IRC 2014 INTERVIEW Simon Langthorne of Homebase on big data

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Ahead of this year's Internet Retailing Conference (IRC) 2014, we're running a series of interviews in which we hear from some of the industry leaders taking part in this year's event. Today we talk to Simon Langthorne, customer loyalty manager at Homebase [IRDX RHMB].

Internet Retailing: At IRC 2014 you're speaking in a panel on big data. How is Homebase learning more about customers from their data, and what service improvement does that drive?

Simon Langthorne, customer loyalty manager, Homebase: At Homebase we use combinations of Nectar data, EPOS (transactional data), research and online information to understand more about our customers. We use this information regularly to help improve customer service at all touch points. For instance, we gather customer feedback every week both online and in store to understand where we are unable to meet customer expectation in order to put these right each week (whether these be tactical fixes or more strategic actions).

Internet Retailing: What one or two things, in your opinion, do customers need in order to stay loyal?

Simon Langthorne: Customers expect great service in whichever form they choose to deal with businesses, whether it is quick and easy checkout online, availability in store or advice on how to get something done. Getting the service proposition right for each individual customers and linking this experience together for customers is vital in order to gain greater emotional connections with our customers.

Internet Retailing: How do you think customer loyalty will develop in the future, over the next 5-10 years, say, and should retailers plan now to meet those future changes?

Simon Langthorne: The landscape for loyalty is changing dramatically, with greater choice and more niche players now coming into the market with strong and focussed online propositions. This means customers have greater power in the way they will choose to shop and one poor experience can lead

to customers leave a lasting impression. With this shift, the emphasis on developing better and deeper relationships with customers becomes even more important. There is a greater expectation to use their data to support them in their shopping experience and therefore build a more emotional (rather than transactional) relationship.

Internet Retailing: What are you most looking forward to at IRC 2014, apart from your own panel?

Simon Langthorne: Understanding how other retailers are looking at the challenge of building a more joined up experience for customers across all touch points and how they are making transforming the way they do business with new technology changing the way customers shop.

Simon Langthorne is taking part in a panel discussion, Are big data blind spots leaving you vulnerable to customer turn off?, at Internet Retailing Conference 2014. The discussion is at 14.35 in the Tide track of Internet Retailing 2014, to be held at the Novotel, Hammersmith, London, and also features Sarah McVitie of Dressipi, Mike Bishop, managing director of Rakuten's Play.com, and Fred Prego, insight and reward director at Game.

Link: http://internetretailing.net/2014/09/irc-2014-interview-simon-langthorne-of-homebase-on-big-data/