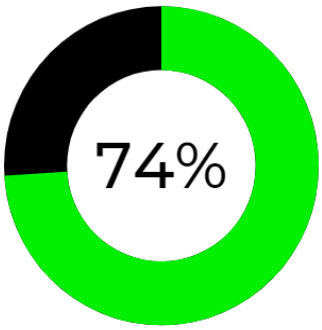
Winning the product content game

Activating the right product content to drive discoverability

Take yourself back to early 2020, pre-global pandemic, the digital landscape was already an extremely challenging channel to navigate. Now entering the third year of COVID-influenced life and disruptions, shoppers have reprioritized what matters to them, and are seeking shopping experiences and products that cater to their new needs.

What matters to shoppers now has changed.

A recent NielsenIQ 2022 Consumer Outlook online survey revealed that 74% of global respondents believe that their priorities and resulting shopping habits have been impacted to some degree by COVID-19. This includes 30% who feel they have a totally different set of priorities than they had in 2019. Shoppers view health and wellness as part of their everyday choices. It is not a one size fits all approach.

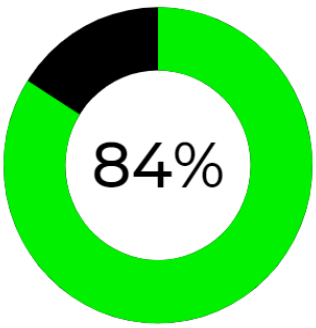


of global shoppers believe that their priorities and shopping habits have been impacted to some degree by COVID-19

Shopper behavior continues to rapidly change with hundreds of millions of shoppers now searching for products that meet their specific health, diet, allergy or lifestyle needs. In fact, NielsenIQ Label Insight research shows that more than 70% of shoppers are looking for specific attributes that are important to them when choosing a brand.

The global pandemic has pushed more shoppers online than ever before and brands and retailers are fighting to win the attention of shoppers. Simply providing product information on the product description page and expecting shoppers to trawl through pages of products to find the one that best suits their needs is no longer acceptable.

The shift in shopper behavior to purchasing online and seeking health and wellness products has accelerated the need for an innovative approach to product data for brands and retailers. Omnichannel needs to cater for the shoppers changed and continually evolving circumstances and focus on the specific product benefits that shoppers seek.



of brands fail to claim at least one of the top three most searched attributes

The shopper's repertoire of brands or consideration sets may look very different to what they have been in the past. Shoppers will continue to scrutinize the necessity of products and any that do not meet their specific requirements will be left behind and alternatives will be added to the basket.

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To meet the demands of today's digital-first shoppers, product attribute metadata has emerged as a "must-have" complement core and enhanced content that shoppers expect on the PDP. CPG brands and retailers must look to differentiate to win omnichannel market share and build lasting loyalty.

Discover:

- Are your shoppers able to discover your products through organic and faceted search based on their need states and preferences?

Empower:

- How does the PDP empower shoppers with the expected information, pictures and details about the product?

Engage:

- Is the PDP engaging shoppers and answering questions on the path to purchase with enhanced content and rich media?

Personalize:

- How are you creating personalized and unique experiences to drive brand loyalty and add value to the shopping journey by removing any friction?

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DISCOVER

Uncovering products beyond the back of pack

Recently, two consumer macro-trends have emerged that have added both incremental business value and incremental complexity to FMCG product data in the grocery industry. The first significant and growing trend is the propensity for shoppers to search for and purchase products based on health and wellness and lifestyle-based needs. Year over year online searches for relatively established need statements such as 'organic' and 'plant based' have increased 163% and 148% respectively. This shift in shopper product discovery and purchase behaviors has dramatically increased the level of detailed product information needed to effectively serve these growing shopper segments.

The second macro-trend has impacted the importance and complexity of the FMCG product data ecosystem is the growth of grocery e-commerce, especially in response to the global pandemic. In June 2020 the U.S. market saw a record 46 million active monthly online grocery shoppers, up from 16 million less than a year prior. As a result, the need for relevant content online is critical, it is the key to success. Retailers implement strategies on how content is set up, how it is categorized, what its taxonomy looks like, the integration of multimedia content and keyword linkage.

