

A man and a woman are shown from the chest up, facing each other in a snowy outdoor setting. Both are wearing face masks. The man is on the left, wearing a brown jacket and a blue surgical mask. The woman is on the right, wearing a grey coat and a blue surgical mask. They are both holding shopping bags; the man's is brown and the woman's is red. Snow is falling around them. A teal semi-transparent overlay covers the middle of the image, containing the title and subtitle text.

# *Holiday Retail Unwrapped 2021*

KEY INSIGHTS THAT WILL DRIVE RETAIL  
TRANSFORMATION INTO THE NEW YEAR

**NELSON** | INSIGHT SERIES





## *Holiday Retail 2021*

This year, retail brands are facing new challenges as shoppers return to stores and have a new outlook on fulfilling their holiday shopping lists after the height of the pandemic. Brands must rapidly evolve to stand out among competitors by ramping up their holiday strategies both online and in-store.

This holiday season we are sharing key insights that will drive retail transformation into the new year.



TRENDS TO WATCH

1



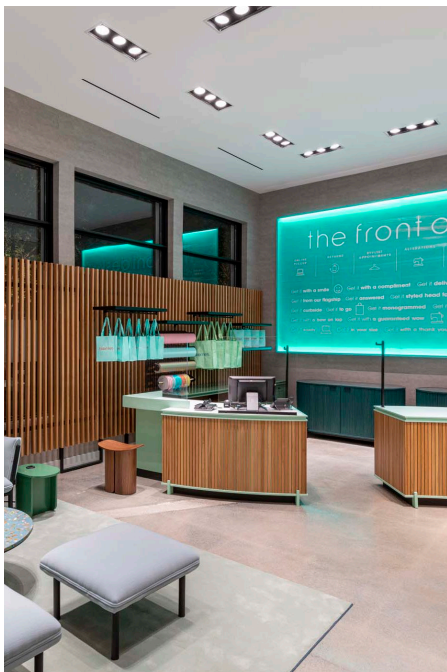
BLACK FRIDAY BURNOUT

2



GIVE THE GIFT OF  
CONVENIENCE

3



TAKE A LUXURY LENS

4



TRANSPARENCY INSTORE &  
ONLINE

5



ENHANCED IN-STORE  
BROWSING

6



REIMAGINE PROGRAMMING





1

## BLACK FRIDAY BURNOUT

Each year Black Friday deals are being offered earlier and earlier, with this year being intensified due to the critical supply chain bottleneck. As a result, many brands have extended their discounts well before, and after, Black Friday. This not only expands the sale timeframe but allows retailers to be more flexible with employee hours, avoid supply chain issues, and provide better service.

Overall, stores that offer exclusive in-store deals and unique experiences beyond Black Friday will draw in customers, especially those who find crowds to be the most frustrating part of the season.

# 69%

*of survey participants said they will NOT be shopping on Black Friday this year.*

*(NELSON Worldwide, 2021)*

*“Consumers are starting earlier than ever to be sure they can get what they want, when they want it, at a price they want to pay. Black Friday stopped being a one-day event years ago, and this year some consumers started shopping for Christmas as early as Halloween.”*

*-NRF President and CEO Matthew Shay*





2

## GIVE THE GIFT OF CONVENIENCE

While convenience is always a driver of successful holiday retail, 2021 has created time-crunched consumers that are also concerned over longer delivery periods. As a result, there will likely be more in-store shoppers than in past years, looking for real-time purchases.

Retailers must quickly adapt and identify how their shopping experience can support this increased demand and provide greater visibility into product supply. Brands will need to consider offering more dedicated operations for fulfillment opportunities, whether that's in-store, curbside, drive-thru, or other creative avenues to meet the consumer where they are this holiday season.



*Picture this*



Outdoor mobile  
check-out



Click & Collect/  
BOPIS

Seasonal  
parking lot  
pop-ups



Same-day,  
localized  
delivery







3

## TAKE A LUXURY LENS

When observing what retail brands are thriving through the global pandemic, luxury brands are unexpectedly set up for success. The type of white-glove, concierge service offered at a high-end retail store is unmatched in the shopping industry, and consumers are starting to recognize the value of this type of curated, one-on-one attention.

Traditional retailers can emulate these luxury brands during the holiday season with thoughtful retail moments. From hospitality-driven offerings to more elevated services, these meaningful gestures can go a long way in building brand affinity.





