because the right circumstances took place, it is safe to say that experience-driven commerce is happening now.

E-Commerce has completely transformed how consumers shop and how businesses operate. So, is experience-driven commerce really the next big thing for commerce? And how is it changing the online shopping experiences of consumers?

Experience-driven commerce, defined

According to Adobe[2], "Experience-driven commerce = Maximizing sales by delivering customer experiences from discovery to purchase that are optimized with insights from real-time shopping behaviors and multichannel data."

Specifically, experience-driven commerce is:

- *Customer-centric – presenting products in a way that resonate with what consumers are looking for*
- *Omnichannel – meeting shoppers and their needs across all channels*
- *Relevant product content – providing shoppers accurate, rich, complete and up-to-date product content*

Experience-driven commerce trumps traditional commerce since today's consumers are savvy enough to know and get what they want. They seek personalized experiences, connection and engagement. This means businesses need to develop experience-driven commerce strategies if they want to remain relevant and competitive.

Experience-driven commerce, the essentials

The shift to experience-driven commerce is fueled by:

The age of consumers. Millennials are currently the largest consumer group[3], and Gen Z, the pickier and savvier version of Millennials, is not far behind. These current and soon-to-be consumers grew up with digital conveniences at their fingertips – and they only recognize brands that are accessible and personal.

Brands must be [customer centric](). Brands cannot expect these new breeds of consumers to accept everything they provide. Thus, brands need to find a way to know their customers — their needs, preferences, where they are and how they shop. The foundation to understanding this consumer behavior begins with data. Therefore, brands must harness the power of data if they want to deliver experiences tailored to the needs of these consumers.

Constant connectivity. 53% of the global population is connected to the internet[4], and it is a number that is still growing as devices become more affordable. It is also estimated that an average person owns and will use at least 154 connected devices by 2030[4]. Most consumers can therefore easily reach for any of these devices to research a product or service they need, complete a purchase, and share their experience, good or bad, online. This means that with a few swipes, consumers can make or break a brand.

Brands must be omnichannel. Today's consumers expect to have access to what they want when they want it. To remain competitive and relevant, brands must employ a strategy that delivers a seamless experience across all platforms – desktop, laptop, mobile phones, tablets and in-store.

Personalization. Most shoppers are willing to share personal information as long as they get personalized experiences in return. In fact, 61% are willing to share private information to ensure brands understand their needs[5]. Furthermore, offering personalized shopping experiences are necessary for brands to build loyalty and expand their customer base:

- *52% of consumers said they would switch brands if the company does not offer personalized communication[6]*
- *25% of consumers have stopped engaging with a brand due to poor personalization[7]*
- *35% of Millennial consumers are willing to walk away from a brand with poor personalization[7]*

Brands must offer [personalized and contextualized product experiences](.)Consumers become advocates when brands meet or exceed their expectations. Brands must understand their customers and their purchase journey to create a shopping experience that specifically caters to their needs.

So how can brands deliver the demands for experience-driven commerce?

Delivering experience-driven commerce

Brands that want to focus on experience-driven commerce must re-imagine their e-commerce strategy. Many will have to begin by embarking on a [digital transformation](link) journey. Digital transformation is the catalyst for innovation in the e-commerce space. It allows brands to connect people, process, data and technology. Specifically, digital transformation can help brands eliminate organizational and technological silos, improve internal processes and empower brands to deliver accurate and updated information to its partners and audiences. This is vital to build an engaging brand message in order to generate the success expected of an experience-driven business.

Brands that are digital are in a great position to understand consumers, enhance their product offerings and deliver a channel-agnostic experience, any time. Additionally, brands must consider the following elements when shifting to a more experience-driven approach:

- *[Technology](). Brands need to leverage the right technology that can fully support their e-commerce strategy. The necessary solutions will depend on the products sold and the target market. At its core, the chosen technology must be able to provide solutions for personalization, analytics, testing, [product information]() and [digital assets]() management.*
- *Data. Hyper-personalized experiences begin with data. Brands need a system of insight to ensure that data, wherever and however it is used and by whom, is high quality – complete, accurate, rich and up to date, all the time. Additionally, data must be used intelligently by way of analytics to fully exploit its potential.*
- *Content. Product content is critical. It must speak to the needs and wants of consumers. To provide context around shopping experiences, product content must be tailored to the persona, preferences, location and needs of the target audience.*

Experience-driven commerce begins with product experience

Great experience-driven commerce begins with meeting customers on every stage of their shopping journey. It requires understanding on how consumers use different channels to look for the information they need to decide on a purchase. Brands must send the right messages without overwhelming their consumers along the way. Furthermore, the shopping journey must be made seamless and easy.

Delivering experience-driven commerce does not have to be complicated. However, it does require the right strategy that is adaptable to the future expectations and preferences of consumers.