



Unlocking the Customer Experience

Where the provision of mobile device
charging fits into the store of the future.

A ChargeBox Retail Whitepaper
March 2021

INTRODUCTION

The onset of the Coronavirus pandemic brought unprecedented pressures to the **retail sector**. At a time when they were already struggling with crippling business rates, Brexit uncertainty and price wars from online challengers, Covid arrived and closed down most sectors of traditional high street retail almost overnight.

In the space of less than a year, retailers, from main high street brands to small independents, have had to change their business model and look for new ways to attract consumers and improve the retail customer experience.

In a post pandemic world, it's clear that consumers see shopping as an event or destination experience. The individual retailers, out of town outlets and **shopping centres** that make a continual investment in delivering a consistent and differentiated customer experience will be the ones that will start to prosper.

75%

of people say large high street stores and shopping centres should offer free charging

*ChargeBox shopper survey 2020





IMPROVING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE BY KEEPING PEOPLE CONNECTED

Pre-lockdown, much of the innovation on retail experience had come through collaborations with experts in their field. We've seen everything from bookshops and clothing retailers introduce coffee bars, to Selfridges go as far as to introduce a permanent cinema. They all represent ways to get people through the door, improve the customer experience and increase share of wallet.

They also provide added value to the customer and generate a halo effect for Net Promoter Scores, a vital indicator that stores are performing against customer service measures.

But in the future, as we move towards true omni-channel experiences, there is more interest in offering technical solutions. For instance, we will see more augmented and virtual reality in the next few years. However, right now, there's a pressing need to offer services that align with the most important item people own today – their mobile phone.

SUSTAINING HUMAN CONNECTION AND SUPPORTING DIGITAL STRATEGIES

Although online sales have grown at an unprecedented rate during Covid, research has shown that while most consumers will continue to shop online they are also desperate to get back to the High Street. Post-lockdown, customers will return to bricks-and-mortar retail, with consumers more likely to see shopping as an experience, a chance to connect and a welcome distraction. Retailers will have to respond and think more broadly in terms of the customer experience and how to improve it.

Staying in touch and meeting up with people, making price comparisons and using a phone to pay or take advantage of an offer are highly relevant and important reasons why people take a phone shopping with them.

In fact, digital strategies all rely on these aspects of phone use for success. Instagram competitions, loyalty apps, bar codes for in-store collections, and speedy check out all form part of the sales journey and retail customer experience today. They reflect the way lots of people like to shop and interact with a brand. Tapping into this desire to be connected is an area where retailers can improve the retail customer experience and gain distance from competitors.



Paying for things Price comparison
Using vouchers
Taking / sharing pics of items Brand research

56%*
said they did one or more
of these shopping.

*ChargeBox shopper survey 2020

CHARGING SERVICES CREATE DESTINATIONS AND STIMULATE GROWTH

But none of this can happen if someone's battery is low, making them anxious and reluctant to use their phone for experiences. That's why many leading retailers, out of town large format stores and **shopping centres** are offering a place to charge a mobile safely and effectively. It presents a new opportunity to improve customer experience, execute digital strategies and make the brand a destination to shoppers who rely on their phones, especially if it's a charging service that's free to use.

The financial rewards are clear: Retailers and outlets that invest in a **free to use charging service find dwell time greatly improves**, and as a result basket size increases too. They also prove that free to use charging services deliver better returns in terms of NPS.

The Impact of Free-to-Use charging?

↑ Dwell time

3.85+ million extra customer hours minimum.

↓ Customer Anxiety

76% of shoppers admit they feel anxious if they can't use their phone.

↑ Footfall

61% of shoppers said the provision of charging influences their decision to visit.

↑ Shopping Experience

94% of shoppers said a charging service enhances their shopping experience.

* source: study/survey at Intu Lakeside shopping centre



ChargeBox®

KEEPING PEOPLE CONNECTED REQUIRES MANAGEMENT

The Covid pandemic has changed the face of retail. The day to day pressure of running a store at the same time as a professional online offering, staying competitive and hitting targets is huge, which is why collaborations and partnerships with experts works so well. They manage the service and its maintenance so the customer experience remains consistent and store management teams can get on with their day job.

That's why the most successful implementations of free charging solutions are managed as a service by the provider. The physical units that house the charging service, the diagnostics and reporting that provide insight on use and performance, and all the upgrades to new charging technology, including the integration of Apple's most recent **MagSafe® technology**, which offers the fastest wireless charging experience available, are all covered.

With safety and hygiene now a main consideration, the provider can also deliver the peace of mind to the consumer and retailer that shared resources are Covid-safe, with the implementation of **antimicrobial coatings** to all touch points including cables, keys and fobs and locker doors.

This managed service by the providers adds value and peace of mind, taking away the need for someone to be managing the maintenance and cleanliness on top of the day job. It also ensures the customer experience and service that stores and centres commit to delivering every day is delivered to high standards.





