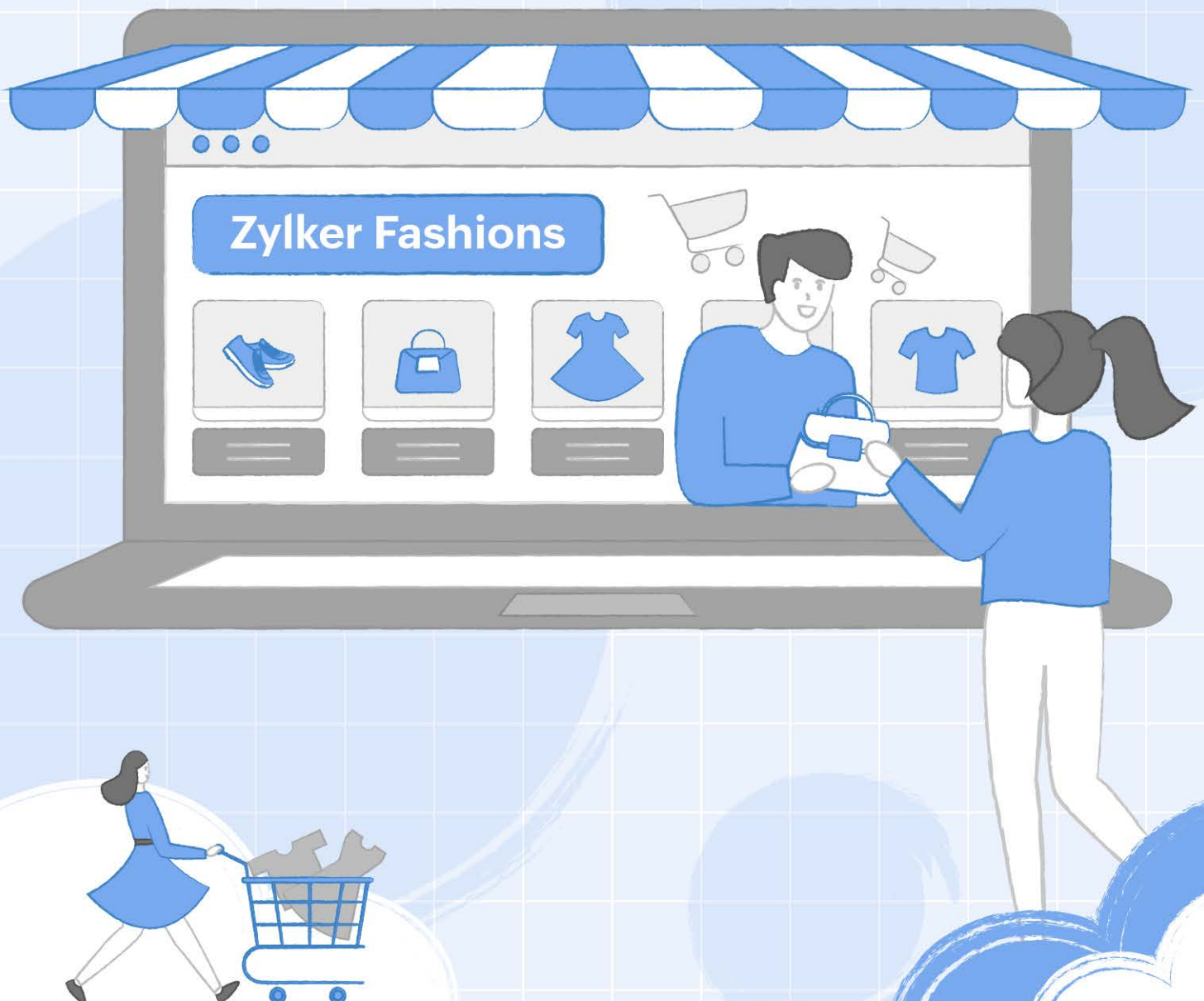


A complete guide to hybrid shopping



Traditional retail models were disrupted due to the rise of ecommerce, which forced retailers to adapt to changing consumer preferences. The emergence of hybrid retail models (hybrid shopping), which combine both online and offline shopping, has become the new norm.

