



Channel Mastery Podcast, Episode #61: Kristin Carpenter-Ogden Solocast, Leveraging Digital Tools to Enhance the Brick and Mortar Experience

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- Kristin: [00:00](#) Hey there, everyone, and welcome to Episode 61 of the Channel Mastery Podcast. Kristin Carpenter-Ogden here for you today as your host. I am so stoked to be here with you today, and thank you as always for spending part of your time here with me today. All right, today is a solocast. I am actually sharing a presentation that I researched and delivered at Interbike 2018, so it was in September, last month of this year. This show is being recorded in mid-October, and I did that, oh gosh, I guess it was about three weeks ago now. I was out in Reno for that show. It was a great show. It was cool to have it in Reno. I heard that the on-dirt demo up at Northstar was fantastic for the show, and people were stoked on it. So good job, Emerald, good job Interbike. I was really happy to be part of the lineup over there.
- Kristin: [00:50](#) Today I'm going to present to you my presentation, which was titled How To Capitalize on the Clicks-to-Bricks Opportunity Presented to Today's Omnichannel Consumer. But before I drop into that, I want to give a nice little nod to our presenting sponsor. The Channel Mastery Podcast is produced by Verde Brand Communications. Verde is a market-leading communications agency, and we partner with the leading and most innovation brands in the ultra-active lifestyle markets. And yes, I am the CEO and founder of Verde. We're going up on our 18th year in 2019, which is crazy. I can't believe that. But I normally just give a shout-out to Verde, but I wanted to go ahead and share a little bit about Verde before I drop into this episode. So real quick, I wanted to just give you a little insight on what Verde is, what we do.

- Kristin: [01:41](#) This is how I like to look at it. Consumers today are trained to look for low price and convenience online, and while that works well for paper towels and deodorant, it really doesn't work well for the incredible specialty brands that comprise the client roster of Verde Brand Communications. Everybody knows that, right? But as I'll get into later in this podcast, dealing with how consumers are being trained by Amazon to look for convenience and price is really important, because that tendency has literally given brands the full driver's seat, if you will, in terms of making a market. And that market is super crowded, competitive, and noisy.
- [02:23](#) So how do you encourage your target consumer to fall in love with your brand and wear it as a literal identity piece, which is what our brands at Verde have the awesome opportunity to do, because we're in these passion industries of outdoor, bike, snow, endurance, travel, consumer electronics, etc., overland, pet? You must have a remarkable differentiated and meaningful brand story, and Verde was founded by journalists. That's our specialization. You also have to surgically target that story to your ideal end consumer again and again. We also are experts in content marketing. We create it, we position it, we optimize it for our clients, driving people to a call to action or a point of conversion. It's pretty cool the way this company has evolved, and I'm super proud of our team.
- [03:12](#) Once you have those in place, the storytelling and the optimization strategy, it's only at that time that you can really convert people into your tribe and continually be discovered and shared by more people in your tribe. So today's omnichannel consumer, who I talk a ton about on this podcast ... in fact, that's why the podcast exists ... is driving, and the work Verde Brand Communications does to serve our client family is more important than ever. Verde drives discovery, engagement, and conversion for our brands, and creates emotional connections through story positioning and visibility across our clients' most important channels. Please go to [verdepr.com](http://verdepr.com) to learn more about Verde's proprietary approach to integrated brand communications. Again, super proud of my amazing team at Verde.
- Kristin: [03:58](#) Okay, so back to the Interbike 2018 presentation on last mile. Even in the last three weeks, we've had some things pop up that have actually enabled me to kind of update this presentation. There are some parts of the presentation that probably would be more targeted to physical brick and mortar retail, but considering that the brands and retailers in my audience have both components to their business ... they have either sell direct or wholesale ... I feel like it's going to be really relevant to you. I hope it is.

