



Digital Gift Cards In 2016: Where Omni-Channel Strategy Meets Customer Expectations

Annual Digital Gifting Benchmark Study

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Introduction

Welcome To An Ongoing Revolution

We evaluate retailers' digital gift card offerings every year. Why? Because they are something customers increasingly desire – and purchase – for an ever-growing number of occasions. Yet, despite this fact, most retailers have never really loved gift cards. They have, in the past, been viewed as difficult to manage, leverage, and prioritize. As a result, the baseline finding of this report is that retailers are ignoring far too many opportunities for digital gift cards. And in the year 2016, this is nothing short of a mistake.

Gift cards are here to stay, and digital gift cards are an increasingly important component of gifting. They help retailers engage consumers by sharing or participating in a recipient's brand passion. They are easy and convenient in an era when more and more consumers connect with each other digitally first. And if managed properly, they offer retailers a tremendous opportunity for otherwise difficult-to-attain cross-sells, upsells, and increased basket sizes.

Which raises the question: are retailers leveraging digital gift cards to their full potential? And why then – and exactly how – are so many of them dropping the ball on their digital gift card offerings? This research seeks to answer these questions.

81/100 retailers have a digital gift card offering

However, more retailers were unable to fulfill these orders than ever before (10 this year, compared to 4 last year)

An increasing number of retailers have a mobile app, but...

... Too many retailers still offer no option to buy gift cards via mobile Web or App

Methodology

As in the past, RSR starts with a list of 100 retailers. They are collated from a combination of the Internet Retailer Top 100 and Nation's Restaurant News. Non-pertinent candidates for gift cards are removed (1-800-Contacts.com, for example), and the remaining retailers are organized into categories (apparel, home goods, etc.). This year, we also added airlines. The list of brands evaluated is in Appendix A.

The criteria we use for evaluation evolve every year — just as retailers' capabilities (and needs) evolve. We focus on updating the criteria to highlight differentiating capabilities, rather than the features that have become industry standards. This year, that meant looking at digital gift cards more holistically – adding not only criteria about supporting omni-channel payment options and bulk purchases, but also a deeper investigation into loyalty programs as we attempted to buy a gift card from each retailer using loyalty points from major credit card providers. A list of the criteria and the rating scale we used in the evaluation are included in Appendix B.

The evaluation was conducted exactly as it has been in years past for consistency: one person purchased all of the gift cards and another person received them all. We made certain to use consumer-grade email addresses and ISPs, rather than sending gift cards to corporate servers. The purchases were conducted in the latter half of May through June 2016. An overview of the results for every retailer and category is also included in Appendix A.

Summary Of Results

During the 2016 evaluation, we found that 81 out of the 100 retailers offered digital gift cards, down by only one retailer from 2015. In itself, this is hardly a headline. As everyone knows, you can't win if you're not even in the game, and the amount of top-performing brands willing to play remains stalled at too few.

However, **10 retailers were entirely unable to deliver on their digital gift card offering.** The number of retailers in this position more than doubled from that of last year (4 in 2015), and that truly is shocking.

Five of these 10 had a purchase process so broken that we could not complete a purchase. RSR returned to each of these retailers several weeks later for a second attempt, only to find the breaks were not flukes: all still remained broken.

Worse still: the other five of these 10 brands allowed a buyer to walk through the full purchase process, provided confirmation of a sale, and then simply did not deliver what was sold. Not only that: in each of these cases, RSR contacted the retailer after three days *via phone* to inquire what went wrong, only to have delivery still not take place.

Consider this: we are within the context of a controlled research project. In the "real world," if a purchaser were to buy from one of these brands, receive confirmation of their order, and no further communication from the person they sent a gift to, they might be well-inclined to think the recipient simply did not acknowledge their thoughtfulness.