Hybrid shopping is forecasted to be one of the significant trends of coming years according to a new IBM trend analysis. Per their report, customers expect their shopping and purchase experiences to flow naturally between digital and physical locations.

This ebook provides an overview of hybrid shopping and explores the benefits of using tools like live chat and chatbots to simplify retail customer experiences.

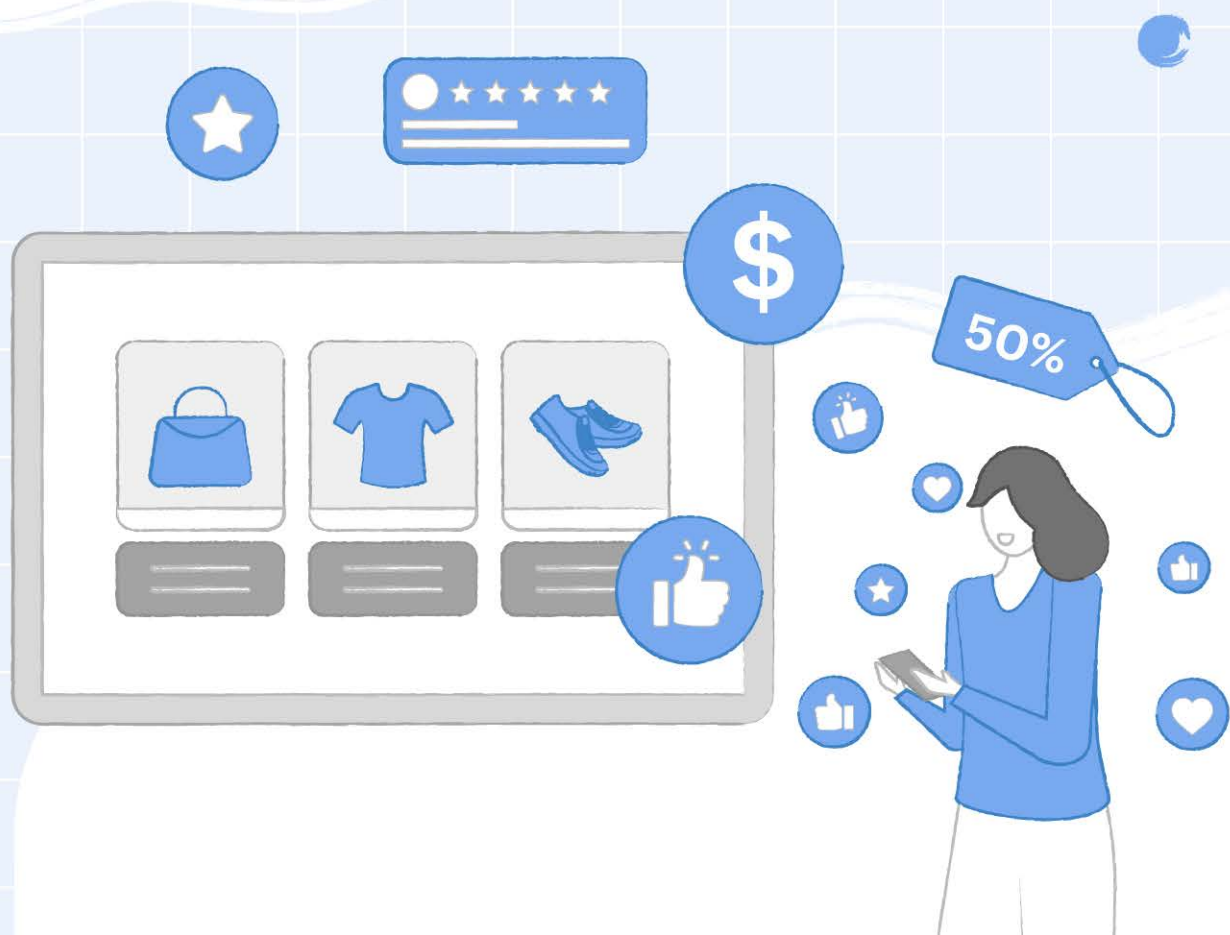


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Introduction

Hybrid shopping refers to a shopping experience that combines both online and in-person shopping. This can include using a combination of digital and physical channels to research, browse, purchase, and receive products.

