

A woman with long hair, wearing a white dress and a VR headset, is crouching in a dark blue, monochromatic environment. The scene is dimly lit, with the woman's white dress standing out against the dark background. She is looking down, and her hands are resting on the ground.

C O R R A

A New Decade of Commerce

2020 TREND PREDICTIONS

It's the year 2020, where customer-centricity continues its reign, deceptive marketing tactics will prove less effective and AI becomes smarter, better, faster, stronger. In this whitepaper, Corra will delve into our 2020 trend predictions and how we expect commerce to evolve in the new decade. We touch on values-based consumerism, data privacy, facial recognition, B2E (business to everyone), social media inspired design and so much more.

A New Decade of Commerce

INTRODUCTION

The next decade of commerce will amount to an abundance of technology advancements – that much is evident. But we shouldn't underestimate the power of good old-fashioned human connection. As the cost of acquiring a customer using paid ads increases, ecommerce professionals are searching for ways to reach consumers directly – without Facebook and Google as their middleman. Brands are using storytelling and forging organic connections through consumer touchpoints in all of their countless formats.

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The new dot com bubble is here: it's called online advertising.

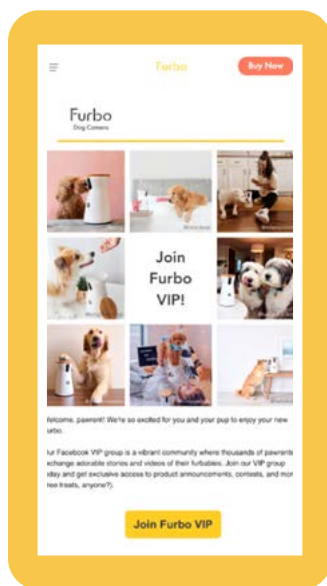
THE CORRESPONDENT, 2019

AI will become more human-like with the rise of artificial emotional intelligence and merchants will try to strike a balance between personalized and personal experiences – personalization being the use of data to closely align recommendations to a consumer’s needs and personal being human interaction that aims to evoke an emotion.

TREND #1

Organic Connection

What will take after a generation of millennials with their phones glued to their palms? A craving for good “old-fashioned” human connection. The pendulum of anti-social culture is swinging back as people are feeling increasingly isolated. Ecommerce professionals can approach this demand one of two ways: by simulating human connection with technology (i.e. private social media like groups that introduce like-minded consumers) or reviving offline retail with innovative experiences (i.e. a makeup bar that allows you to drink wine with friends while playing with lipsticks and concealers).



Who's Doing it Right? **Furbo**

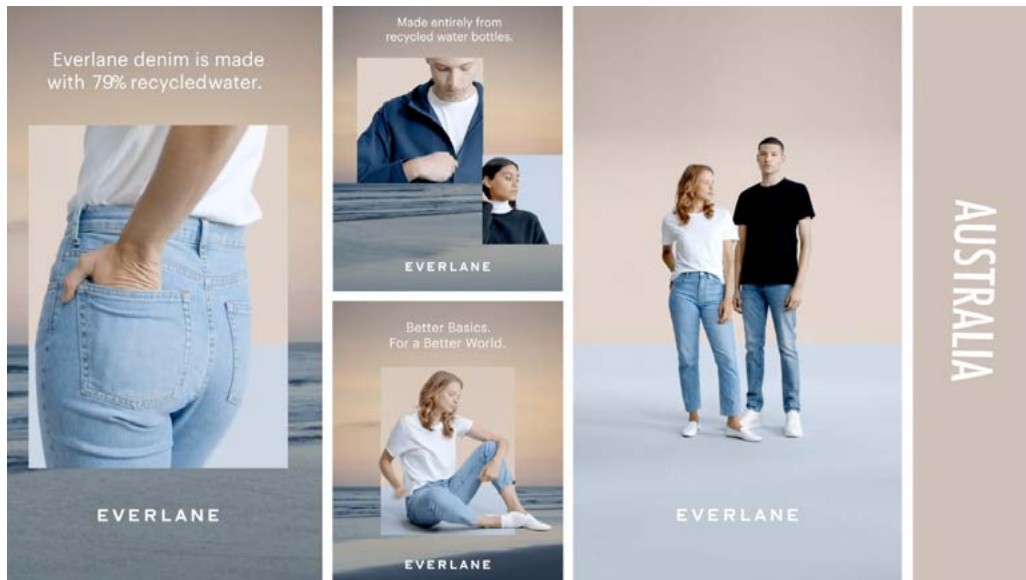
After a pet owner purchases a Furbo camera they're prompted to join 'Furbo VIP' a Facebook group of pawrents that share stories and videos of their pets and engage with the brand through product announcements and contests.

