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Apparel Retail **Survey + Report**

Personalization and the Customer Experience



April 2017



Study Reveals Shoppers More Likely to Revisit Clothing Stores that Offer Personalization.

Let's get right to the point: As an apparel retailer you should be offering customers in-store personalization. It's one part of the retail experience that shoppers have come to expect from clothing stores. And, they'll reward you for it. Our research shows shoppers will revisit a store if they receive a personalized experience.

But, what kind of personalized experiences do shoppers care about most? How important is personalization relative to other aspects of the customer experience? And, how does this apply specifically to apparel retailers? We set out to answer these questions and more by conducting a survey targeting 400 consumers to learn about their personalization preferences in 2017. Here's what we discovered.

Nearly 70% of shoppers will revisit a clothing store because of personalization.

Based on our survey results, you are more likely to boost engagement and earn repeat store visits from your customers if you offer in-store personalization.

In fact... **33%** of respondents said they are "very likely" to revisit a store, and **35%** said they are "likely" to revisit. When combined, we're talking a large majority at **68%**.

Yet, surprisingly, **42%** of our survey respondents (those who had visited a clothing store in the last six months) did not get a personalized experience!

Presumably, many retailers have not implemented personalization offerings, or they are simply not doing a great job of presenting them to patrons.

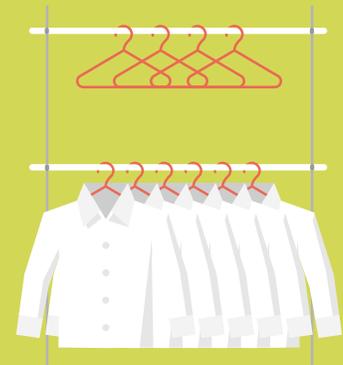
Clearly this is a missed opportunity.

Top retail trends all point to "personalization of the customer experience" as an incredibly important means for small and mid-size retailers to carve out market share from big box merchants. The reality is, customers have come to expect interactions with retailers to feel directed at them individually; responsive to their specific preferences, needs and habits.

68% Of the survey respondents said they are **LIKELY** or **VERY LIKELY** to revisit a store due to a personalized experience.



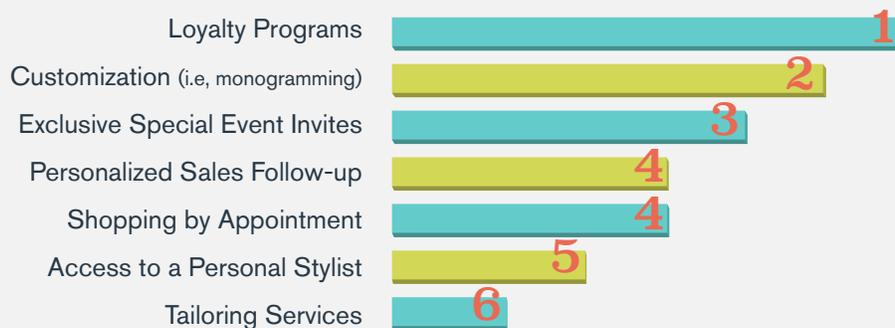
But **42%** of respondents who had visited a store within the past 6 months said they had **NOT** received a personalized experience!





Loyalty programs are still the #1 preferred personalization offer.

Next, we asked survey respondents to rank seven types of personalization offerings. We were surprised to see loyalty programs in the number one position. While this is an old standby, retail consumers still expect this to be a standard offering from retailers and continue to respond well to it.



**Bar graph shows mean rank based on survey respondents who had visited a clothing store one or more times in the past 6 months.*

Perhaps, it is simply a matter of updating traditional loyalty programs to be highly data-centric; adding the ability to pull customer information directly from POS and Retail Management software and crafting very targeted, personalized campaigns.

Today's POS software, like cloud-based [Springboard Retail](#), allows retailers to collect any data they want during the sales process and then see it displayed in real-time on their dashboard. When used in conjunction with loyalty programs, the data can be analyzed and segmented to provide customers a highly customized and relevant experience. Imagine how empowering that is for retail owners, managers and marketers as well as for the team that interacts with customers on the sales floor.

In second place was customization or monogramming of clothing. Huge advancements in technology have significantly lowered the costs of all types of machines—embroidery, silkscreen, hot stamping for example. For well under \$1,000, it's feasible to offer in-store apparel or accessory personalization.

Meanwhile, "exclusive invitations to special events for your favorite brands" ranked number three. Hosting events at your store can also be a low-cost initiative to encourage repeat visits. Not to mention, it provides an opportunity to build rapport with customers, designers and suppliers. The key is to plan well in advance and market strategically by understanding your customer's detailed history.

Beyond the top three, shoppers' and non-shoppers' choices diverged. Shoppers want personalized follow-ups by sales, shopping by appointment, access to a stylist and finally tailoring. Meanwhile, non-shoppers (i.e. respondents who haven't visited a clothing store in the past six months) prefer tailoring, access to a stylist, shopping by appointment and personalized follow-ups.



