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SERVICES OUTLOOK

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WINSTON WEBER & ASSOCIATES

INTRODUCING
SHOPPER-CENTRIC
RETAILING
BUSINESS MODEL

Win Weber,
Chairman & CEO

\$15





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big drawcard for the people in the consulting business is being on the road all the time. But traveling 4.4 million miles? Sounds crazy, doesn't it? Well, that's how one would describe the life of the nomadic consultant, Win Weber, the chairman and CEO of Winston Weber & Associates (WWA). What keeps him going? "To me, quality is everything in the consulting business, and that's why I travel so much. When it comes to WWA and associated retail clients, I want to make sure we deliver the best possible outcome by leveraging my knowledge and experience. If I'm busy elsewhere, our team—which consists of consultants with 25 years of average experience—takes over with their hands-on and tightly knit expertise," answers Weber. The relentless focus that the CEO and his team show every day has gained them a stellar global reputation. The WWA team has worked with top-notch and multi-billion dollar North American, Latin American, Australian and Asian supermarket chains. "As the retail industry becomes flooded with technology, it is quite clear that the consultants who just read and apply textbooks are a thing of the past. The industry needs consultants who can solve modern complexity by bringing leading edge thinking and practical applications for retailers. And that's how we are built," mentions Weber.

From the late 1980s, WWA has been instrumental in driving industry change by bringing the idea of trading partner collaboration. But that is not all. The company is recognized for introducing category management in 1990 and most recently, the novel, beyond category management process—the Shopper-Centric Retailing business model. At the helm of it all is Weber, guiding the company toward success.

When the Purpose Is to 'Win,' Trust WIN!

Weber began his career in 1962 and progressed rapidly into management positions of increasing responsibilities within the divisions of Colgate-Palmolive, General Foods, Squibb (Beech-Nut), American Brands (Sunshine Biscuits), Bristol-Myers (Drackett Products Company), Warner Communications (Atari) and Schering-Plough. Since entering management consulting 34 years ago,



Win Weber,
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Weber has consulted for CPG manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers, and industry associations. Highly regarded for his expertise in establishing collaborative relationships between retailers and suppliers, and credited with designing the first partnering relationship plan in the U.S. between a retailer and its suppliers 32 years ago, it was only a natural progression for him when—through WWA—he introduced the Shopper-Centric Retailing business model in collaboration with the Food Marketing Institute and Deloitte Consulting.

So what is this business model all about and how is it creating a difference? As artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies become entities that must be integrated into any digital strategy alongside human workers, for many retailers and consumer goods manufacturers, this means moving from the evaluation of individual elements and solutions to an integrative approach that spans their entire technology ecosystem. While this has many advantages, it also raises challenges which include prioritizing investments, precisely evaluating available resources, and accurately identifying the magnitude of change. That's where WWA's Shopper-Centric Retailing business model comes in. The model ensures that merchandising management has a voice in these decisions and there is proper alignment between the theory and practical application.

Beyond Category Management

The Shopper-Centric Retailing business model significantly increases the ability of retailers to enhance the shopping experience through the alignment of strategies, tactics and execution, organizational structure, business processes, merchandising competencies and performance measures across internal functions, and between trading partners at the “touchpoint” with the shopper, the store. This includes moving from the current department structure based on merchandise attributes to a solutions-based structure relying on shopper attributes, consolidating decision support and analytics, restructuring store management, and upgrading vocabulary to align with a shopper-focused culture. Shopper Solutions Planning—a core component of the Shopper-Centric Retailing model—builds upon and overcomes the limitations of the 29-year-old category management process. The company delivers advanced analytics at the backend which provides a much deeper look at item performance by category and total store. “Finally, we now have the ability through AI technology and machine learning to address the decades-old 8 to 10 percent out-of-stock problem that crosses many channels. Our experience to date indicates we have the ability to reduce out-of-stock conditions at least 50 percent,” says Weber.

The Shopper-Centric Retailing business model, or components of the model, can be successfully applied across retail channels, to varying degrees. Mark Baum, the chief customer officer of Food Marketing Institute (FMI) says, “The business case has been made. Industry practitioners—retailers, manufacturers, and service providers all agree; change must occur. The blueprint to creating a shopper-centric model exists. The capabilities, to a large extent, are in place. We encourage industry partners to come together and utilize the new Shopper-Centric Retailing roadmap to begin the journey today.”

