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In-store Training Aims to Bolster Sales, Create Loyal Shoppers

By *Arthur Zaczkiewicz*

Analysts often discuss the knowledge gap between well-researched consumers and sales associates in the store. It's problematic because it can sour the consumer's experience with a brand. But David Harouche, founder, chief executive officer and chief technology officer at Multimedia Plus, is offering training technology that can bolster the knowledge of associates during "IBC" times, or "in-between customers."

Here, Harouche discusses how it works as well as other trends in the market.

WWD: As consumers increasingly begin their shopping journey online (to include researching trends, products and user reviews as well as to seek bargains), it seems that having well-trained sales associates has never been more important. Would you agree?

David Harouche: Absolutely. Digitally savvy consumers are entering stores already well-informed, knowing about features, prices, and even other customer's experiences. Shoppers are entering a store looking for an associate that knows more than they do and for a 360-degree brand experience. Retailers that invest in a digitally modernized and well-trained staff will excel at educating, converting, up-selling and creating loyal customers.

WWD: From a retailer's perspective, though, training can be costly and labor-intensive — meaning it takes paid staff off the selling floor. But platforms such as yours can offer a solution. Can you explain how it works?

D.H.: Multimedia Plus developed a proprietary QuizScore app that runs on a mobile device, delivering video without streaming and offers bite-sized modules of information. From communications to training, associates are able to remain on the sales floor and become more knowledgeable IBC (in-between customers). Knowledge checks at the end of each module are entertaining and reinforce key messages. The platform is designed to keep sales associates current and provide relevant information where the action is



David Harouche, founder of Multimedia Plus.

Courtesy Image.

taking place — on the sales floor. Companies save a significant amount of time and money by keeping training within an associate's schedule.

WWD: How do you measure the effectiveness of the training modules? Do you create a baseline for retailers, and then measure the post-training impact?

D.H.: The QuizScore dashboard provides field leaders real-time online reporting organized the way retailers do business, by region, district and store. Field leaders own these results and provide regular reinforcement and confirmation of messaging. Actionable, real-time data allows management to assess the effectiveness of modules and even match results against store sales. High engagement comes from the “edu-tainment” value of the programs and the ability of field managers to communicate the importance of ongoing communications.

WWD: With Apple's rollout of a larger pro iPad and the creation of mobile partner program, the company is doubling down on the B2B space. What are some of the advantages of using iPads and other similar mobile devices on the sales floor — for training, and other purposes?

D.H.: iPads and tablets were first being considered by retailers for mobile [point of sale], but now companies are realizing that enterprise communications provide a greater value and return. These new technologies can offer a network of up-to-the-minute, enterprise-wide communications and training that directly impact the customer experience on a global basis. Increased customer satisfaction and experiences, driving units per transaction, maintaining consistent visual merchandising and product knowledge all play a role in increasing sales.

From the moment the iPads are rolled-out there is immediate [return on investment] from reduced print and shipping costs, payroll hours maintained on the floor and increased conversion rates by knowledgeable associates. One client saved over \$500,000 in annual print costs alone — that's a lot of iPads.