The obvious takeaway: Retailers, if you are going to invest in in-store personalization, you should prioritize offerings that are most desirable to shoppers. To take it one step further, why not survey your customer base to find out what's most important to them? A POS system like Springboard Retail makes it easy to market or poll your customer base using [Mailchimp](#) which has an integration with [Survey Monkey](#). Today, the more connected your systems are the more targeted your actions will be!

While personalization is important, our survey shows customers rank having the right product in stock as their top preference.

Despite the growing interest and increasing coverage of personalization, our findings suggest that when compared with other in-store experiences it is one of the least important shopping criteria. We asked survey respondents what they care about most while shopping at a clothing store. The number one response? Having the right product and size in stock. Shocker, right?

Proper and [proactive inventory management](#) continues to be one of the most critical aspects of running a successful clothing store. Whether you are a single store, multi-store or [omnichannel](#) retailer, how you plan your buys, optimize your inventory and manage orders across the entire breadth of your enterprise really matters. No customer wants to find that the size 6 pair of jeans they love are out of stock.

According to Gordon Russell, CEO and Founder of Springboard Retail, "no longer are retail management systems only available to enterprise retailers in cumbersome, painful and downright expensive software solutions. I own 12 retail stores and felt very stuck in my choices for a POS system. I was looking for one that would give me all the features I would need to run my business profitably but that my seasonal staff could also easily use. So, long story short, we decided to build a robust POS system from the ground up!"

Customers rank operational efficiencies higher than personalization.



Today, retailers like Gordon can have enterprise-grade functionality within their POS software. Inventory management, order management, purchasing and receiving are all built in to user-friendly systems like Springboard Retail POS that help managers optimize their inventory management procedures.

Moving on, hiring and training employees is the next best investment retailers can make. Based on responses, shoppers care highly about the friendliness and knowledge of store employees. So, an obvious takeaway is to make sure you are [recruiting great people and training](#) them well. "A quick and easy checkout process" was basically tied for second place. And, having a well-trained staff is one key to efficient check-outs. But, having



the right technology in place is equally as important. As your store grows, simple cash-register devices won't keep up. There are many advantages to using a more sophisticated Point of Sale application that is part of an integrated **Retail Management System**, especially one that is intuitive and easy to use for the whole team. Additionally, mobile, cloud-based software, capable of functioning on a variety of devices from tablets to laptops, results in eliminating lines at the cashwrap while increasing sales throughput. And as a bonus, presents a more modern and sleek retail environment.

Finally, the design or layout of the store was least important to shoppers. While store aesthetics are important to differentiate your brand and to help merchandise product, be sure you're investing energy and effort in the right place. Prioritize good retail management; **inventory management**, employee management, and efficiency at the point of sale. Couple that with a data-driven loyalty program that allows you to personalize your customer's experience and you will be poised to grow your retail business exponentially.

Survey Methodology and Demographics

Our survey was conducted in Q1 of 2017. We collected 400 consumer responses through a third-party service. Women represented a majority of respondents at 68%, while men made up 32%. Nearly 70% of respondents said they had shopped at a brick and mortar clothing store in the past six months. And, almost 40% said they shopped once a month. Finally, when comparing ages of survey respondents, Millennials represented a majority at 55%, Generation X trailed at 36% and Baby Boomers made up just 9% (based on demographers William Straus and Neil Howe generation ranges).

In the last six months, how many times have you shopped at a brick & mortar clothing store?

Age of Survey Respondents

Baby Boomers:

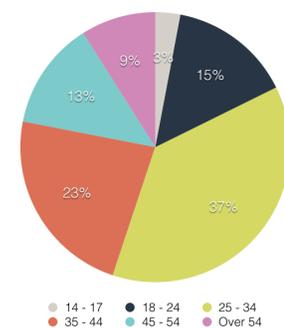
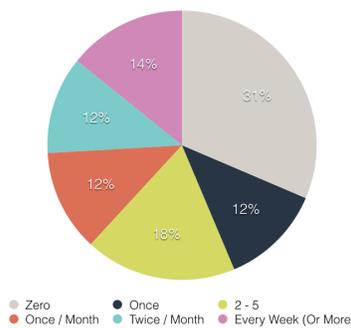
1943 to 1960 (Ages 57-74)

Generation X:

1961-1981 (Ages 36-56)

Millennials:

1982-2004 (Ages 13-35)



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Springboard Retail is a cloud POS and Retail Management platform designed by retailers, for retailers. Built with multi-store, omni-channel retailers in mind, the software allows retailers to service every customer the same way, no matter where or how they shop.

Springboard Retail provides retailers with better control over sales and profitability by placing actionable real-time data in the hands of every person who needs it, from the C-suite to the store floor. Retailers nationwide have used Springboard's mobile POS to reclaim valuable square footage and influence buying behavior at the point of decision, where it matters most. With inventory management, unparalleled custom reporting, APIs, portability across platforms and devices, Springboard Retail is easy-to-use, quick-to-start and revered by its users for making their jobs easier.