WINning the Retail Service Race

What really steers WWA ahead of the competition is their ability to easily adapt to different corporate cultures and practices, in any country or size of the corporation they are involved with. Combined with their leading-edge thinking and unparalleled retail merchandising expertise from both an operating and consulting standpoint, the company's understanding of the interrelationship between a retailer and their trading partners, gains them traction from various retailers.

Adding to this is the attractiveness of their Shopper-Centric Situational Assessment Process that identifies organizational strengths and opportunities for improvement based on over sixty benchmarks within categories such as shopper centric positioning, organization readiness and so on. It then defines the future state and implementation plan. Weber adds, “Combined with our deliverables, our fee structure is more attractive than the larger consulting firms” By focusing on the shopper and enhancement of the shopping experience, the company is also attuned to the dynamic changes due to expanding food lifestyles, shoppers wanting solutions tailored to their lifestyles, digital connectedness, social media, online shopping, delivery options, and increasing generational complexities. This is reinforced by the fact that the company has a very experienced consulting team that has an unparalleled ability to translate cutting-edge thinking into practical solutions.

All-In to Deliver Practical Retail Applications

Weber gives an example of a supermarket chain, which underwent major restructuring to implement Shopper-Centric Retailing, and its core component, Shopper Solutions Planning. The SVP of the supermarket chain comments, “The categories planned to date have seen results regardless their size. For example, one category that had been seeing erosion outlined with a new set, consumer awareness, and education along with a shift in promotional strategy improved the overall profitability. The category has since exceeded its growth goals in units and profit goals by a whole point. It also saw a rise in its sales versus trend trajectory.” This retailer also says that the consolidation of analytics into one function has exceeded their expectations.

Having created practical applications for many retailers across the globe, WWA plans to continue and maintain its size as a small consulting firm to ensure that it delivers solutions that traverse their client expectations at all times. “This has proven to be a very successful strategy over the years. Geographically, we plan to concentrate on North America while growing in Latin America and expanding to more retail channels,” states Weber. The company recently extended its capabilities to capitalize on the growth potential offered by the U.S. Hispanic market with the hiring of an expert with over 30 years of experience in 17 Latin America countries. “Whatever the individual retailer's situation is, the message is very clear. Our commitment to consistently exceed client expectations and our ability to provide a comprehensive solution is what we are all about, and we plan to continue providing more value and ROI to clients than the typical consulting firm,” concludes Weber. 

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10 Most Recommended Retail Service Providers - 2019

As the emerging technologies are taking center stage, retail companies will seek to extend their technological boundaries to draw in cognitive computing and conversational AI platform to develop advanced analytics and maximize operational efficiencies. Data's role in retail decision-making is on the rise and pioneers in the field will continue to explore ways to collect and utilize data in their sales, marketing, customer service, and operations; allowing for significant insight into the consumer behavior and psychology to aid the development of products. That being said, as more consumers embrace instant messaging apps too, such as Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, we can expect retailers to follow and use these platforms to talk to customers and streamline business communications.

Corporations are hyper-personalizing and digitalizing the experience of shopping through customer-centric data

combined with technology to provide buyers new and sophisticated digital shopping experiences and added brand value.

Smart speakers and voice assistants are fundamentally changing the way we engage with technology and is set to explode over the next four years to \$ 40 billion by 2022. By leveraging such advancements and best practices, enterprise organizations are aiming to optimize transportation performance, product tracking, and traceability to analyze product ROI.

As organizations look for a retail service provider that matches their needs, ES Outlook brings forth a comprehensive list of the leading service providers. This listing provides a fresh view of how the technology solutions in this domain can deliver optimization to your retail processes. We present to you "10 Most Recommended Retail Service Providers - 2019."



Company:

Winston Weber
& Associates

Key Person:

Win Weber
Chairman & CEO

Description:

Introducing the new Shopper-Centric Retailing business model that delivers benefit beyond category management

Website:

winstonweber.com