



# Bold Predictions for 2019

As marketers, we usher in the New Year by studying and making sense of the ever-changing tides of customer behavior. To get in front of the 2019 wave, we've factored in a variety of insights to discover the key emerging themes. What will customers want from their interactions with brands? What will pave the way for repeat interactions? From customer expectations to engagement to advocacy, let's take a look at where we see things going in the year ahead.

## 01

### Micro-moments make a macro impact

According to research from eMarketer, customers now spend an average of 3 hours and 35 minutes on their phones every day. In 2019, mobile devices will surpass TV as the medium attracting the most minutes by U.S. adults. With real-time exploration and decision-making happening on mobile devices, marketers will focus on four key moments coined by Google as "micro-moments":

- I-want-to-know moments
- I-want-to-do moments
- I-want-to-go moments
- I-want-to-buy moments

By quickly providing customers with highly relevant information, products, or content when they express interest, brands will drive more impact through moments that matter.

## 02

### Content marketing gets personal

During 2018, we've seen tremendous developments in machine learning, voice search and content marketing. In the year ahead, some of these capabilities will converge—offering more personalized content based on browsing history, social media behavior and past purchases. Rather than seeing content marketing as a developing capability, look for it to become core to all marketing.

How can we be ready? As nearly 50% of Americans use voice assistants, having small, snackable amounts of relevant content connected to keywords and search terms will help garner a sale. Consider weaving more authentic, conversational language into your inputs in order to blend data-driven and content-focused philosophies.

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# 07

## A.I. is knocking down the door

Consumers use more A.I. than they realize. While only 33% think they use A.I.-enabled technology, 77% actually use an A.I.-powered service or device, from thermostats to security cameras to voice assistants. These smart devices use Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) to learn behavior patterns and predict and adjust accordingly. There's a convergence happening as the technology is becoming accessible to marketers from companies of all sizes.

This means marketers will be able to use A.I. to build better customer experiences and in real-time, because it replaces the need for laborious, time-intensive A/B testing and data modeling. 72% of business leaders termed A.I. as a "business advantage" because while they look to improve the customer experience, A.I. already knows how to achieve it.

# 08

## Direct-to-consumer brands look to overthrow

While Amazon continues to be king of online retail and department stores work to maintain their footing, the channels available for smaller and medium-sized direct-to-consumer brands such as Harry's and Away are quietly growing in new ways. As Instagram works to expand capabilities with native payment apps and more shoppable content features, brands with strong followings are ripe to take advantage of their now over 1 billion active monthly users. Careful, king, there may be new royalty crowned if you're not more planful.

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# 09

## Mobile payments move to a tipping point

Mobile payment technology has continued to mature in recent years, but there have been a few hurdles hindering mass adoption. The number of mobile devices in the market with Near Field Communication (NFC) payment technology has just begun to reach levels of significance.

From 2015-2018, there has been a 243% increase in NFC-enabled mobile devices in the market, driven by customer demand. In parallel, merchant adoption of NFC-ready payment terminals has increased and studies estimate that by 2022, 88% of North America's POS terminals will be ready for contactless payment.

As more devices capable of NFC payments continue to hit the market and merchants invest in updating their payment technology, 2019 is sure to be a year of significance for the world of mobile payments.





# 10

## Loyalty programs change their main menu... introducing more à la carte options

With 46% of millennials willing to pay for enhanced benefits, and Amazon Prime membership still in growth mode, it's clear that the traditional points-for-discounts model isn't what is driving today's loyal customer. Sephora offers free two-day shipping for \$15 a year to their base tier members, while Walgreens now offers a beauty sub-program in an effort to gain share in the category. In 2018, Wayfair launched a fee-based program with a focus on services and benefits, and yet maintains their email and direct mail discount programs to all targeted customers.

Watch for more brands to shift their strategies from a single program model to a hybrid of approaches—offering varying degrees of services, benefits and fees based on the level of engagement the customer desires.

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*Relevancy is the only currency that matters. 46% of millennials are willing to pay for enhanced benefits.*

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### Our word of the year: *Purpose*

Everyone wants to have purpose. You feel better, make more impact and live a more inspired life. Brands are no different. As customers expect more from brands, they are developing stronger connections with those that provide a deeper meaning. Which means connecting with customers' emotions now requires more than profit-driven companies solely promoting their Corporate Social Responsibility platforms.

Research conducted by Cone in 2018 revealed that 88% of Americans would buy a product from a purpose-driven company and a majority would try new product lines as well as be willing to pay more. Brands like Patagonia and Brandless have built purpose into the core of their business models, and are able to strengthen their connections with their customers by living out these missions.

In 2019, businesses will work hard to build real, authentic purpose and transparency into their brands. Customers and employees alike will be cheering.

*Wishing you a great 2019 filled with purpose, micro-moments,  
and more laughs than you think you should have.*

*Cheers,  
Margaret Murphy  
CEO & Founder*