Kristin: [04:35](#) All right, so here we go. I guess from all the trends and headlines I continually read, and from what the specialists are saying that we've had on Channel Mastery recently, like Chris Walton of the Omni Talk Podcast and Blog, who gave his second interview to us last week on Episode 60. It is a must listen. It's on the top five trends shaping retail in 2019, so please check that out. It's actually a great precursor to this podcast, or you can listen to it after. What's shaping ... it's very evident, rather, that 2019 is already shaping up to be another transformational year in terms of how consumers are researching, engaging with, and sharing, and buying from brands.

[05:16](#) Again, I believe that's true, whether we're retailers or brands. Our focus has to be continually on where, how, and why our target consumer is discovering us. And as Chris Walton says in Episode 60, you need to understand your flywheel. Look at Amazon's flywheel, and make one for your own company. Find out how you make money and what your north star is. That's the best thing you can do right now in October 2018 to prepare for holiday 2018 and for 2019.

[05:46](#) Going back to this, we also have to understand ... and then we have more and more data to help us do this ... how our people find us and join our tribe and become lifers. What do we need to do to be remarkable to them and have them fall in love with us so much that we become part of their very identity? Today, consumers still want three things as they're going through their online consumer decision journey or their consumer decision journey, but I'd say 110% of the time it involves online research, but they still want three things. These are things that Amazon has kind of trained into us. They want convenience, and then I think they also want still a third-party validation. That can come from digital reviews, but it also can come from exceptional support from a shop sales floor person at a specialty shop, from a media placement, from a forum, from an influencer, etc. So that third-party validation is really important. It could also come from their family, of course.

Kristin: [06:46](#) And then an experience, and the experience is really, really important for people in my tribe, which is you, Channel Masters, because again, we make the products and provide the services that give people the experiences that mark happiness in their lives. We are active outdoor lifestyle markets, outdoor recreation. That is what we do. So here's another statistic that I want to share, that kind of frames up the rest of the presentation here. This is crazy. I used to think it was lower than this, but I just found out it's actually higher. Statistics show that within 24 hours of concluding online research, 90% of consumers head to brick and mortar stores to complete their purchase process. That's true across all retail, but I have to think

it's incredibly true for what we do in the active outdoor lifestyle markets.

Kristin:

[07:38](#)

You heard that correctly, 90%. That means e-com accounts for 10% of sales, while brick and mortar still holds the reins at 90% of retail sales. Let's be honest. The way in which people decide to purchase in a store and the timing around that journey continues to change, and that's what our shifting channel strategies must address and what we hit every week here on Channel Mastery. But let's stop and consider something huge for a second. If 90% of all retail sales are still occurring in a brick and mortar store, and the way in which people decide which store to head to and when, how all that equation fits together, it really comes down to the fact that 90% of all retail sales are still occurring in a brick and mortar store.

[08:26](#)

That means one thing to me, that specialty brick and mortar retailers ... again, you probably are one or you serve one as a brand ... specialty brick and mortar retailers have a huge opportunity to grow new customers, your new customer base, through the very process of online research and brick and mortar conversion, through that last mile opportunity. Today's podcast is based on that, okay? So this last mile opportunity, that means people are definitely going to look for the convenience of discovering and finding what they want online, then 90% of them within 24 hours will head to a brick and mortar store to make that purchase.

[09:07](#)

So there's three things that we need to really focus on here. We need to nurture the relationship with customers, even when they're not standing in the store or researching your website or owned media, if you're a brand. We need to leverage differentiated experience to provide your customer with a personalized approach, with convenience, and an exemplary shopping experience. And we also have to be masterful at how we catch and romance consumers at the tail end of that purchase process, like they have the last mile. They finish researching, they know where to pick it up immediately, and they go and acquire the product at your store. That is an opportunity to get a new customer to join your tribe.

Kristin:

[09:54](#)

There are three points that kind of underpin this, that I wanted to share with you right now. Today's connected consumer expectations, as I've said, are largely shaped by how Amazon has trained us. They have set the bar for what we expect. Amazon delivers nearly on-demand access to an incredible array of products, and most can be delivered in the same day, depending on your ZIP Code. Because of this expectation, when consumers feel any sort of friction, they jump to another more convenient option. This is true for all consumer demographics,

so that's a really important point to keep. Do everything you can to get rid of friction and to enable your end consumers to feel like it's a seamless process for them.

