

INVESTIGATING

the New Merchandising Maven

MAVENS: "Information specialists" or intense gatherers of information who are often the first to pick up on new or nascent trends. "Mavens are really information brokers, sharing and trading what they know."

- Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*



The new merchandising maven is a rare breed of retail talent. These executives are brimming with valuable information and insights, but very few retailers know how to find them or what makes them tick. We investigated to find out.

Here's what we learned about the new merchandising maven:

CLUE #1

They're Born Collaborators

You could say new merchandising mavens leave their fingerprints in the marketing department. They collaborate with their marketing counterparts on a daily basis to ensure campaigns and offers align with consumer trends, product availability and demand.

Sadly, upon further exploration, we found that only



of merchandisers collaborate this extensively with marketing colleagues.

CLUE #2

They're Customer Advocates

New merchandising mavens inspect shopper behaviors, brand affinities and style preferences to create more relevant, localized assortments.

But we discovered that only



of merchandisers use these clues to customize assortments on such a granular level.

CLUE #3

They're Agile & Responsive

New merchandising mavens are constantly searching for new shopper trends and shifting market conditions. Like a detective on call, they spring into action at a moment's notice and use new insights to alter pricing and promotions. **Unfortunately, our research points to a painful truth:**



of merchandisers can quickly respond to shifting trends and preferences. They're stuck in their old ways...



have different pricing and promotions for different channels, and they have no plans to change that.



have different pricing and promotions for different channels, but plan to make changes soon.

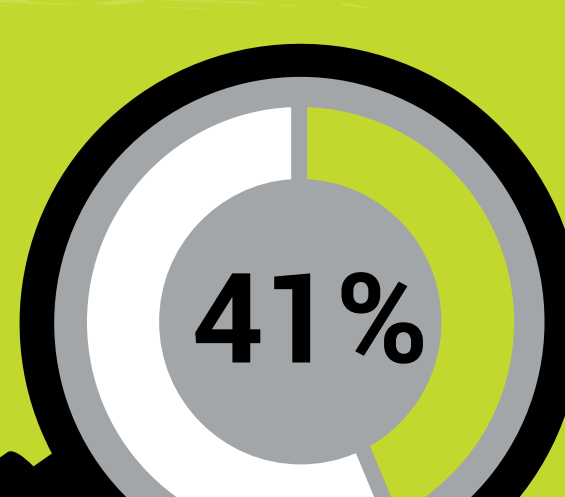
CLUE #4

They're Obsessed with Data

Data isn't DOA (dead on arrival) for the new merchandising maven. They use analytics to make smarter, more profitable assortment planning, pricing and promotional decisions. **Our investigation revealed that very few merchandisers are able to use data clues to improve decision-making:**



use data/analytics to stock inventory in the right stores, DCs and warehouses.



purchase inventory based on sales and fulfillment demand.



measure the effectiveness of pricing, promotions and offers.

CLUE #5

They Use Cutting-Edge Tools & Tactics

Like the best crime scene investigators, new merchandising mavens use cutting-edge tools and tactics. The must-have items in their toolkits are store grading tools and advanced forecasting algorithms, which help them improve assortment planning efficiencies.

Upon further inspection, we found that only



of merchandisers use advanced forecasting algorithms to send the right merchandise to the right stores.

New merchandising mavens are on the rise

but our clues prove that they're still **hard to find.**

Do you need to go on the hunt for the new merchandising maven... or are they hiding in your organization?

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Take this quiz to find out!