Commerce Can No Longer Be Where Creative Goes to Die

Last year, global ecommerce sales totaled nearly $6 trillion and are expected to grow 10% this year. People expect nothing but the best shopping experience every time, and expectations increase every time they experience something better.

This represents a sharp departure from how commerce has traditionally been approached—as a mere transaction after all the creative brand-building and consumer engagement. Now, commerce is often the sole or most pivotal moment where brands interact with consumers, making creativity and commerce work hand in hand. Necessity created by pandemic lockdowns fast-forwarded the world of commerce, creating a world where speed, value and frictionless convenience are the victors and the loyalty that brands have fought so hard and paid so handsomely for are the first casualties.

We have matured immensely beyond the days of short-term commerce tactics like “add to cart” or “buy now.” Modern creative commerce is about far more than getting people to buy something; it’s about getting them to buy into the brand experience before purchasing your product. But how?

Here are four examples of how creative commerce has recently been brought to life to great effect.

When it doesn’t feel like shopping

Durex “Down to Duck” was a 24-hour response to Apple’s announcement to stop autocorrecting “F***” to “Duck.” It is a testament to our belief that people don’t “go” shopping; they

always shop.

And aren’t we all delightfully guilty? Be it passive scrolling that turns into Air Jordans shipped overnight, TikTok cooking livestream binges that lead to family-sized Doordash grocery deliveries and shopping during those endless virtual calls. Or our kids on Roblox, spending our hard-earned Robux on their avatars.

When it doesn’t feel like you’re shopping, that’s creative commerce; it’s the hinge between a one-time purchase and a long-term brand-consumer relationship.

The dots between the data points

Online grocery and food delivery services have rapidly grown in the last few years. Voilá, a Canadian challenger brand in the grocery delivery category, targeted millennials by being where they are: Social media. When Dalgona Coffee, Pasta Chips and Kit Kat Cheesecake were trending on TikTok, the ingredients sold out quickly.

[embedded content]
By predicting upcoming viral recipe trends and partnering with foodie content creators, Voilá’s “Trending 2 Table” intercepted cultural trends before their competitors, acquiring new customers first and accelerating sell-through on the digital shelf to parent company Sobeys. A custom-built Trend Index collected data from TikTok and Pinterest trends, Google insights, social listening, Voilá’s first-party search, and sales data. Connecting the dots between data points turned into delicious dollars for Voilá.

Commerce interceptions

LATAM Airlines “Fly over Cyber Monday” where the brand had a unique proposition to sell affordable flight tickets to people who were shopping for electronics. This ‘commerce interception’ was inspired by the strategic cultural insight

that it’s more affordable to buy electronics overseas, flight tickets included. Clever shopper targeting and redirecting led to $30 mil in ticket sales, lots of brand love on social and inclusion in Forrester’s Best Practice Report.

The ‘adaptive retail’ approach

The future of commerce is frictionless, secure, tech-forward and human-centric. At CES this year, Walmart was already ahead of the game with their ‘adaptive retail’ approach, a dynamic, unified retail experience that’s integrated across all channels people engage with. Another stand-out example was its gen AI-powered “occasion” search experience where people can key in searches like “football watch party” instead of “chips, wings or 90-inch TV.”

What’s important is how Walmart puts people’s experiences at the center. Sure, they want to sell you everything, but it’s on the customer’s terms. And while we’re at it, let’s throw in some cross-category ideas like that dream 90-inch TV, which pairs nicely with football and chips.

In a world where any relationship can forever end with just a swipe or click, brands cannot afford to *not* make every experience count. It is no longer just about short-term tactics like discounts, freebies or sales spamming.

Creative commerce is a business multiplier, a strategic mission for building enduring and profitable relationships between brands and people. To simultaneously supercharge growth and love for your brand, commerce must be where creativity thrives, not where it ends.

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