Kristin: [10:41](#) This is what Mike Massey, a frequent guest on Channel Mastery, and [founder] of locally.com, what he means when he says that all of the channels have to converge into one channel, and that is the sales channel. And he cited Lululemon and apple.com as two great retailers and brands that are doing a wonderful job with this. So just keep in mind, if you understand today's consumer expectations, get rid of friction, make it convenient, etc. That's number one.

[11:10](#) Number two, again, there's only one channel, and that's the sales channel. It's so important, I'm going to say it like four times in this podcast. The consumer might be dubbed omnichannel, but know this: you have to work really hard to own screen time and to converge the fragmented channels into one channel, which is what Massey was saying. Again, it translates into a seamless, friction-free shopping and buying experience. And brick and mortar is obviously a super-important part of this journey, being 90% of all the sales. And physical retail offers consumers a place to connect, join, and have that experience that they want around their purchase. This can be so much more than just picking up a product at a shop, and that's what we really want to dig into here. That's what we are digging into. So, just today, on October 11th, I saw an article from Business Insider Intelligence, that shared a study about how a number of digitally native brands are planning to commit to invest in Clicks to Bricks, and expand into physical locations. And they're doing this because people want that experience and because they know people want to buy in a store. They want to get a third party validation from an awesome store person or join the tribe of a very good retailer. So, that's why all of those digitally native brands are investing in opening popups or opening physical retail stores.

Kristin: [12:41](#) I'm also gonna put a link in the show notes for another one of Omni Talk, Chris Walton and Ann Mezzenga, and Carter Jensen's podcast that I love. But, they just did a show recently with the CEO of Storefronts.com. That's basically the VRBO of retail. They're motto is, basically, short term is the new long term.

Kristin: [13:01](#) There's a reason why a business like that is thriving today, so let's pay attention. That means you can maybe hop around and try different retail experiences, and use a tool like Storefronts.com, and it becomes a lot more simple and easy than maybe you thought in the past. But the point being is, having that physical touch point is really, really important. And making sure it's awesome is really important, so that you can

actually romance and capture that traffic and turn them into people who are in your store's tribe, or your brand's tribe.

[13:36](#)

Okay, and then number three. Consumers head to physical retail because 55% of product searches, well maybe not entirely because, but this is maybe my opinion. If 55% of product searches are starting on Amazon, I would say, and I'm sure you would agree with me, that experience online on Amazon leaves very much to be desired regarding the theater of the brand, doesn't it? Or maybe consumers are walking around in your community, and they pop a product search into Google. They want to acquire the product and they want it now. And so they're walking around to see if they can find it, and if there's a store that sells it.

Kristin:

[14:19](#)

The intent is to come to your store, and it could be about the impulsive purchase, or the convenience. But you have the power to make it so much more. Again, you wanna turn that last mile traffic into a lifer. And just another quick aside, this is an awesome aside. So here we are in just about middle of October. There's been a ton of stories that have hit, headlines that have hit, recently, that are talking about retail being super bullish for the remainder of 2018. Have you guys read those, 'cause I've been seeing a lot of those.

Kristin:

[14:52](#)

The retailers that made it through the consolidation are positioned to gain customers. It makes sense. There are just fewer doors for them to go to. And this is an even bigger opportunity for you. So, look up The New York Times September 3rd ... There's a title, I'll have the links in the show notes of course, but there title of the article is Hard Lesson and in parentheses it says, "Thanks Amazon." Breathe new life into retail stores.

Kristin:

[15:16](#)

That is a really, really good, solid article that you should check out. And I also wanted to frame this point by sharing a quote from one of my absolute favorite authors and thought leaders, Doug Stephens, who is the Retail Prophet. He says, "As retailers awaken to the idea that the consumer's primary problem is no longer the scarcity of products, but rather the scarcity of genuine human social connection, great things will happen."

