

Navigating digital transformation of brands into e-commerce

By [Paul van den Berg](#)

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Disruptions brought about by the pandemic have forced the acceleration of e-commerce innovation and digitisation, resulting in cramming decades of innovative growth in a fraction of the time. Some may even say, it's been a year or more of Black Fridays.



Source: ©supplied. Paul van den Berg, CEO for Oliver Africa

The result is that many brands are struggling to keep up with the growing demands of their customers.

Despite the rapid expansion of e-commerce before Covid-19, as the upheaval of the pandemic continues, buying behaviours around the world have been disrupted which, in turn, has forced brands to accelerate their e-commerce innovation, expansion and marketing offerings literally overnight.

While e-commerce has been delivering consistent double-digit year-on-year growth prior to Covid-19, many predictions on projections indicate that the past year is set to be the strongest yet, with a 20% growth driven by the massive shift from offline to online due to the pandemic.

Adapt, accelerate and be relevant

That being said, e-commerce, now more than ever, offers brands a rich potential to improve their customer experiences, increase sales and future-proof their business.

The Brandtech Group (formerly known as You & Mr Jones) already anticipated in 2019 the accelerated use of e-commerce as a lasting trend. According to eMarketer estimates it's indicated that online sales increased more than 32% year on year in 2020, or more than double the annual growth in 2019*.

As people rely more on e-commerce, brands are accelerating the development of their e-commerce presence. This trend is shifting from bricks to clicks with spend shifting from physical, retail-centric media to digital channels.

This means brands need to adapt, accelerate and be relevant – now. By focusing on efficiency, brands can unlock the huge untapped power of digital creative and content to drive growth.

Data driven marketing allows brands to build relevancy through response driven creative solutions directly measured and optimised against conversion.

Harmonised marketing

In addition, by leveraging data and consumer insight, strong customer experiences at scale and drive consistency and efficiency across multiple channels can be achieved.

Historically brands work in silo teams especially between sales, marketing and agencies which precipitates a lack of data sharing and intelligence, but now collaboration is key for these brands to evolve.

The pandemic feels like a vast experiment, but it has provided brands with a unique opportunity to engage and build as well as learn many lessons in the limitations of e-commerce and their relationships to their customers.

When it's all said and done, what we do know is a lot can happen in a year and there's never been a stronger case for harmonised marketing than right now.

It is more important than ever for brands to have one, clear voice to ensure a consistent message with its customers.

Yet this is one of the biggest challenges as customers' online shopping journeys are broader than they have ever been and with this comes exponential demands for content and multiple teams doing production.

ABOUT PAUL VAN DEN BERG

As the founder and leader of a number of creative, digital, retail and content agencies in both the UK and South Africa, Paul brings a wealth of local understanding and agency expertise to the business. It was this energy and African knowledge that brought him to the attention of Oliver in 2016 encouraging them to step in and make an acquisition of the local agency.

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