

An action plan to move from awareness to favourite

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An action plan to move from awareness to favourite

The road to favourite status will vary by category, proposition and customer objective. The following actions provide a practical starting point.

1. Understand what disrupts a customer's path to favourite

Map out awareness, consideration, visitation, purchase, repeat purchase and favourite. A retailer that is attracting high numbers of customers but that is favourited by few has a different challenge from one that is preferred by a small but highly committed audience.

Questions to ask:

- Are we attracting a broad audience but struggling to build loyalty, or building strong loyalty within a relatively small customer base?
- How does the customer journey differ across customer segments, locations or channels?

2. Understand where you can win

Customers make different choices for different needs and occasions; your brand can't be everything to everyone. Understand what types of purchases and occasions your brand is strongest for, and focus your investment where it has the greatest potential impact.

Questions to ask:

- Are we trying to be relevant for too many occasions at once?
- Which occasions offer the biggest potential to grow preference and loyalty?

3. Nail the basics before adding anything else

Get the basics right: availability, value, fulfilment, service, and so on. Innovating when you haven't gotten the basics right is meaningless, and is unlikely to result in becoming a customer favourite.

Questions to ask:

- What are customers complaining about and how quickly and effectively are their complaints resolved?
- If we turned off all marketing activity tomorrow, would customers still return?

4. Enhance trust through your operations

All important information, processes, policies and terms should be crystal clear and easy to find. Customer service staff should have all the information they need to solve problems quickly and effectively.

Questions to ask:

- How often can your staff resolve customer issues first time?
- Do customers believe we are transparent and fair when things go wrong?

5. Choose what you want to be famous for

Identify exactly what your brand should be known for beyond the basics: expertise, community, quality – make it specific. This is the essence of your brand. Invest disproportionately in areas that reinforce that message.

Questions to ask:

- What would customers say makes us different from competitors?
- Do we bring those differentiators to life in all customer interactions?

6. Deliver your promise consistently

Customers build preference through repeated positive experiences. The more consistently you deliver on your promise across channels, touchpoints and occasions, the easier it becomes to build trust, preference and loyalty.

Questions to ask:

- Is the experience consistent online, in store and across customer service channels?
- Would customers receive the same quality of experience regardless of where they interact with the brand?

7. Overlay behavioural and attitudinal data

Customers who shop because a retailer is convenient to them can, on the surface, appear similar to customers who consider a retailer to be a favourite; however, their relationship with the brand could be very different. Measuring both sales and sentiment creates a more accurate picture of why customers are shopping with you.

Questions to ask:

- Are repeat customers shopping because they don't have an alternative or because the store is close by?
- Are we measuring how customers feel about us alongside measuring sales?

8. Prepare to be chosen by people and AI

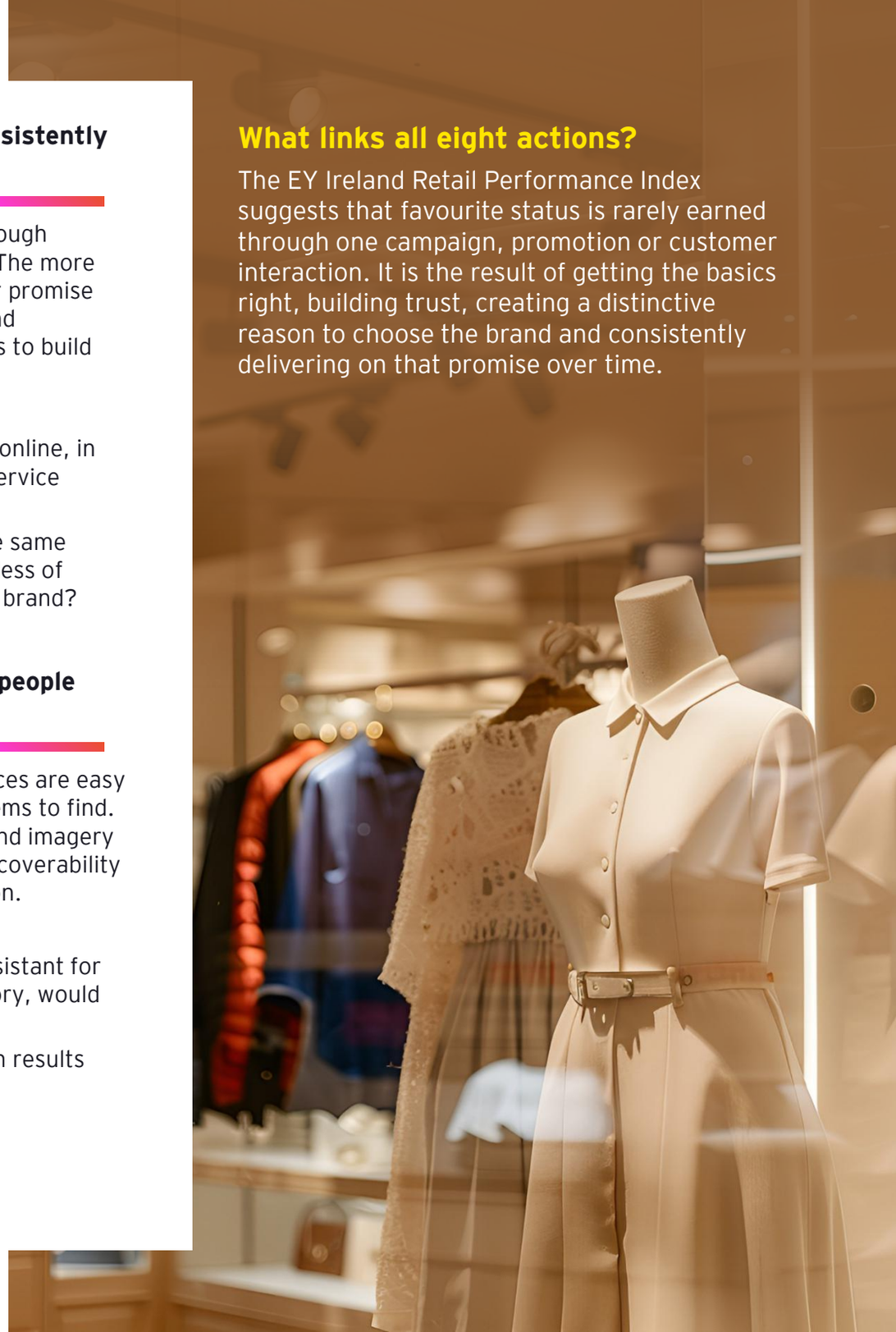
Ensure your products and services are easy for both customers and AI systems to find. Product descriptions, reviews and imagery all contribute to visibility, AI discoverability and, ultimately, recommendation.

Questions to ask:

- If a customer asked an AI assistant for the best option in our category, would we appear in the results?
- How accurately are AI search results representing our brand?

What links all eight actions?

The EY Ireland Retail Performance Index suggests that favourite status is rarely earned through one campaign, promotion or customer interaction. It is the result of getting the basics right, building trust, creating a distinctive reason to choose the brand and consistently delivering on that promise over time.



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