Today, retailers are failing to return on average 92% of qualifying products on their online channels. This means that for every ten products that could be shown in the search results, retailers are only presenting one. This is a massive gap. A gap that is driven by incomplete, siloed and poor product data quality.

With over 200 million shoppers adhering to a health or lifestyle related diet and nearly as many indicating food allergies and intolerances affecting the purchase decisions shoppers make, inaccurate and incomplete data is not only costing retailers billions but also damaging shopper trust and loyalty.

Let's look at an example. Gluten-free is one of the most commonly claimed attributes found on packaging. Label Insight's database of about 420,000 food and beverage products shows that 1,209 products include the phrase "gluten-free" within their product title and 86,295 products are making a gluten-free claim on their packaging. When analyzing the data further and looking to see if the ingredients include gluten, Label Insight were able to unlock 185% more products that qualify as gluten-free.

Going beyond the label with nutritional and ingredient analysis creates an ideal state of data enabling the shopper to select an attribute or search for a keyword and experience holistic and personalized results, improving shopper satisfaction and inherently helping to increase basket size and loyalty.

Retailers must opt for digital attribution as those with smarter product metadata will deliver better insights and empower the best activation, claiming an advantage over competitors in a crowded market. It is a sign to shoppers that you have prioritized their need states and want to make the online shopping experience easy and simple to all shoppers to use. With the right data, retailers have a massive opportunity to deliver an exceptional online shopping experience.

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EMPOWER

Empowering shoppers with the expected product information

A well-designed product description page is essential for any marketing strategy as it is the page that leads directly to a sale. It is critical that shoppers have visibility of the product information that they are interested in such as what size is the product or what functions does it have? The lack of product information will cause shoppers to become skeptical about the product and will either leave the product page or worse, proceed with purchasing a competing product.

Research by Forrester investigated what information shoppers use when researching and making a purchasing decision and results showed that the top three included detailed product description and specifications, reviews and images.

77%

of shoppers use product descriptions when researching a purchase decision

63%

of shoppers use product images

61%

of shoppers use multiple images

66%

of shoppers rely on the ability to zoom in on product images

When researching online, shoppers rely heavily on the product descriptions more than any other type of information on the product page. In fact, Forrester research states that 77% use this content when researching a purchase decision. Why? Because it includes everything from the raw product information to key call outs and brand information. Enough to provide a basic informed purchasing decision.

And then there are product images. Product images are viewed first from the aisle view and then more closely on the product description page. According to the Forrester survey, 63% of shoppers use product images, 61% use multiple images and 66% rely on the ability to zoom in on these images. Missing product images or inaccurate product images is no longer acceptable. In fact, missing images make shoppers believe the product is out of stock, resulting in missed sales.

There are many points to consider when it comes to product imagery. Is the image suitable for all screen sizes? Does the image identify the key product call outs? Does the image provide a visual representation of the product in a real-life scenario? Does the product image stand out against competitors?

According to eMarketer, shoppers expect to see anywhere between five to eight images on each product description page. Too many and the load time on the product page will be too long, deterring shoppers away from the page, but too few product images provide minimal insight into the product and a lack of attention from the shopper. Product images are expected by shoppers of today to enable an informed purchasing decision as if the shopper was in store holding the product in their hands.

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ENGAGE

Delivering a seamless experience with enriched product content

Engaging with shoppers and bringing experiences, content and brand interactions directly to the shopper is key. And whilst there are endless ways to market a product online, the most accessible and effective option is utilizing the product description pages available on retailer sites. Break the page in two halves—above the fold and below the fold. While the above the fold product information focuses on empowering the shopper, below the fold opens the opportunity to engage shoppers and connect with them by providing enriched product content, including video, 360 product tours and interactive elements.