Mini case study – John Lewis becomes destination for shoppers who want charging services, increasing time in store and basket size:

John Lewis has both 'Lock & Shop' and 'Stay & Charge' services in its stores. Independent research to look at the return on investment of charging in store revealed both behavioural and attitudinal changes in shoppers:

ChargeBox users:

- spend more money than the average shopper (133%)
- they stay in-store twice as long, +28 minutes on average
- have larger average basket sizes, typically +28% more

Shoppers also feel more positive about John Lewis and 82% of those who were aware of the service provided by ChargeBox in store, said it influenced their decision to visit. Read the full case study [here](#).

MAKING A STRATEGIC CHOICE

It's very likely that your business will have a list of key requirements when it comes to delivering a great experience every time a person walks through the door. These will certainly revolve around your product and services, to your staff behaviour to the ambience and location of your premises.

But there will be other elements that make a great experience. Depending on your business these will range from clean toilets and disabled facilities, through to providing refreshments.

Services at Shopping Centres: Need vs Benefit vs Market vs Cost

SERVICE	NECESSITY	BENEFITS	MARKET	COST
Toilets	■■■■■■■■	■■■■■■	■■■■■■■■	■■■■
Wi-Fi	■■■	■■■	■■■	■■■■
Lifts	■■■■■■■■	■■■■	■■■■■■	■■■■■■
Escalators	■■■■	■■■■	■■■■■■	■■■■■■
Water Points	■■■■	■■■■	■■■■■■	■■
Food & Beverage	■■■■■■■■	■■■■■■■■	■■■■■■■■	■■■■■■
Creche / Kids Play	■■■	■■■	■■■	■■■■
Parking	■■■■■■■■	■■■■■■■■	■■■■■■■■	■■■■■■■■
Power Points	■	■■	■■	■■■
Mobile Charging	■■■■■	■■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■
Seating Areas	■■■■	■■■■	■■■■	■■■
Shop Mobility	■■■■■■■■	■■■	■	■■■■
ATMs	■■■■	■■■■■■■■	■■■■	■■■
Customer Service	■■	■■■	■■■	■■■■■■

Necessity (inc Demand & Expectation): Essential through to Optional

Benefits: e.g. longer dwell time, bigger basket size, greater spend, improves loyalty

Market: the number of customers the service is used by

Cost: high to low

SERVICE AND VALUE

From our work with the major retailers and **shopping centres**, we know that each one of the services they provide will be graded according to the value they bring to the experience of shopping, through to the number of people that benefit, to the revenue and loyalty they drive.

They can also be assessed according to a business model, and what impact a monetary cost for a service will have on its use and perception. In many instances the services are free because they align to the brand values, or marked as seasonal. So for instance, while a pop up climbing wall might not be a permanent feature or something every visitor will want to do, during the summer holidays it will be a prime investment to make sure the centre is a destination for families. Providing this free of charge would certainly attract more people and the ROI will stack up very quickly.

In the same way, it can make sense to have free charging in areas where people will be spending longer periods in store, for instance when they are having a makeover at a beauty counter.



Understanding the value of each service helps determine the investment required, informs things such as space planning, and helps provide USPs for marketing campaigns.

Over 18 million charges+ delivered in-store and in shopping centres

UNDERSTAND THE VALUE

Understanding the value of each service helps determine the investment required, informs things such as space planning, and helps provide USPs for marketing campaigns.

Much of this requires a clear understanding of your customer. Knowing what motivates them, their tastes and preferences, their demographics, and also how they feel in certain situations can contribute to the assessments you make. Today, making more environmentally friendly decisions is becoming a higher priority, so providing places to fill up a water bottle may not have been as important in the past. Now it's becoming more essential.

Just as charging is becoming essential - running out of battery is creating a more anxious shopper so helping to solve that problem is why more and more companies are marking out device charging as a priority.

ABOUT CHARGEBOX

The ChargeBox Story

Since 2005, ChargeBox has led the way in providing the best out-of-home charging services for mobile devices. We are the experts in helping companies to keep their customers charged and connected.

Our clients benefit by improving customer satisfaction and loyalty, increasing footfall and spend while ensuring their customers are always able to use their smartphone for payments, tickets, boarding cards, and critical apps. As a result, customers experience reduced stress and anxiety from low batteries and feel safe in the comfort of knowing they can securely charge mobile devices and stay connected to their loved ones.

We specialise in mobile charging for retail, mass transit, healthcare, education, corporate and the events sector. On a purchase or rental basis, we can provide 'stay and charge' or 'lock and leave' units with standalone or integrated solutions.

Our British designed and manufactured charging stations, which include our patented 'Smart Lock' system, have delivered more than 48 million out-of-home device charges worldwide at over 2,000 points globally such as train stations, airports, in-store retail and shopping centres, through major sport and music events to industry conferences. All of our solutions feature ultra-robust charging cables for the latest devices and are backed by our real-time monitoring system that provides a safety and security audit trail, usage statistics and also enables our service team to ensure every charging point is working at its optimum.

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