For example, a customer can begin their shopping journey by researching things online, reading reviews, and comparing pricing followed by visiting a physical store to try on or test the product before making the final purchase. They can also purchase online and either pick up their purchase in a physical store or have it delivered to them.



In recent years, hybrid shopping has grown in popularity as more retailers provide omnichannel experiences to accommodate the changing demands and preferences of customers who prefer the convenience of online shopping combined with the personalized and interactive experience of in-store purchasing. Hybrid shopping can take the following forms:



Click-and-collect

Customers order online and collect their purchases in-store



Buy-online-return-in-store (BORIS)

Customers purchase items online and return them in-store



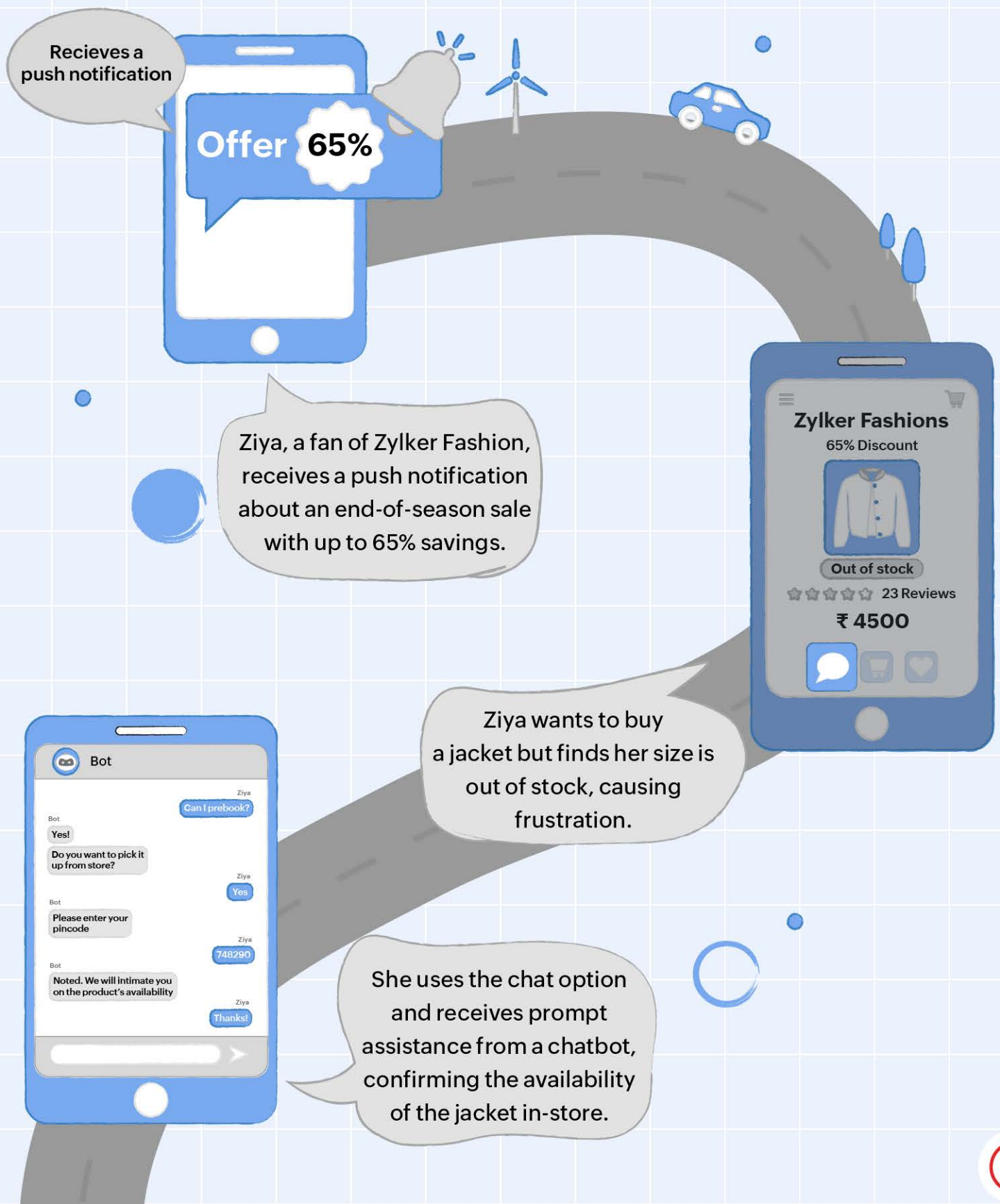
In-store pickup

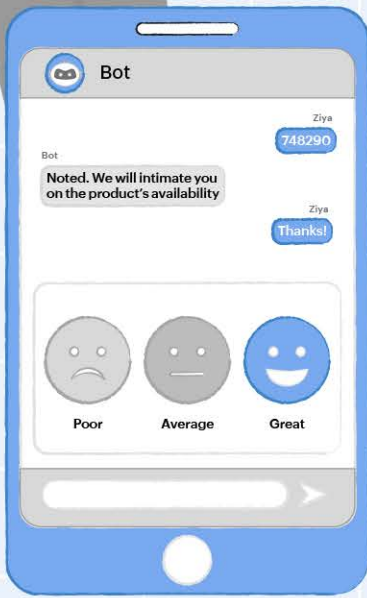
Customers browse and purchase items online but pick them up in-store



The hybrid shopping journey

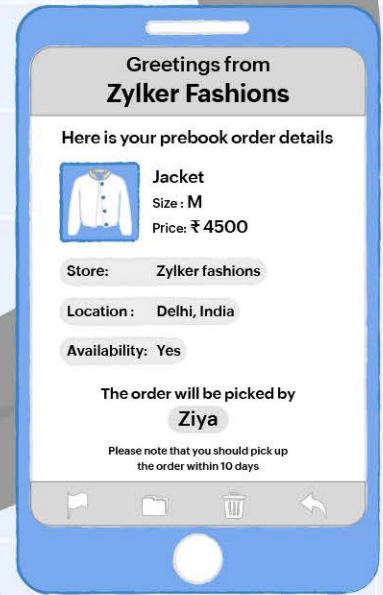
To see what this journey looks like in practice, let's use a fictional example involving Ziya, a massive Zylker Fashion fan who continuously checks their mobile app for the latest offers.





Excited, Ziya pre-orders the jacket through the chatbot and provides feedback.

Ziya receives an email notifying her that the jacket is available in her size at a nearby store.



Ziya goes to the store, where her identity is verified by a sales representative using an OTP.

Ziya picks up her jacket and is delighted with her purchase.



Benefits of using live chat and chatbots to improve the hybrid shopping experience

Customers want the convenience of shopping online, but they also want the personal touch of in-store experiences. To bridge the gap between these two worlds, businesses are turning to live chat and chatbots to enhance the hybrid shopping experience. Let's look at some of the benefits of this model.



