

Financial Times x PayPal Webinar: Thursday 16 March

E-Commerce: Building Resilience in a Downturn

What: Financial Times partnered with PayPal to host a webinar panel discussion with Cameron McLean, SVP of Europe, and Australia Enterprise at PayPal; Sandra Alzetta, VP and Global Head of Commerce & Customer Service at Spotify; Gabriele Griesbacher, Global Director of Payments at Entain Group; and David Pitt, UK VP at SilverRail Technologies.

Why it is important: The webinar discussed how major global organisations are approaching e-commerce in an economic downturn. Executives from PayPal, Spotify, Entertain Group and SilverRail Technologies discuss how they are adapting to changing consumer behaviour in a digital economy. The overall theme of how big retailers are planning to persevere through economic downturn is by providing a secure, seamless, and frictionless payment process for customers.

Panel Discussion

Cameron McLean, SVP of Europe and Australia Enterprise at PayPal

- The omnichannel is still at the top-of-mind for businesses but emphasises that **digital is truly the future** and it is how customers are consuming from searching to selecting and to purchasing.
- Post-covid, customers are spending in different ways and using digital channels to explore new categories such as purchasing groceries and resale vintage pieces online.
- Each sector in retail must adapt differently when it comes to approaching the digital economy. However, in an economic downturn, **it is essential that all retailers take greater strides to offer more resources and services to consumers.**
- For retailers to stay relevant in their local markets, offering the customer a choice of payment is the easiest way to do so.
- Trust is key for payment platforms like PayPal.

Sandra Alzetta, VP and Global Head of Commerce & Customer Service at Spotify

- Consumer behaviour is shifting, and customers are feeling fatigued. They are focusing more on budgeting and auditing their expenses as a recession looms, causing them to spend less, and “good deals” are a driving factor for decisions about spending.
- Spotify is at an interesting spot on the market as music and audio are still considered a necessity in the eyes of consumers.
- **The most important thing for retailers to do in an economic downturn is to offer flexibility of choice.** Emphasises that choice is very important when it comes to payment, and customers need options, as Spotify accepts over 150 payments.
- Consumer expectations shifted and they now expect to have payment choices, fast checkouts, and clear messaging throughout the payment processes.

- While some panellists wondered if cash is dead, Spotify still accepts cash in certain markets if the demand is still high proving that Spotify passionately believes in customer choice.
- Spotify's AI DJ in the US and Canada is an example of how businesses can use technology to add significant value to their offering.

David Pitt, VP UK at SilverRail Technologies

- SilverRail is an information tech and services company that makes rail transportation easy for rail operators, travel agencies and travellers. Its product suite spans the full customer experience: journey planning, distribution, fulfilment, customer service and data insight.
- Prior to the pandemic, consumers were stubborn to use digital processes, but now digital is so openly adopted, the business has been impacted as **consumers are using digital in new ways** that no longer requires them to even leave their house (i.e., working, shopping, etc.)
- Digital is the way for SilverRail to bounce back, and they are beginning to see customers embracing more digital ticketing and payment processes than before. This is important for meeting consumer expectations and ensuring that **processes are as smooth and seamless as possible**.
 - However, they are still prioritising semi-digital approaches to not leave behind any customers.
- The travel industry is progressively moving toward frictionless payment processes by implementing the buy now pay later process.
- Using AI in their customer service proposition to automate the process of customers demanding information regarding their journey, tickets, etc.

Gabriele Griesbacher, Global Director of Payments at Entain Group

- Entain is a global sports betting company.
- Customer behaviour drastically changed for Entain Group in terms of expectations. Their customers are demanding speedier banking processes with faster processing and instant payment.
- **A quick payment checkout process is vital for consumers**, and companies should start relying on data to onboard customer information seamlessly, as entering credit card numbers and contact information is not an easy process for customers.