Kristin:

[15:47](#)

And he says, "Great retail, if it's sensitive to this condition, can fill the void. Your customers are merely people with shared interests and values, that's it. And bringing them together with a sense of community can be super powerful. And this is true for many channels, social, physical, storefronts, online retail, and direct first, alike. We all have to focus on what our role is in that singular sales channel. For physical retail, that is the point of pick up. Meet your customer where they are, online, social,

etc. and provide them with an experience. This is how you can get them to discover you online, engage them on social media, give them a brand experience. Tell them your brand story. Ideally make it a memorable and shareable experience that they have getting to know your brand. And also, don't try and be Amazon. You can provide an exceptional in store experience and rule it with building and serving a local community. You're better at that than Amazon, so be better and focus on that. Don't worry about having endless queues, or being the epitome of convenience."

- Kristin: [17:04](#) And another key point that channels physical retailers and online retailers, and brands itself direct need to keep in mind is shop-able social media. It is going to become a more and more important, I think, part of the equation for us going forward. Several of our guests in the past four or five shows on Channel Mastery, the most recent ones in queue three of 2018 have all cited this. So ultimately, you're giving them an experience and you wanna keep them in that same place and enable them to purchase right there. So, think about that as something else that's going to train the consumer's, I guess, expectations.
- Kristin: [17:44](#) They're gonna kinda want the marketing, the research, the discovery, and the actual conversion to happen all in the same channel. So, as a retailer or brand, you have to keep that in mind. That leads me into the point of nurturing the relationship with your customers, even when they're not standing in the store or researching your owned media online. You have to focus on the needs of your consumer, not the needs of your business. That's super, super important. You also need to show them, don't tell them. Show them a specialty experience. Make it memorable and shareable, and keep your brand experience consistent for your consumers. Consistency builds trust. And here are a few tactics that support those three overarching strategies.
- Kristin: [18:33](#) The first tactic is probably pretty, I would think for many of you, something that you've either already considered or deployed. But it's more and more important than ever. Have a mobile first, mobile optimized online presence. A website will likely be your customer's first experience with you, and that could be a brand website or a retail website. No matter what your budget it, you have to have a site that not only looks well branded, but makes it easy for the consumer as they go through their online decision journey.
- Kristin: [19:03](#) A second tactic is commit to email marketing, making it personalized and segmented. So, I love my, all of our brands, all of our brands in the Active [inaudible 00:19:16] lifestyle markets, I have to tell you. Not very many of them do a great

job with awesome email marketing. This is still a huge, huge opportunity for everybody listening here today, whether a retailer or a brand. Whether you're a direct first or a physical first. Email marketing is still the top converting channel and it is a great way to build consistency by telling them what they're gonna get when they join your email list and delivering it, and delivering a great branded experience, right into their inbox. You have an incredible opportunity with it.

Kristin: [19:51](#) So, invest in doing it differently next year. Invest in maybe considering one or two ways that you can make that a much, much better channel for you because it's still a top converting channel. And keep in mind that my company, Verde Brand Communications is offering a more, I think, a very more robust email marketing and acquisitions solution, as part of our service mix for 2019. You can check it out at [verde.com](http://verde.com).

Kristin: [20:17](#) One tool that I wanted to share that kind of is more retail oriented, but really is awesome, is called Flex Receipts. You can Google that and I'll have the links in the show notes. But basically Flex Receipts takes receipt delivery far forward into basically building a relationship with your consumer. So, if I'm in a store and I get the person who's ringing me up is like, "Do you want a printed or an emailed receipt?" Flex Receipts enables when I say I want an email receipt, it starts a relationship and a conversation from me. I get something from the store that basically invites me to join their tribe. And that's awesome. It's like we've been stepping over that opportunity for years, haven't we?

Kristin: [21:03](#) So, check that out. It's a very easily implementable tool and I think that it could really create a very solid spike and people who shop in your store choose to get emailed receipts, and will likely raise their hand to get your brand content, via email. Very, very cool tool. And also just remember, I always tell people this because it's so easy to forget 'cause we're all so busy, that your email list is comprised of individual people. Treat them like complete VIPs. Be super consistent with them. Tell them what you're gonna do and show up and do it. And be remarkable with how you communicate to them.

