

A really important point that Beth McCormick, VP Commerce and Customer Engagement Technology, brought up to this discussion is that the customers don't care what your organization structure is, they don't care about the channel. What they really care about is to be able to interact with the retailer, to get what they want, and that's what she cares about when bringing everything together in delivering a great customer experience. She added that for the last couple years she is able to look at data and analyze realistic statistics from customer's experience. Before, they were only able to analyze what 'just happened', while now, they are able to predict what is going to happen, and influence the outcome through the experience perspective, which she considers the biggest shift from the previous model.

PetSmart digital transformation journey was driven initially by the leadership recognition that they have to be stronger in the space. She points out that 10 years ago there were already a lot of places shipping dog food, but this type of evolving technology is never ending. They made strategic technology platform decisions that enabled them to react to whatever is coming. The example of the Pandemic was brought up, how nobody could have predicted what was coming and how we can't predict what may happen in the next few years. With this platform they were able to grow a technology team where there's knowledge in this platform and they are in control of their destiny and they are able to react so quickly in various situations that could happen. She calls this new implementation an IT strategy to be able to have more control of their destiny.

For Rituals, the technology transformation was already taking place and Covid basically just accelerated the process. The CEO for the beauty company Rituals, Raymond Cloosterman, says that it's most important to have a relationship with the customers and a brand community by the quality of the products, but now also by the way their customers are treated. According to him, to build a relationship with the customers, the most important thing is to show that you care. He strongly believes in the digital transformation, which they were forced to do after the closing of 800 stores during Covid, bringing the online sales from 8% to 22%. He claims that before Covid, the online beauty sector wasn't really important because as part of a beauty industry, the customers like to touch things and smell things before they buy it, which was a challenge for the transformation in the beauty industry online.

My takeaway and what I think was the most interesting about both videos is how both leaders are pointing into the relationship with the customers and how important it is to build a great customer experience to have a brand community. I do think that the world is becoming more and more virtual and it's extremely important for all brands to think about the virtual commerce in order to be successful nowadays, and these videos helped showing what brands have to apply to their online resources to promote a great customer experience and having great improvement in their company as a consequence.