Image Source: furbo.com

TREND #2

Values-based Consumerism

Today's consumers want to see brands take a stance on the social and environmental issues they care about. Forrester predicts 55% of consumers in 2020 will consider company values when making a purchase. In a time when consumers have dwindling attention spans and an overwhelming amount of options when purchasing a hoodie, for example, many companies will view retention as the ultimate KPI. Converting a consumer is one thing, but transforming them into a repeat purchaser, now that's an art. A company's values and what they stand for can be extremely powerful when retaining a customer base. Particularly with the rise of Gen Z, a generation that values activism.



More than 55% of consumers will consider company values when making a buying decision.

FORRESTER, 2020

Who's Doing it Right? Everlane

Everlane appeals to the values based consumer at every touchpoint. Their values aren't hidden away on an about page they're stated loud and clear on the homepage, PDPs (product description page) and throughout their site. They even let you see the factory each product was made or learn how their denim is produced with recycled water, alternative energy sources and repurposed byproducts to minimize waste.

Image Source: etoroumoren.com/everlane

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Forward-looking CMOs will recognize that customers don't merely want to be served but want to be part of the service; consumers will view brands as vehicles to participate in a larger cause.

FORRESTER, 2020

TREND #3

Democratizing IT

With the increasingly popular technology movement known as headless commerce or “API-based commerce” merchants can decouple their front end (“head”) from their back end, enabling the two systems to communicate via APIs. Headless architecture divides consumer-facing concerns from system-facing concerns, reducing the need to dive into your back end and get your hands dirty with every iteration of your commerce strategy. It allows your marketing/CX design teams to experiment on the front end and implement revenue-driving improvements – making them less reliant on technical teams to make advancements. The net effect is that merchants become more agile and faster to grow.

When marketing and creatives have the freedom and mobility to implement change, they're able to conduct tests and experiments more frequently, garnering richer insights, which ultimately lead to higher conversions.

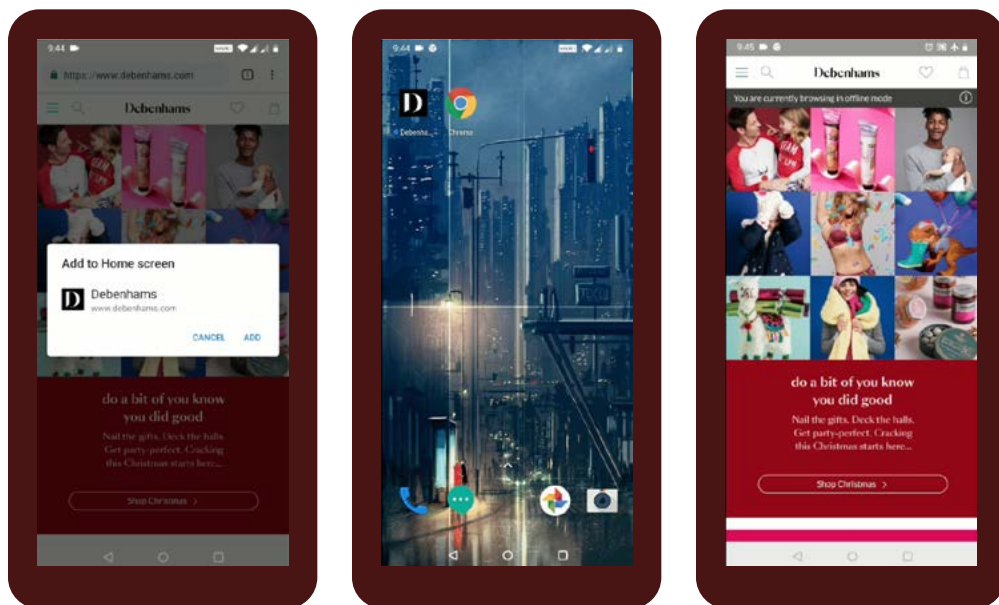
TREND #4

Progressive Web Apps

Merchants are continuing to adopt a mobile-first mindset in order to align with consumer browsing habits. They're investing in their customer experience on mobile and want an app-like experience optimized for smartphone screens, without the barrier of entry that requires users to visit the app store and download.

Experts say one solution is progressive web apps. They combine the discoverability of the mobile web (searchable via google) with the performance and functionality of an app (speed, interaction design modalities, push notifications, etc.)

YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT PWAS [HERE](#).



Who's Doing it Right? Debenhams

According to industry experts, when it comes to ecommerce, nothing matters more than speed. Google's data suggests that over half of consumers will bounce from a site that takes more than three seconds to load. Debenhams' new PWA is twice as fast as their previous site experience and their mobile revenue subsequently grew by 40%.

