

# Retail Marketing Nuggets from Philly

by KELLY GILMORE

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**While at the Shop.org Digital Summit last month in Philadelphia, I took in some local flavor — mini-cheesesteaks, pizza bites and tiny tart desserts — but also found that food was not the only thing being served up in appetizer form.**

Today information has to be packaged as “snack-able,” “bite-size” and “digestible” for retailers. Staying with that theme, I want to share some takeaways from the dynamic marketing track for readers to nibble on.

Shawna Hausman from Giggle shared some fun facts and great tips around user-generated content. Today customers are sharing a lot; over 70 million photos are shared on Instagram daily. Retailers should think about this rich content stream and consider if they can use it to communicate the lifestyle of their brand, recognizing that rights management should be considered; it doesn't take much time and is worth the investment. Retailers should leverage user-generated content across all marketing channels: e-commerce, email, social media and advertising. It's also a great way to make a mobile app more engaging and create an emotional connection.

Michael Yamartino from Pinterest offered some other tasty tidbits. Current trends indicate that time spent with apps is rising, but 84 percent of smartphone users open fewer than 10 apps per day. The challenge for retailers is to get users to engage with their app, though conversion rates on mobile web are low. Pinterest is a chosen app among users, and retailers can use it to drive product sales.

There seems to be increased chatter about “programmatic” ads. InSparq's Veronika Sonsev served up some details: \$15 billion will be spent on programmatic ads in 2015, representing 52 percent of non-search digital ads in the United States. She told attendees that programmatic ads are more than retargeting; retailers should be using them for top and mid-funnel marketing activities. Sonsev advised attendees to leverage customer data as broadly as possible to help target ad campaigns and to use program-

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matic ad creative to ensure the brand uses the right message for each potential customer.

One thing that was clear across all sessions is the importance of the customer. Even large retailers prioritize retention to prevent churn. Melissa Collins from The Container Store said customer retention is crucial for their brand: Some 32 percent of their customers account for 83 percent of total sales.

Understanding customers is key to engaging them. Justin Winter of Diamond Candles revealed that his company's messaging is highly tailored to its audience, which is approximately 95 percent female. Before Valentine's Day, however, men make up 50 percent of sales — and it's important to capture that audience to encourage yearly engagement.

Attention to detail matters when it comes to the customer journey. Temptu's Amy Madonia emphasized that a smooth customer journey is key to preventing churn. She tests each step of the purchasing process herself to make sure that it's intuitive and easy to follow, to provide the customer the smoothest ride possible.

I also attended the NRF CMO Council meeting while at the Summit. The council, which celebrated its second anniversary and has grown to over 40 members, is a perfect environment for senior retail marketing professionals to feast on a variety of topics. Here's a sampling of what's on the menu: increasing traffic both in-store and online, how digital marketing impacts sales and brand differentiation, as well as attracting and keeping talent, specifically digital talent within retail organizations.