

A young couple is shown in a warm, outdoor setting, likely a shopping district. The woman, on the left, has her hair in a bun and is wearing a dark, double-breasted coat with large buttons and a red scarf. She is smiling broadly. The man, on the right, is wearing a red jacket and sunglasses, and is pointing towards a large brown paper shopping bag. They are both holding smaller shopping bags. The background is softly blurred, showing buildings and trees.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

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HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The trends this holiday season that retailers really need to focus on won't be around just the latest fads. Instead, companies that focus on delivering consistent, engaging customer experiences will set themselves up for success during the busiest months of the year. In order to run your business successfully and provide the brand experiences shoppers expect, you must first have the right foundational systems in place.

To build a true omnichannel brand experience, retailers need to get back to the basics—focus first on making sure the business has the right technology foundation in place.

This involves consolidating their core systems and initiating a one-system approach. With a one-system approach, your back-end Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and order and inventory management systems will reside on one platform. You'll get a single source of the truth for customer, order and inventory data in real-time, making that data available to all existing and future front-end, customer-facing systems.

Retailers that have properly set their foundation are now ready to take on the excitement of the holiday season.

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- **Tip #1: Provide an Experience.** Consumers are demanding an experience, something they can touch and feel. This can be seen throughout multiple demographics but has been made imperative by the emerging purchasing power of the millennial generation. According to Dana Telsey, CEO and Chief Research Officer of Telsey Advisory Group, millennials have greater discretionary spending, are tech savvy, and demand convenience and digital interaction, while baby boomers often rely on customer service. As a result, forward-thinking businesses are adapting to provide an experience for their shoppers in store, from virtual fitting rooms to yoga, and that is only the beginning.
- **Tip #2: Be Mobile Ready.** The growth in ecommerce and mobile commerce is dominating market share. In fact, according to Internet Retailer, more than half of the holiday shopping that happened last year was on mobile. Given the shift in demographics where the internet and mobile functions are native to the experience of today's buyers, purchasing online and through mobile will continue to dominate the buying experience.
- **Tip #3: Deliver an Omnichannel Experience.** Omnichannel and technology are changing priorities and shopping behavior. As we have seen with ecommerce, a majority of shopping is being done online and the industry has had to adapt. New technology players are providing a more streamlined approach to the omnichannel buying process and shoppers are beginning to expect that experience.
- **Tip #4: Personalization is Key.** Retailers can no longer attract customers simply through targeted ads and promotions. To influence purchasing, retailers need tailored communication and shopping experiences. According to Retail Dive, a leader in covering retail news, 54% of shoppers used a retailer's recommendation when making shopping lists and 72% of millennials say that it is important to them for retailers to personalize the shopping experience to fit their needs.

Given these transformative trends, what will the holiday season look like?

There are many trends that will influence the holiday season. Without a solid foundation, retailers will be at a competitive disadvantage.

Investing in the right technology now will put you in a position to deliver engaging and consistent brand experiences to your customers, and get you on the path to omnichannel evolution.

Visit [SuiteSuccess Retail page](#) for more information on how NetSuite can get retailers up and running quickly on a modern platform.

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