Omnichannel retail experience

Omnichannel simplifies consumer-business communication for retailers, saving time and effort.



Present all the time

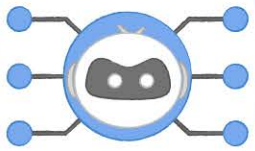
Chatbots are available 'round-the-clock, enabling customers to reach out to merchants from anywhere and receive prompt responses without being restricted by working hours.





Improved in-store retail experience

Kiosks in retail stores allow customers to make payments and use self-service options. Employees can also quickly access information—like available shoe sizes—thereby improving employee productivity and enhancing the customer experience.



Streamlined processes

Retail operations must maintain consistent experience both online and in-store, coordinate special deals, and handle merchandising. Chatbots can assist with these tasks, saving time for store owners.



Recommended actions

Chatbot recommendation algorithms help retailers boost sales by matching products to consumer preferences.





Locating nearby stores

Online shoppers can use the chatbot to search for nearby stores, check product availability, and find out store hours for in-person product viewings or try-ons.



Pre-booking or placing orders

Customers can order things via the chatbot by selecting and providing their contact and address info. It also allows users to pre-order items and receive notifications about new products that meet their preferences.



Tracking deliveries

After ordering via chatbot, customers can ask about parcel location, delivery schedule, and local branch contact information.



Self-service options

The chatbot provides product information including return policies, offers, and FAQs, eliminating the need to chat with a human.





Backup live agents

All the details about the company's goods, services, locations, and features are linked to chatbots that the support can use to quickly obtain accurate information for clients who prefer to speak to a human.