Image Source: lambdatest.com

TREND #5

Chief CX Officer

We hear it again and again: a customer-first strategy is essential to building and scaling a successful ecommerce business. But what does that look like in practice? Investing in ongoing audits of your customer journey to make sure it's frictionless. Listening to and analyzing what resonates (i.e. maybe your social media efforts have suggested customers want to be more involved in the product development process). As Forrester predicts, the role of Chief Marketing Officers will evolve and adapt to be less marketing focused and more customer experience focused. “CMOs will thread the needle between employee experience, customer experience, brand purpose, creative, and technology, imbuing all these crucial areas with customer obsession.”



In 2020, the top CMOs will be responsible for all that surrounds the customer.

FORRESTER, 2020



Glossier's product developer took to Into the Gloss (the editorial sister site of Glossier) to ask fans what their signature candle should smell like — effectively putting customers at the heart of their product development strategy and building hype before the product was even conceived.

Image Source: intothegloss.com



Image Source: onica.com

TREND #6

B2E (Business to Everyone)

B2B buyers don't leave their B2C consumer selves at home when they go to work. They bring those expectations with them, the expectations that they'll be presented with a streamlined intuitive experience. This is especially the case for millennials, which, according to Merit, make up 73% of all B2B consumers. The line between B2B and B2C customer expectations is becoming increasingly blurred. Business-to-business are following business-to-consumer's lead and investing in mobile CX, flexible payment methods, personalized buying funnels, etc. And as the B2B industry is expected to double the revenue of B2C in 2020, B2C merchants with applicable products and services would be smart to go after a piece of that pie (selling online to businesses tends to equate to higher order values).

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B2B retailers are never really selling to a business; they're selling to people who happen to work at a business.

FORRESTER, 2019

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The notion of separating business-to-business and business-to-consumer tools is archaic. The future is to merge the two together and create what he calls 'b-to-e,' or, 'the business to everyone revolution.'

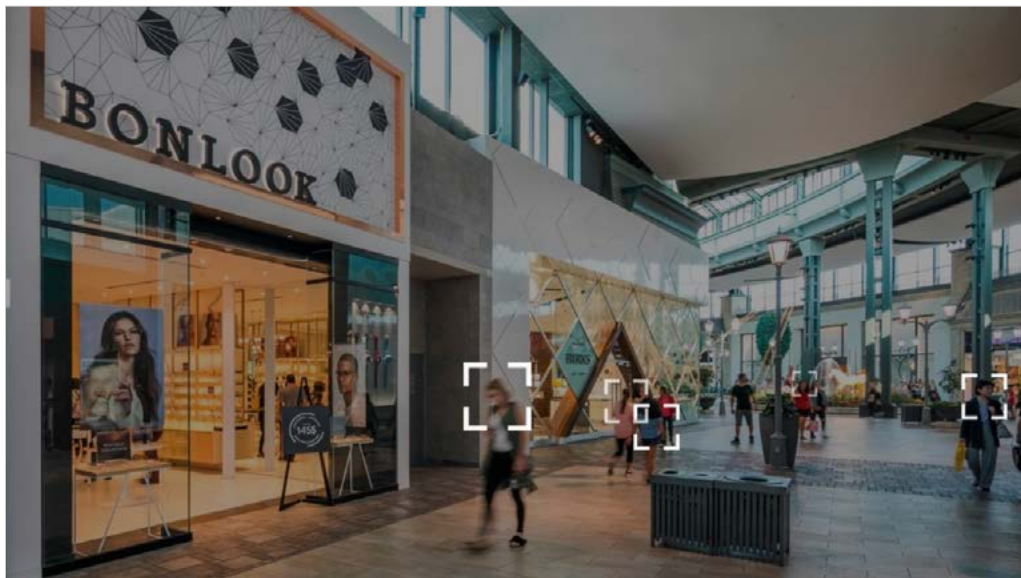
STEVE LUCAS, SENIOR VP OF DIGITAL EXPERIENCE, ADOBE

TREND #7

Device Tracking

As it turns out, consumer data collection isn't just taking place online anymore. Merchants are aligning online and offline data, piecing together a 360 view of consumers through in-store facial recognition, device tracking, and Point of Sale (POS) data.

This data can then be used to inform storefront displays, marketing campaigns, merchandising and more. Merchants will know when a consumer pauses in front of a selection of their sunglasses, for example— and retarget them online accordingly.



Who's Doing it Right? BonLook

BonLook, a Canadian based eyewear store knows that 86 consumers considered to be in their target demographic (glasses-wearing 20-30 year old women) passed by their Quebec City store between 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. on a Friday. Twelve of those women entered the store and two purchased a pair of glasses.

