



THE BALANCING ACT

3 choices facing retailers and
consumer brands in the new era of
Connected Commerce

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In our most recent retail and consumer product (CP) research, [What Matters to Today's Consumer](#), we offer four practical and actionable recommendations for how retailers and brands can compete and win in the new era of connected commerce. However, in reviewing our best practices within the context of consumer demands and expectations for a connected experience, fast and efficient delivery and fulfillment, and competitively priced sustainable products, it can be difficult for organizations to decide which issue to tackle first and where to focus limited resources.

This underscores the idea that today's brands and retailers need to embrace a multitude of initiatives and often balance several competing priorities. In this article, I'll review three of the most pressing dilemmas facing retailers and CP brands and explore how organizations can address the underlying issues to compete and win with today's digital consumer.

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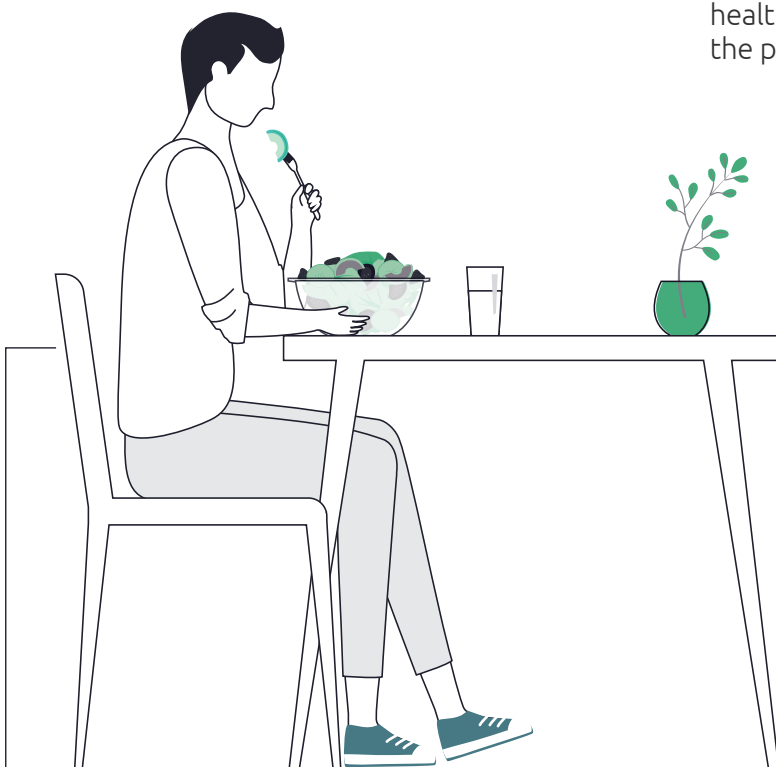
THE ROLE OF RETAILERS AND BRANDS: PASSIVE OBSERVER OR CHANGE AGENT?

Our recent research confirms the notion that now more than ever consumers want to live healthier, more sustainable lives. According to our report, 7 in 10 consumers indicate they plan to be more vigilant of their personal health post-pandemic, while nearly two-thirds (64%) will be more conscious of the conservation of natural resources.

With these data points in mind, retailers and brands need to decide what role they want to play in the lives of the modern consumer. Will they be a passive observer of changes and trends? Or will they be change agents that help people live healthier lives and create more sustainable societies?

Some consumers are eager to become better, healthier, more eco-friendly versions of themselves. However, some have not yet adopted “healthier living” desires. Brands must commit to making sustainable, responsible products, and embrace consumers to adapt to healthier living.

And retailers need to sell and supply those products. Educating consumers through digital technology, in-store events, and other awareness campaigns, about the wide range of benefits of a healthier lifestyle benefits the consumer, but also the planet.



7 IN 10

CONSUMERS INDICATE THEY PLAN TO BE MORE VIGILANT OF THEIR PERSONAL HEALTH POST-PANDEMIC.