Chat routing

Chat routing provides consumers with instant access to a customer service representative for extended support, rather than a chatbot. It also helps distribute the workload among available operators, improving the effectiveness of a customer support team.



Click-to-call

With the click-to-call feature, consumers can easily talk to reps in just one click, eliminating the need to call a customer service number and wait in a call queue.





Chat triggers

Retailers can use chat triggers to boost conversions and personalize the customer experience, particularly when shoppers abandon items in their carts.



Personalized alerts

Retailers can leverage information about their customers to notify them about new items, seasonal sales, news, and events based on their demographics, preferences, searches, and past orders.



Maximizing loyalty points

Chatbots can alert shoppers with loyalty points about deals, help them redeem points, and notify them of credit issues.



Gathering consumer feedback

A chatbot can gather customer feedback on product, service, packaging, etc., to analyze behavior and enhance the shopping experience.



Hybrid retail store examples

What are hybrid retail stores?

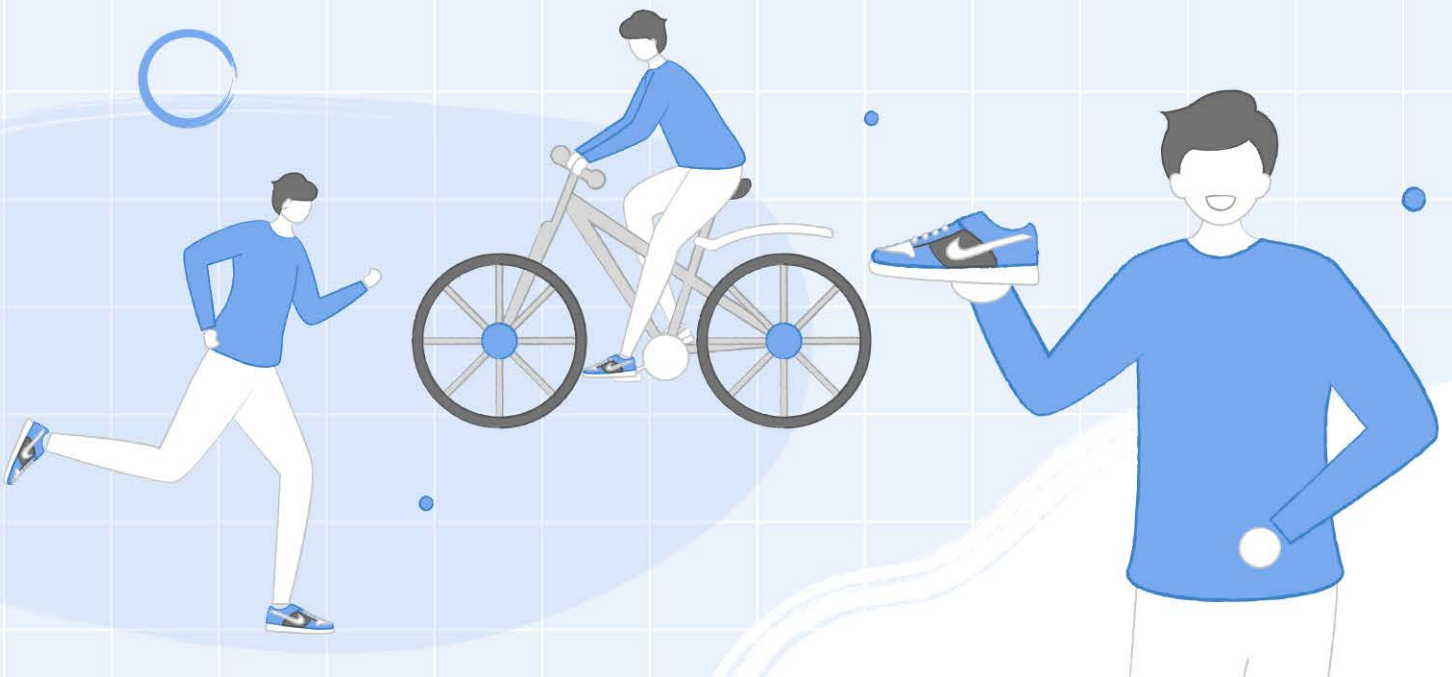
Hybrid retail stores include characteristics of both traditional brick-and-mortar stores and online shopping. They often provide a unified shopping experience, allowing customers to view items and make purchases in-store, online, or a mix of the two.

