Disrupt or be disrupted

3 winning strategies in the era of commerce disruption
Commerce is a battlefield.

Every workday may feel like a round in a boxing ring. In an era when many industries have been disrupted, retail is experiencing the greatest level of transformation. The challenge comes from many sources: pure-play e-commerce competitors, international entrants, new regulations and new technologies. As external pressures mount, your work as a commerce professional becomes even more demanding.

Your daily workout now includes:

- Helping drive business growth as the physical store experience changes and evolves.
- Acquiring new customers in bold new ways, targeting them where they live, on apps or social media, and making it easy for them to buy anywhere.
- Increasing customer loyalty by delivering better personalized experiences, and inspiring them at every step of the journey—the content, reward programs, fulfillment options—so that they want to return.
- Helping store foot traffic with Buy Online, Pick Up in Store (BOPIS) and other fulfillment options.

At the same time, you try to stay one step ahead of customer expectations and one step ahead of the competition. You need to take advantage of many solutions from many different vendors, with limited resources and more data than you can consume. Not to mention your CEO is monitoring your performance and can quote online sales off the top of their head.

In an era of digital disruption, strategy and technology take on a new relationship. Are you going to duck and weave or are you going to start throwing punches? Take control and set your business apart, creating a sustainable competitive edge by being smarter about technology. The power of AI is ready to help you manage your growing task list and drive innovation.

IBM has the tools to help you go on the offensive. Here are three strategies that will empower you to fight back and win.
Customers no longer expect you to compete solely on product, price, promotion or placement. Digital speed has virtually eliminated the ability to differentiate your business via those original four Ps.

Today, it’s all about the customer experience. But you can differentiate and compete by knowing your audience and creating experiences that convert them into customers and keep them coming back. Delivering a great customer experience anywhere—online or offline—is what will drive stickiness and stave off commoditization.

What’s the key? Data. Yours might be siloed or hard to find and draw insights from right now. But AI can leverage your data and learn from it, helping you predict what a customer wants before they know it themselves. Once you can understand customer intent through better contextual awareness, tone and sentiment across all channels, you can deliver truly personalized shopping experiences. One punch more: you have new ways to engage with a customer through voice, visual, new devices and new ways to fulfill and deliver orders.

Don’t let your commerce platform limit your vision or your business growth could be limited as well.

“Customer experience is the business imperative in 2018—those organizations that invest in technology that helps them deliver a contextual, differentiated omnichannel or multi-channel experience are the ones who will thrive in the era of digital disruption.”

Cathy Hotka, Cathy Hotka & Associates
ROUND 1: At the sound of the bell, come out swinging

Your Challenge:

I have the data but can’t connect the dots when it’s siloed across departments and marketing platforms.

I can’t deliver the personalized brand experience I want because I am limited by the template in my commerce platform.

I don’t have the right business tools available in my commerce platform to create the omnichannel experiences I want.

Fight Back and Win with IBM:

AI is built into the IBM Digital Commerce platform to drive real-time personalization and create seamless experiences. Untapped data, no longer siloed across the organization, delivers fresh insights that let you create memorable user experiences.

IBM Digital Commerce lets you break away from a standard and templated approach, making it easier, faster and cheaper for you to design, customize and manage differentiated brand experiences that meet the needs of your customers.

With the headless commerce and robust REST API layer of IBM Digital Commerce, you can create experiences to engage customers whenever and wherever they want: mobile apps, social buying, wearable devices and voice-driven experiences. You can also easily plug in your favorite CMS to deliver the experience your customers want and value.
ROUND 2:
Proper footwork—the need for speed.

Is your commerce platform holding you back? If you can’t easily add features or make changes, then you’re not fighting at the top of your game. Your commerce foundation defines how you create your customer experience—online and offline.

Content for your platform can come from many sources: product data, marketing content, user-created content. And, you need the ability to be able to switch the content in and out where appropriate.

Innovate faster and execute better than your competitors by leveraging the speed and simplicity of SaaS. Upgrades are fast and won’t take you off your game. You can easily bring in a new set of tools and increased flexibility so you’re ready for anything. Stay ahead of fast-moving markets, changing customer expectations and rapidly evolving patterns of engagement to increase conversions and grow sales.

“Brands need to incorporate sophisticated technology to truly keep up with the demands on capturing customer attention in what can often be saturated marketplaces.”

Nicole Leinbach Reyhle, Retail Minded
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<th>Your Challenge:</th>
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<td>I can’t take advantage of every market opportunity presented to me—in fact, I often don’t even know they exist.</td>
<td>AI-infused IBM Digital Commerce enables business users to work more efficiently and effectively by automating tasks, making recommendations and simplifying marketing and merchandising operations while keeping resources and costs in check.</td>
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<td>I can’t easily build out the integrations I need—features like a simplified checkout or frictionless payments.</td>
<td>Business user tools are thoughtfully designed to help you merchandise the store, optimize site search, create and manage promotions and personalize customer engagement—without IT.</td>
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<td>My marketing and merchandising team spends too much time managing and finding the right content.</td>
<td>Content management augmented with AI automatically tags and helps find relevant content for each moment and for every customer touchpoint.</td>
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ROUND 3: 
Go the full twelve rounds.

The way you interact with your customer is changing and will continue to change. Even a few short years from now, commerce will be dramatically different. When the market evolves this fast, if you’re not moving forward, you’re falling behind.

AI augments your team and culture. It’s not a replacement for your team of experts. Instead, it manages the large datasets and automates the routine tasks, so you’re free to take steps to innovate. You’ll need flexibility in your platform as you make decisions to incorporate new commerce options in the coming years, such as chatbots, virtual assistants, IoT integrations, virtual shoppers, intelligent agents, etc. It’s time to get ready.

“From confidential customer data to internal analytics and more, IBM is a trusted partner that not only delivers ease and efficiency to commerce businesses but optimization and security, as well.”

Bob Phibbs. CEO, The Retail Doctor, a NY-based retail consultancy
### ROUND 3: Go the full twelve rounds.

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<td>I need more flexibility in my platform.</td>
<td>With AI, you aren’t locked in. You can deliver experiences that are personalized, relevant and content-rich on a scalable platform that is also secure, fast and reliable.</td>
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<td>I need support for new channels—in-app purchases, wearables, kiosks, etc.</td>
<td>AI is built into the IBM Digital Commerce platform to drive real-time personalization and create seamless experiences on every channel, even those that are still evolving. Customer journeys and the checkout funnel are optimized to remove points of friction and optimize the customer experience.</td>
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<td>I need to plan ahead for channels that aren’t yet developed.</td>
<td>Organizations need a commerce platform that reduces the time spent managing the platform and leaves the team more time to plan.</td>
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Commerce is changing more rapidly than ever, and you need new tools or you’re at risk of being disrupted.

IBM is a go-to-partner to help put you on the offensive and gain more market share. We’ve learned from the largest, most demanding retailers in the world. And by balancing the speed, simplicity and economics of SaaS with the richness of functionality and freedom, we can enable you to create the differentiated customer experiences you need to compete.

With advanced AI technology and decades of experience, we created a champion commerce platform that can give you a competitive edge. When the next punch comes your way, you’ll be ready. And you’ll be able to deliver that knockout punch back.

Learn more →
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