Image Source: retail-insider.com

TREND #8

Smarter AI

Forrester predicts advanced enterprises will double down on their data strategy budget in order to take full advantage of AI and machine learning capabilities: i.e. product recommendation, content personalization, fraud detection, price optimization, image search, virtual assistants, customer segmentation, etc. The next significant advancement in machine learning will be artificial emotional intelligence – analyzing facial expressions to pinpoint emotions, behavioral patterns and voice intonation in order to tailor shopping experiences for a consumer’s moods and desires. “Businesses will be able to detect consumer emotions and use this knowledge to increase sales,” says Laurence Goasduff.



Image Source: interestingengineering.com

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By 2022, your personal device will know more about your emotional state than your own family.

ANNETTE ZIMMERMANN, RESEARCH VICE PRESIDENT AT GARTNER



Image Source: interestingengineering.com

TREND #9

Privacy, Please

As trust and privacy becomes paramount to consumers, companies should be transparent and do more to educate consumers about how their data is being collected and used. Transparency being the keyword here. Today, machine learning is big tech companies sucking your data; tomorrow you'll have complete ownership over it, only sharing it with trusted brands in exchange for high-value and personalized experiences. This will lead to what we'll call "advanced personalization." Today, even the most sophisticated of companies (Google, Louis Vuitton, etc.) have fragmented data. In the future, you'll choose to share your data with restaurants so they know your dietary restrictions as soon as you walk in the door. Or that you're a high spender and treat you (and seat you) as such.

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By 2023, the majority of organizations using AI for digital commerce will achieve at least a 25% improvement in customer satisfaction, revenue or cost reduction.

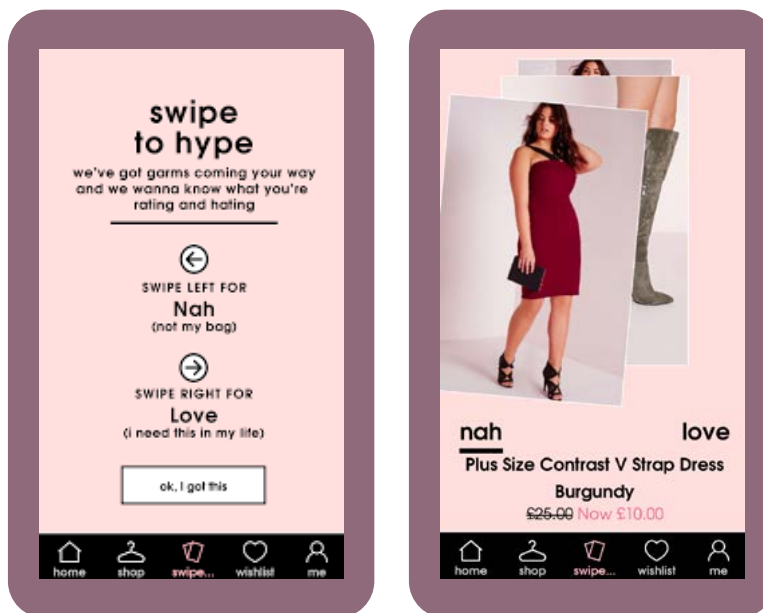
SUSAN MOORE, GARTNER

TREND #10

Social Media Inspired Design

Merchant's conversion rate on mobile continues to lag – despite contributing to more traffic than desktop. Web designers are learning that mobile customer experience design shouldn't be an adaptation of desktop, it should be reimagined entirely. D2C brands are utilizing Instagram commerce with shoppable tags and in-app checkouts and seeing exceptional results. From a consumer standpoint, it's a much more inspiring way to shop.

It begs the question: what if your mobile site's UX elements and user flow resembled that of Instagram's? Or the product imagery on your PDP (product description page) swiped like Tinder. Would it drive more engagement and conversion from your audience?



Who's Doing it Right? Missguided

The Missguided app cleverly uses tinder-like gamification to collect data from their consumers of the new products they like and dislike. The user can swipe left on styles they wouldn't wear and right on items they might– the right-swiped items are then saved to their wishlist and can be easily moved to bag. This data can then be used to target consumers with ads, notifications, forecast sales or contribute to AI powered personalized merchandising.

Image Source: <http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk>

ON BEHALF OF THE CORRA TEAM,

Have a successful year of
high-converting experiences,
happy customers and
impressive growth.

Thank you for reading our coverage of 2020 trend predictions.

Reach out to learn about any of the trends that align with our services: headless commerce, progressive web apps, AI fueled personalization/ optimization, social media inspired design, merging B2C and B2B experiences and more.

CONTACT OUR ECOMMERCE SPECIALISTS