

How seamless interactivity will define 2022

By  Nicholas Duminy

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Although there are barriers to exponential e-commerce growth in South Africa in the short-term, I believe that we are approaching a tipping point, and in the next three to five years we will experience widespread adoption as the appetite is certainly there and 2021 figures are evident of this.



Nicholas Duminy, digital and e-commerce director, KFC South Africa. Source: Supplied

In fact, according to PayFast's second annual [Ecommerce Performance](#) (PEP) Index, there was a 178% increase in QR code payments, and a 55% growth in mobile usage for online shopping over 2021 – with payment innovation removing barriers for consumers to transact online.

Today, it is all about customer-centricity and convenience and I believe this will continue to set the tone for successful e-commerce strategies in 2022 with every retail channel creation an integral part of a convenient end-to-end journey. We know that each person has their own preferences when it comes to retail and coming out of a pandemic, it is crucially important that we map to each of these and provide customers with a service that suites them best – be it in-store or online.

In my mind, there will be four key focus areas we are likely to see dominate the retail and e-commerce space in 2022.

1. Customer experience

Customers no longer base their loyalty just on price and product alone; instead they stay loyal to companies due to the experience they receive.

While the focus on customer experience has grown exponentially over the last few years, this battleground is set to be even bigger in 2022 and companies that have ignored it in the past, cannot do so anymore as it will become a key differentiator across many segments as customers look for seamless ways to interact, engage and purchase across offline and online

channels.



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2. Ease and convenience

Anything, anytime, anyway – convenience is on the rise and it's here to stay. Convenience means maximising efficiency and leveraging timesaving potential for customers, not just before and during a sale, but after as well. We are likely to see a continued migration of customers into different e-commerce channels, but it will be essential for companies to preserve the swift and seamless shopping journey, and consistent experience, across all channels.

3. Delivery

Last year we saw a rise in consumers using businesses that best prioritise safety while minimising changes in established preference and shopping patterns and delivery channels grew exponentially as a result.

While delivery has always been a critical channel in e-commerce – we are likely to witness growth in the broader delivery category, driven by large retailers and in a sector such as ours, quick service restaurants, ramping up their offerings and physical penetration.

4. Personalisation

Advances in technology, data, and analytics allows businesses to create much more personal experiences across the buying stages – supporting the customer journey far beyond a brand's front door. Over the next three to five years we are likely to see major shifts in sophistication in CRM and personalisation – with the focus on tailoring experiences for customers, especially as physical spaces become more digitised and ecosystems and cross-device preferences take centre stage.



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Essentially it's all about seamless interactivity for customer experience with a strong integration between offline and online services and increased accessibility. Retailers will need to put themselves in consumers' shoes to unlock new perspectives, provide a lighthouse for what they should do next – and ultimately become a catalyst for creating new value for our consumers. It's about localised innovation that truly resonates with consumers and continually tapping into consumer insights to develop the next level in e-commerce.

Businesses that are able to transform traditional models through focussed investment and innovation in digital products and services will rapidly grow their market share. Couple this with end-to-end customer experience to suit every preference and at great value – will make for a winning recipe in this space.

ABOUT NICHOLAS DUMINY

Nicholas Duminy is a marketing professional with 12 years of experience working in the FMCG/QSR categories. Nic has worked on some of SA's most loved brands, most recently as the Marketing Director Digital & eCommerce for Yum Brands, KFC, and previously as the Marketing Manager for Carling Black Label.
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