76%

of shoppers prefer to have enhanced product content available when purchasing online

Adding enriched content does not have to be complicated. In fact, product videos have been on the rise in ecommerce for years and product pages are the perfect location to host product advertisements or explainer videos for shoppers to watch. Whilst they are expensive to produce, they can be worth the investment, with research stating that using videos on landing pages can increase conversions by 86%. Remember, video content has completely changed how the majority of people use the internet and grocery shopping is no exception. It is critical to give shoppers the content they are looking for, as it can be guaranteed that a competitor will have a video available. It is an opportunity to tell a story and showcase products in ways that images cannot.

Once the shopper is on the product description page it is critical that shoppers have all the content they need. In many cases, the use of feature sets are implemented, a form of enriched content that gives brands the freedom to showcase a product's most compelling features and key differentiators in a customized and attention-grabbing format. It is a fantastic opportunity to utilize lifestyle photography, marketing images including brand logos, graphics and standard product images, placed alongside eye-catching headlines.

Using videos on landing pages can increase conversions by

86%

NielsenIQ Brandbank research shows that 76% of shoppers prefer to have enhanced product content available when purchasing online. Bring products to life through compelling product content that tells the brands story, should be a critical component of any digital transformation strategy. Especially as brand loyalty is no longer a key factor in the shopper's purchasing decision. In fact, 79% of shoppers have made changes that impact their loyalty and furthermore over a quarter of shoppes have made brand or store switching changes since the global pandemic. The competition is fierce, and the shopper journey is complex. The brand story must be activated, providing instant, engaging and inspiring product content to shoppers.

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PERSONALIZE

Driving unique experiences for the shopper

So, the shopper has discovered your product, they have been empowered with the relevant information and engaged with enriched content, but are they receiving a personalized and unique experience?

In all cases the answer needs to be yes. Differentiation is key for both in-store and online channels. Health and wellness is no longer a niche market. Every shopper is a health and wellness shoppers – whether shoppers are looking for foods that fit new lifestyle trends or avoiding ingredients in which someone in their family has an intolerance to, or are seeking cruelty-free products, shoppers want and expect more transparency on product labelling. Unfortunately finding products that meet shoppers' needs is not easy – with hundreds of millions of shopper searches going unfulfilled – leaving brands and retailers missing out on millions of sales.

Retailer must provide a personalized experience for the shopper. Products shown in the search must meet their needs and products are out of stock and unavailable, a retailer should be able to evaluate a product similarity index and deliver the most relevant product replacements and recommendations by utilizing thousands of data points.

Some of the United States biggest retailers have already begun leading this personalization through the launch of wellness programs.

Instacart

With 1 in 5 Americans expected to be shopping online for their groceries in the next five years, Instacart identified an opportunity to meet the shoppers needs by utilizing product attributes to power their recommendations and replacements, dynamic aisles and search.

Target

Recognizing the need to provide shoppers with product attribute information at a glance, Target uses product attributes to power their Wellness Icon program in-store and online, to drive shopper loyalty.

Walmart

And finally, Walmart, emerged as a true omnichannel competitor to Amazon as its grocery initiatives evolve, the leading retailer leverages product attributes to power their Shop By Diet ecommerce search and Great for You health and wellness program.

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KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Your next steps to win the product content game

Winning the omnichannel shopper is critical to drive success. Retailers must have complete, representative, high quality and accurate product content that engages the shoppers, meeting their needs and fueling product discoverability and conversion. Without this, shopper loyalty will be lost, and sales will diminish.

Retailers must ask themselves the below questions to understand what needs to be actioned to win the product content game online.

Discover:

- Do you enable shoppers to discover your products through faceted search? Are you utilizing metadata and differentiation products to stand out on the digital shelf?

Empower:

- Do you empower the shopper with the expected product information, including images and details about the product?

Engage:

- Does the PDP page engage the shopper? Does the PDP resolve the questions shoppers have on their path to purchase?

Personalize:

- Do you offer a personalized and unique experience to drive brand loyalty? Do you provide your shoppers with a frictionless experience?

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