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AUSTRALIAN & NEW ZEALAND MARKETING ACADEMY

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN RETAIL MEETS RESEARCH?

KEY DATES / INFORMATION

Number of participants: Open
Tentative workshop date: 7th December 2016, 1:30 pm – 3 pm
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SPECIAL SESSION INFORMATION

We are witnessing the beginning of a seismic shift in retail due to digitalization. However, what is meant by digitalization is less clear. Sometimes it is understood as means for automatization and sometimes it is regarded as equal to e-commerce. Sometimes digitalization is considered being both automatization and e-commerce through new technology. In recent years there has been an increase in Internet and mobile device usage within the retail sector and e-commerce is growing, encompassing both large and small retailers. Digital tools such as, new applications are developing rapidly in order to search for information about products based on price, health, environmental and ethical considerations, and also to facilitate payments. Also the fixed store settings are changing due to digitalization and at an overall level; digitalization will lead to existing business models being reviewed, challenged and ultimately changed. More specifically, digitalization has consequences for all parts of the physical stores including customer interface, knowledge creation, sustainability performance and logistics. As with all major shifts, digitalization comprises both opportunities and challenges for retail firms and employees, and these needs to be empirically studied and systematically analysed. The Swedish Institute for Innovative Retailing at University of Borås is a research centre with the aim of identifying and analysing emerging trends that digitalization brings for the retail industry.

SPECIAL SESSION PROGRAMME

Session 1: Context and background (Approximate time: 15-20 minutes)

Retail innovation is a sector that acts and works differently from others with regard to innovation. As retail firms act as both incremental and open innovators, they need to be better at documenting knowledge in a scientific manner, while at the same time being dependent on creativity in their processes. The challenge to create and sustain a research environment for the sector is huge, and needs to be based on the pivotal mechanism mentioned above. Such an assignment was given to the Swedish Institute for Innovative Retailing (SIIR) by the board of

the University of Borås in 2013. Inspired by our earlier work at the University of Borås on value innovation and Living Labs (Ericsson & Sundström, 2012; Cronholm et al., 2013; Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2010), we wanted to build an environment that focused on consumer insight, thus integrating user-centered research with multi-disciplinary research on IT and business design (Martin, 2009).

Session 2: A Retail Research Lab (Approximate time: 15-20 minutes)

Building an Arena for the purpose of retail research involved planning an environment and involving important actors within the network of retailing, adding researchers, solution providers and consumers. The arena was placed inside the University and designed as a fixed store. We also based the laboratory on applied retailing research on consumer behavior and the decision-making process, which engaged multi-disciplinary researchers from marketing and IT. However, before starting, we undertook a major study on the kinds of problems and challenges retailers were facing. Following this analysis, the environment could be planned in more detail. The original goals of the retail laboratory were to use and develop modern technologies that could help retailers in a transforming landscape of digitization. Applying a customer-centric approach helped us with our ambition to develop IT-pilots designed for a context where e-commerce and fixed store settings might melt down to an omni-channel environment, bringing value to both consumers and retailers. Students and academic employees were used as respondents in early tests of the IT-pilots and service development in order to pre-test perceived value. The main competencies of the researchers engaged in the project were marketing, informatics and IT. Ideas for new customer value-driven services came from both retailers, consumers, solution providers and researchers, and were evaluated, screened and developed with system developers employed at the SIIR research program.

Session 3: The Research Camp (Approximate time: 15-20 minutes)

A four day workshop with researchers linked to SIIR and participants from retail companies took place with the aim of finding new research projects. This session describes the aim of the workshop, how it was conducted and the outcomes, directly after the camp and also a year after the completion of the workshop and how the work there was continued and results of this.

Session 4: Research results and projects (Approximate time: 15-20 minutes)

The session provides an overview of some of the research projects that have been conducted and what these have meant in terms of research impact, implications for industry and research grants.

Session 5: Question and answers session (Approximate time: 10-15 minutes)

Note: References can be made available upon request.

SPECIAL SESSION CO-CHAIRS

Dr. Anita Radon, Phd, Assitant Professor, Academic Director Swedish Institute for Innovative Retailing, University of Borås

Pia Johansson, Project manager, Swedish Institute for Innovative Retailing, University of Borås