*Picture this*

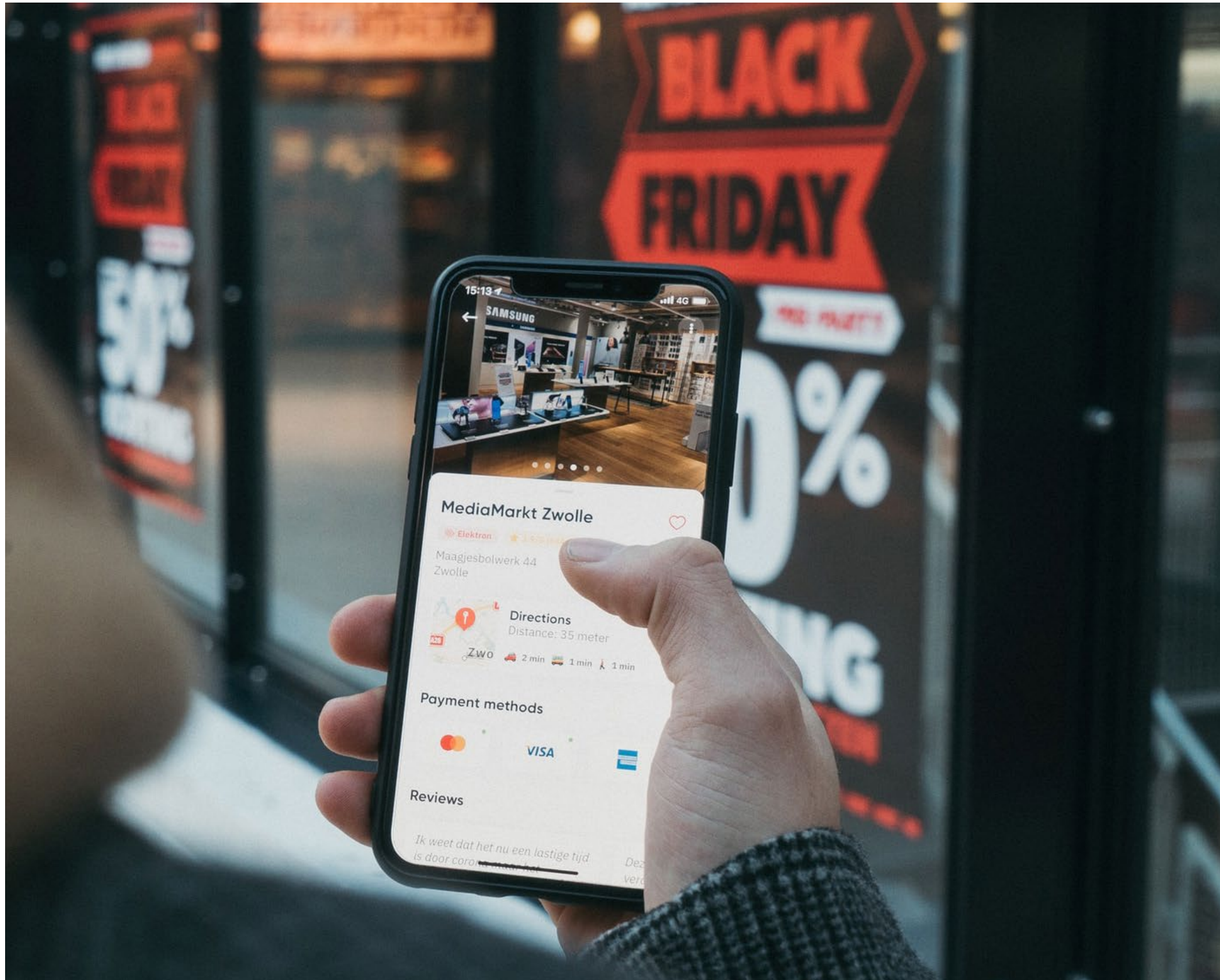
One-on-one  
virtual  
consultations

Gift wrapping  
services

Personalized  
service

Fitting room  
reservations





4

## TRANSPARENCY INSTORE & ONLINE

Staffing struggles across the country have caused stores to get creative in how they attract and retain employees in preparation for the holiday shopping season. With fewer greeters and in-store associates to guide customers, brands will increasingly rely on signage or wayfinding to support the in-store experience.

Additionally, many brands have invested in apps that provide real-time inventory tracking to offer more transparency on what's in stock. These potential solutions can alleviate overcrowding and confusion, providing a more seamless experience for both employees and shoppers.





#### INNOVATION IN ACTION WALMART APPS

Walmart's new store app allows customers to easily locate where products are and what's in stock. After creating a shopping list, consumers open the app while in-store and receive maps that route to the exact locations of their chosen products. Given Walmart's 180,000 sq. ft format, the app creates a seamless shopping experience that offers quick and easy navigation. The brand has also introduced the new employee-facing app, Me@Walmart that answers sales assistants' product and availability queries in-store.

*“New technology has led to the role of the physical store to shift from a static home for merchandise to a hybrid fulfillment center where shoppers can trial, order, or return items. As a result, shoppers are hungry for transparency when it comes to knowing how, when, and where to get a product as fast as possible.”*

- NELSON Worldwide





5

## ENHANCED IN-STORE BROWSING

Thanks to the boom in live streaming, influencer social media marketing, and e-commerce, consumers know what they want to buy long before they step into a store. Brands must not only embrace these new online channels, but explore ways to repeat and enhance these experiences within brick-and-mortar.

Successful shopping environments will bring light to the uncertainty of online ordering and will spark real-time discovery and inspiration.





*Picture this*



Product trials or demonstrations stations



Curated merchandise zones



Showroom spaces



In-store gift guides







6

## REIMAGINE PROGRAMMING

This holiday season many consumers are eager to get back in-store and immerse themselves in nostalgic, holiday memories that took a back seat during COVID-19. Brands that go the extra mile this year, extending their offerings beyond the status quo, will make stronger connections with consumers.

Whether it's a craft store offering virtual DIY classes or a grocery store with cooking demonstrations, finding opportunities to connect with your shoppers both in-and-outside of the physical store will have a high return on investment in years to come.



# 62%

*of survey participants are  
excited for in-store shopping  
post COVID-19.*

*(NELSON Worldwide, 2021)*



## INNOVATION IN ACTION SELFRIDGES

Embracing the growth of the video gamer population, department store Selfridges' has created a new gaming destination named PlayHouse. The curated experience aims to make gaming more inclusive, showcasing VR experiences alongside retro arcade games. The space combines immersive virtual reality (VR) experiences and simulators with regular gaming and coding workshops and has allowed the luxury department store to open up the world of gaming.





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