Here are a few examples of hybrid retail stores and how these brands are improving the hybrid shopping experience for their customers:



Nike

Nike's hybrid shopping experience exemplifies how retailers can fulfill the demands of a wide variety of customers. Nike has developed an engaging, customized, and easy buying experience by blending the ease of Internet shopping with the personalized touch of in-store shopping.



Nike App

Users can explore products, personalize their shoes, and purchase directly from their phones using the app. The app includes exclusive content such as workouts, fitness advice, and behind-the-scenes footage, which fosters a feeling of community and connection. Also, it offers the option to reserve products online for in-store pickup.

Nike Live Stores

The stores feature products curated specifically for the local market and offer services such as Nike Express Sessions, where customers can get personalized styling advice and outfit recommendations.

Nike Live stores also provide services that connect online and in-store shopping. Customers can reserve products to try on in-store using the Nike App, and purchases made in-store can be transported directly to the customer's home.

Nike By You

Nike By You is Nike's customization platform where customers can design sneakers. Customers get to create their designs online and pick them up in-store or have them delivered to their homes, thereby providing a unique hybrid shopping experience.





IKEA

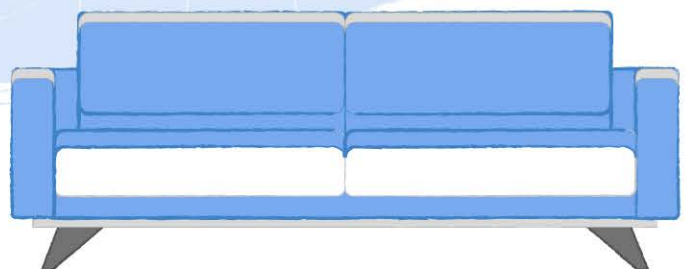
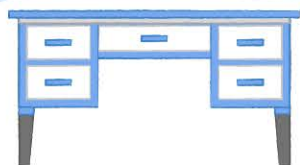
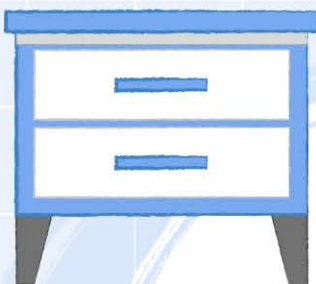
Furniture retailer IKEA has taken a unique approach to hybrid shopping by integrating its online and offline experiences.

VR (Virtual Reality)

IKEA incorporates virtual reality (VR) technology into their shopping experience, which is one way they employ hybrid shopping. IKEA has created an app called IKEA Place that allows customers to use their phones to see how furniture will appear in their homes before purchasing it.

Click-and-collect service

IKEA also leverages hybrid shopping with its click-and-collect service. Customers can use this service to explore and purchase things online, then simply pick them up in-store. IKEA has also optimized the pickup process by designating certain shop spaces for click-and-collect orders, cutting wait times and increasing consumer efficiency.



Personalized recommendations

IKEA also used hybrid shopping to provide clients with customized recommendations. They suggest furniture and home décor goods that clients may be interested in based on data from previous purchases and browsing behavior.





Amazon

Amazon is a leader in ecommerce, but the company has also embraced hybrid shopping to serve its customers. Here are some examples of how Amazon uses hybrid shopping:

Amazon Go stores

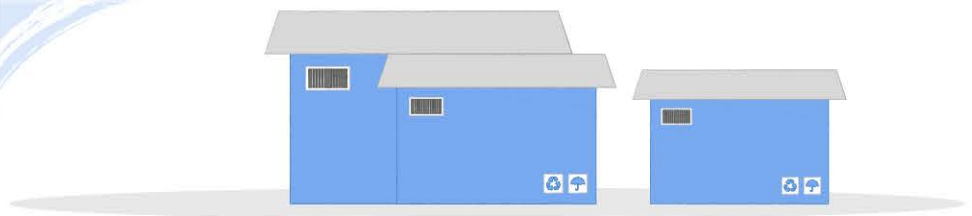
Customers can download the Amazon Go app, scan it when they enter the shop, and then select the things they wish to buy. The software charges the user's Amazon account and delivers a receipt, removing the need for the consumer to wait in line to pay.