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COMPETING PRIORITIES: PURPOSE OR PERFORMANCE?

Consumers are drawn to brands and retailers that mirror their personal values and support their desire for improved health and sustainability. Our research revealed that nearly 7 in 10 (68%) agree that private organizations can do more to help society, while 6 in 10 (61%) expect private companies to give back to society during a crisis.

But when it comes to leadership teams and boards, performance is likely the top priority, 100% of the time. So which wins: the consumer's push for purpose or traditional business performance?

This choice may seem like a paradox, but I would argue that it doesn't need to be. In this case, it's not a matter of choosing between purpose and performance but rather finding links between the two.

For example, our company has developed a solution for CPG companies to level-up their sustainability by reducing food waste. That directly relates to the brand's purpose to be a responsible and sustainable company. At the same time, it also helps improve performance because cutting waste also helps reduce costs.

Brands and retailers need to identify similar opportunities within their business, whether that is changing or reducing packaging to use less material, reformulating products to contain more sustainable ingredients, changing delivery methods to leverage more environmentally friendly channels or any other tactic that can check the proverbial box in both the performance and purpose column.



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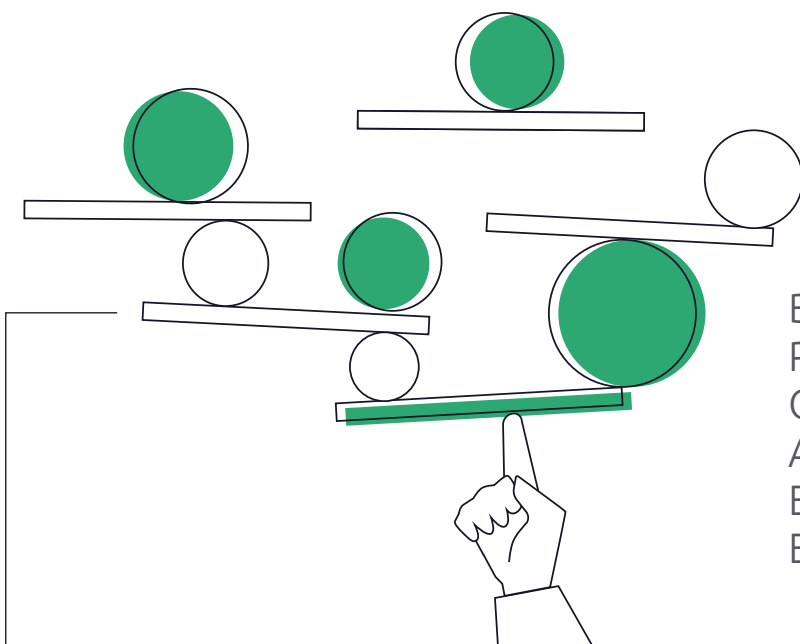
FINDING BALANCE: TODAY OR TOMORROW?

After facing years of disruption from COVID – the likes of which is still wreaking havoc on some supply chains and distribution channels – some retailers and brands may be delaying major investments as they grapple with continued volatility within the landscape and rapidly changing consumer preferences.

However, companies need to realize that waiting is generally not a winning strategy. Balance is a constant pursuit. Even in the most dire circumstances – or, dare I say, especially in the most dire circumstances, organizations must always be willing to evaluate, evolve, and embrace what's next.

Working with a partner who can help identify both the opportunities for improvement within the business and the transformational technology to fuel lasting change is one way to help ensure that steps taken today will drive value tomorrow and well into the future.

With competition increasing day by day and consumers becoming more demanding than ever before, retailers and brands need to decide how they will adapt to meet the needs of the new era of connected commerce. And that's not so much a matter of now or later, but now or never.



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*Ready to reinvent your business to compete and win in the new era of **Connected Commerce**?*

*Reach out to our author, **Kees Jacobs** (kees.jacobs@capgemini.com), today to learn more about how Capgemini can help your company deliver what matters to today's consumer.*

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