Kristin: [21:43](#) So some email thus practices are, set an engaging auto-responder that sets the tone for your brand, and that's really fun, and enables them to opt out, too. Regularly segment and cleanse your list. Be super consistent, again, in your communication because that's trust every time you deliver. And also, use your email list not in an overt way, to survey your customers. Say, all you have to do is reply to this email with your top problem, or your top thing you love about our brand, or something you want to see from us. It's super easy, and

people actually will respond. Then you need to respond back with a thank you.

Kristin: [22:22](#) All right, another tactic is, and this one is super important, community and mission driven involvement for your brand. This is a very key way in how you deepen your emotional connection with your store's customers or your brand's customers. 66% of customers want retailers and brands to take a stand on important issues. All retailers should try to help out their communities, no matter what the cost to themselves. And that's from an article titled "How Retailers Are Re-Thinking The Consumer Brand Relationship." And it was posted on Retail Dive. The author's name is Kara Salpini, and I'll have the links to that. And I'm also gonna put the links to a brand new study that I saw that Edelman put out that's all about cause marketing, and the importance of that with brands.

Kristin: [23:13](#) And that study is incredible. It basically talks about a high, high percentage of consumers looking to brands to basically function as social justice vehicles and change agents on their behalf. And they look at their favorite brands as more powerful than government, so this is obviously a very important trend shaping what the consumer decision journey will look like in 2019, and beyond.

Kristin: [23:38](#) All right, we're almost through all the tactics here. Another tactic is in person and digital engagement, and that means prioritize in person events. Whether it's for your brand or in a store, or both. And also prioritize community sponsorship and participation. Tap into your brands, if you're a retailer, for creative ways to be remarkable to your store's consumer base. Use tools like Promoboxx for example to take your brands that you carry in your store, they actually can easily share and automate how they are running their campaigns nationally and you can take that content and make it very easy to make it into social, regionally relevant social media and content marketing.

Kristin: [24:23](#) And then of course social media which ties right into this. You have to know the platforms where your consumers are spending their time and prioritize those. Don't try and be on all of them. And commit to being very responsive because your social media channels are still a very strong consumer, sorry customer service channel as well. OK. We're almost wrapping up here everybody. I'm going to go over a little bit of strategy and then I'm in a wrap this one up.

Kristin: [24:49](#) Again here's some of the strongest strategy to win with Last Mile customer conversion. I think it's important that all of us take a step back and examine the process of the Last Mile opportunity just as it's evolving. It's going to be evolving

continually going into 2019 as well. And think about this from the omnichannel consumer's standpoint and you are an omnichannel consumer in your life outside of your work with your brand or your store. Think about that one channel. Consumers really don't want multiple channels even though they're called omnichannel consumers you really only have one channel and that is your sales channel.

Kristin: [25:34](#) So here are some cool ways to I guess converge the channels on any budget. Understanding and gaining knowledge of how this continues to evolve is really important to do and there are great resources for that. I hope you consider this show to be one. But there's other ones as well like Retail Dive, like Chris Walton and Anne Bazinga's Red Archer Retail, and Omni Talk Blog. There are many others, Scott Galloway actually has a new podcast out that's really really interesting, too. Essentially read and listen and watch as much as you can about how this is converting and continually transforming.

Kristin: [26:16](#) So let's look at some things like mobile service vehicles, pickup and delivery. I mean this is something that isn't new but you can kind of see how it's evolving in your area or around your brand and other brands that you compete with. Think about before during and after in terms of the brand experience that you can layer in to this type of solution. I also think it's really smart to investigate tapping into ... So if you're a retailer tap into your brand's national inventory via locally.com or SmartEtailing or Quivers or ShipEarly. All links will be in the show notes. So basically what that does is it enables consumers to discover what store carries the product that they have, looking on the brand's website "Oh I want this." They can easily find it using locally.com or one of these other solutions.

