

THE FUTURE IS PHYGITAL

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Introduction

The whole world is slowly entering the digital realm, and COVID-19 just made it so fast. We all turned to online studies, shopping online, having an OTT subscription, and whatnot. But somewhere, we do crave human presence, like how the physical stores have sales representatives. Market analysts predict that it will be impossible to return to pre-pandemic buying behavior. So, at this point, what seems a future possibility is more “phygital”: physical and digital realms that connect and help organizations to comply with customer needs. It brings us the human experience wrapped in the highly personalized digital layer.

Organizations need to understand that, for their prosperity, particularly in this phygital environment, they must think beyond their age-old marketing strategies. Keeping them updated with digital customer survey data, accompanied by an in-person and in-depth customer experience can build a new opportunity. And the customers’ expectation for a better-personalized experience heightens, parallel contributing to their marketing efforts and allowing more sales opportunities.

The Shift

Now let’s see what the shift actually looks like.

Brands faced challenges in creating an environment from scratch for customers, where both the physical and digital worlds can meet, with the aim to offer a store-like experience without having customers visit the stores. And brands are in the process of redefining their stores to create a space where their customers can be comfortable.

Today online shopping is a blessing. But when the products don’t match the expectations, it is a pain, given our super busy lifestyle. And phygital is at rescue here. The complaints will significantly reduce when customers look, touch, and feel the products virtually.



The fact that this technology will equip people to experience products without visiting the store will be the most significant Unique Selling Proposition in the Fast-moving Consumer Goods economy ahead. Augmented Reality ensures the effect is perfectly felt and convincing for customers by overlapping live video with products. AR glasses allow customers to experience close-to-real product visualization and encourage them to buy them.

Approaches in the Phygital environment

Organizations that have excelled over their other counterparts have focused on customer experience and built their organization with a customer-centric culture. However, these approaches are now outdated in understanding and improving customer experiences. However, there are many strategies that an organization may take to connect well with its customers.

Firstly, we need to see customers as people and talk to them. For things to go phygital, the organization needs to understand aspects like the thought process and sentiments behind a customer decision, the reason for customer preferences, and so on, and make a more human-centered design that resonates with the recognized behavior/perspective. It's essential to use tools that are designed to streamline the process.

Secondly, tools make sense when we focus on the right set of objectives. The pre-pandemic situation was managed by Customer Relation Managements, which automated the customer interactions and cut the company's costs. But today, we need to focus on the 'why's and not the 'what's to make the significant change that might change the competition pathway.

And lastly, having the right strategy is more important than the tools used. The proper frameworks will bring out all ideas of people in and outside the organization and give a bird's eye view. The right strategy may work as a blueprint for the long-term benefit of the organization and later on get recognized in the customer-centric culture.

Thus, humanizing business through delivering a solid customer experience is the key to a bright phygital future. People's experiences are no more just experiences that are 'nice to take into consideration' (as a gesture of empathy) but a set of experiences that can be turned into business insights.

Conclusion

Today, people experience phygital life every day without the awareness of it. Gen Z and millennial consumers are and will be the primary customer who will push businesses to meet their expectations. Phygital lifestyle may be easier, but there is a lot to go now in making it a common and practical way of life and also towards the betterment of the experience in further future.

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