Amazon lockers

These lockers are located in public places such as shopping centers, airports, and convenience stores. Customers can have Amazon packages delivered to a locker rather than their house or business, giving a convenient pickup point.

Amazon Books stores

These brick-and-mortar locations sell books and other items. Customers can browse the selection in-store and make purchases, but they can also order items online and pick them up in-store.



Amazon Go Grocery

This is a larger version of Amazon Go stores, offering a wider selection of groceries and household items. Consumers can shop in-store and pay with the Amazon Go app, or they can order online and pick up their things in-store. The stores sell a variety of products, including fresh fruit, meats, and bakery items, making them an ideal choice for busy customers.

Amazon 4-star stores

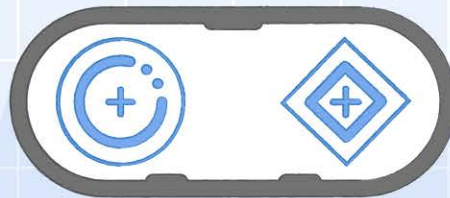
These are brick-and-mortar locations that sell items rated four stars or higher on Amazon.com. The stores sell a wide range of items including electronics, toys, and kitchen supplies, as well as gadgets.



The future of hybrid retail

According to Gartner's projections, in 2026, a quarter of the population is expected to spend a minimum of one hour per day in the metaverse, leading to a novel interaction model with customers. This will have a significant impact on how retail products are purchased, and major brands such as Adidas and Gucci are already taking steps to establish a presence in the metaverse(ii).

As per research(iii), customers desire the ability to communicate with brands at any time and from any location, and they seek personalized experiences. Furthermore, Forrester(iv) has reported that due to the pandemic, consumers have heightened expectations for seamless digital experiences.



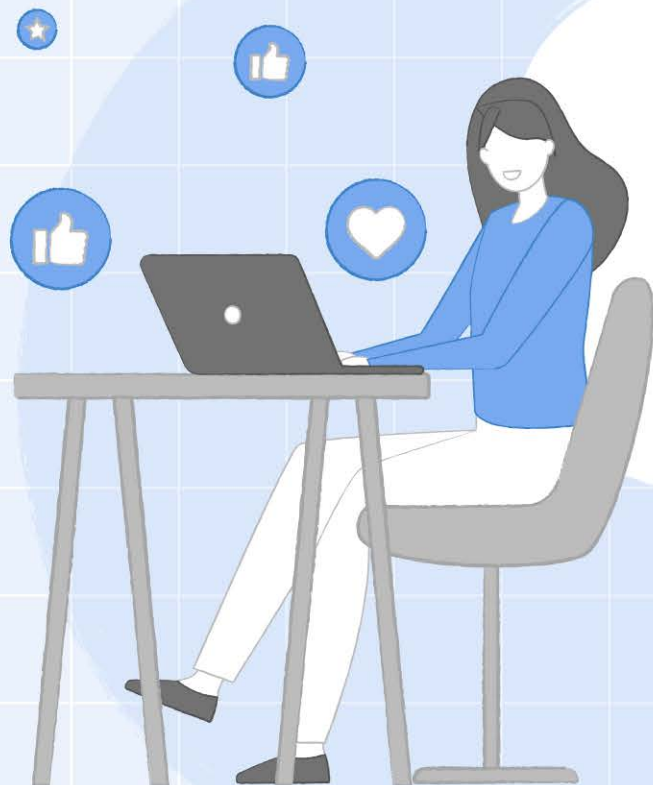
In conclusion, the future of live chat and chatbots in hybrid shopping is promising.

Chatbots will become more sophisticated and capable of offering customers a customized shopping experience as technology advances. They will also assist retailers in collecting valuable insights on customer behavior, which can be utilized to further improve the shopping experience.



By using tools like Zoho SalesIQ, businesses can interact with customers in real-time, track their behavior across all channels, and use data analytics to create personalized promotions and recommendations. With Zoho SalesIQ, businesses can succeed in the world of hybrid shopping and provide customers with a seamless shopping experience.

Try Zoho SalesIQ for free



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