Kristin: [27:08](#) So another cool thing that I mentioned already, I may not have mentioned it by name but there's a new tool that I discovered called pointy.com. I discovered this also from Chris in the podcast that he did last week on Omni Talk. So retailers can now quickly and easily deploy through a little point of sale like thing that they ... it's like a box that you put right on the point of sale. They basically can, this tool called pointy.com basically takes the store's inventory and puts it online and optimizes it for search. And it also connects with Google's [inaudible] to see what's in store feature which gives shoppers an additional way to discover what the store you have sells directly on the Google search page. That's super cool. So you can now connect to national brand inventory but you also now can put your store's inventory online and make it searchable and discoverable through Google. Very very cool. Again links will all be in the show notes, sorry show notes page, you know the show notes at channelmastery.com.

- Kristin: [28:15](#) All right. And then what are some things that you can actually consider trying during holiday to make things more convenient for your customers? Can you do pick up and drop off services? Can you ask your best customers how it best works for them and implement a few of the ideas that they tell them? And always thank them for their counsel. You can also engage your staff to creatively turn the click to brick pickup into a mini brand experience event in and of itself. Put a contest around, get your sales floor people excited to create an experience around a click to brick pickup. The experience from a phone call or an online order but a call to a store or an online order to delivery should be branded, unique and concierge level. That is what people are expecting if they're going to make the trip to a store it better be special for God's sakes. So make it concierge level.
- Kristin C-O: [29:14](#) You also can incorporate something really special even if it's as small as a handwritten thank you note or a coupon to differentiate the experience from a cardboard box that they might get at the front door of their house. The other thing we've learned through researching, the panel that I did that I'm presenting to you here is it's important that you eliminate packaging as much as possible. That's another thoughtful step at retail that people really appreciate and call attention to it make it a choice for your end consumer who are at the register checking out. Try and make it easy for them to not have to deal with the box etc. They don't need to manage waste. And you can also tie it into an environmental responsibility story if you truly do recycle.
- Kristin: [29:58](#) So again all of this kind of funnels into the mindset of today's omnichannel consumer. I love that we can literally put ourselves into that consumers' shoes if you will because we are that consumer. We are a version of that consumer. Think about how you yourself research, engage and buy from brands. The entire online consumer decision journey is what you want to map for your target end consumer whether you're a brand or a retailer. And try to see along that whole journey how you can make it branded, special and then experience. Ultimately, the most powerful point is that 90 percent of people come into a store after they finish their online research within 24 hours after they finish it. The majority of them--I think it's over 70 percent will actually come to a store after 24 hours when they're done—and they're still excited about what they're going gonna get. They want to acquire the product. Give them a special experience and chances are solid that they will raise their hand and want to join your tribe.
- Kristin C-O: [31:05](#) All right. That is I think one of the strongest things we can do in these specialty markets that we're all in and as we head into holiday it is my sincere hope that as more people are trying to

look at the time savings, the convenience, making it easy, making it an experience for them, get them to come to a store, make it worth their while and give them a way to join your tribe. Whether it's an e-mail or enabling them to come join an event, invite them back, get to know them. This is what they want. They want to step away from their computer screen. They've chosen to finish their journey in your store. Make it exceptional for them.

[31:45](#)

All right. I went over a lot. It might be easier for you guys to look at a transcript of the podcast because I have a ton of resources and I have it all mapped out and laid out nicely for you as well. So that'll be available at [channelmastery.com/61](http://channelmastery.com/61) and I hope, hope, hope this show sets you up to have incredible success as we head into holiday 2018 but also well beyond that because ideally you're going to learn some easy to implement new tools that you can use to make the people coming into your store to fulfill their Last Mile needs into lifers.

Kristin:

[32:20](#)

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Kristin:

[32:44](#)

Thank you again to Verde Brand Communications, [www.verdepr.com](http://www.verdepr.com), for being our presenting sponsor. And until next Tuesday everyone I have another great show for you. I can't wait to share my guest with you actually. it's gonna be a great surprise. But next Tuesday I'll be here ready for you again with another episode of the Channel Mastery Podcast. Thanks so much for being here with me. Have an awesome rest of your day and bye for now.