In a moment, we will highlight more of what went right – and what went wrong – in more detail. But by far, the most elemental takeaway from this study is as follows: ***make certain that if you are going to offer a digital gift card, you can deliver on your promise.***

Criteria

For those retailers that do offer digital gift cards, our scale is comprised of 66 maximum possible total points from the following criteria. Below is just a sample of some of the criteria for both buyer and recipient experiences (a detailed breakdown of the criteria is listed in Appendix B):

Discoverability:	The Buyer Experience:	The Recipient Experience:
Easy to find on desktop	Speediness of delivery	Engaging reveal
Easy to find on mobile web & app	Faceplates and personalization	Ease of redemption
Gifting prioritized as selling strategy	Choice of denominations	Ability to thank the buyer
Integrated digital & plastic purchase	Choice of delivery options	Mobile wallet integration
Purchase optimized for mobile	Omni-channel payment options	Reloadable gift cards
Can buy gift cards with credit card loyalty points	Loyalty and marketing program integration	Can manage eGift cards in a mobile app
Support for bulk buying	Notification options	Time to receipt

And The Top Performers Are...

Based on these criteria, where a full range of zero to three points was available for each category, the following retailers took top honors (all scores are out of 66 possible points):

Retailer	Score
Sephora	55 points
Starbucks	50.5 points
The Home Depot	46.5 points
Dunkin' Donuts	44.5 points
Amazon	43 points

What Digital Gifting Leaders Do

Sephora achieved top marks this year primarily through consistency across all three major categories of criteria: discoverability, the buyer experience and the recipient experience. The retailer excelled at discoverability, and provided a solid recipient experience that met expectations for timeliness and accuracy.

The other top retailers tended to achieve high marks in two out of the three criteria categories. For Starbucks it was discoverability and the recipient experience that stood out. For The Home Depot, it was discoverability and the *buyer* experience. In fact, except for Dunkin Donuts, all of the top-five retailers scored well on discoverability.

Other traits common to the top-five digital gifting leaders:

- Make digital gift cards easy to find, most often through a persistent offering, like a menu item, on the home page of the website
- Support bulk purchase of gift cards
- Offer a digital gifting experience optimized for their mobile app
- Provide a wide range of denomination options
- Offer a full range of payment options, including alternative forms of payment like PayPal or a private label credit card
- Deliver a digital gift card quickly and on time according to what was promised

Critical For Retailers: Meeting Customer Expectations

While we continually raise the bar in our evaluation, as we expect retailers to evolve their capabilities, 2016 proved to be a far more difficult year than expected for digital gift card offerings. We've already highlighted the need to ensure programs work properly. The challenge with gift cards is that there are two sides to every gifting experience: the buyer experience, and the recipient experience. If you make it difficult for buyers to buy, recipients may never receive. And if you make it difficult to receive, you risk turning off an already passionate supporter of your brand. Getting digital gifting right is critical, because it is not just one relationship that is on the table, it is two: buyer and recipient. That said, there were some positive outcomes from our research this year, and also places where retailers can improve.

On The Purchase Side

Opportunities to Improve Discoverability

Ensuring a gift card offering is easy to find is one of the most basic requirements for a successful gift card program. However, one retailer buried gift cards within an unrelated link in the footer on their desktop site (for customer service), two retailers made their gift cards nearly impossible to find on their home screen, and several retailers' gift card wording made it difficult to tell if they sold only plastic cards, or if they sold digital gift cards as well (when they indeed did). This is a telltale sign that too many retailers still do not have someone within the enterprise routinely shopping their own digital offerings.

The retailers that achieved top scores did so by featuring either gifting or specifically gift cards as a menu item or as a header item, and ensured that the item persisted beyond the home page.

Confusing Messaging and Processes

Card personalization is a boon for making the experience more enjoyable for everyone involved. Still, of the 30 retailers that allowed a custom photo, video or voice message to be added, nine did so only after forcing the buyer to select a stock experience first. If you take the time to offer a technically advanced experience, tout it early on in the buyer's journey.

One retailer's loyalty engagement offer was worded in a way that implied the buyer had to be 21 years of age in order to buy a digital gift card – which wasn't the case. This likely results in a multitude of lost sales from buyers old enough to have a credit card, but under the age of 21.

Several retailers had a confusing array of faceplates or few or no faceplate choices. This is difficult to justify 16 years into the new millennium. The retailers that scored well on faceplate options offered not only multiple choices, but also categorized the choices to make them easy to sort through (e.g. Birthday, Mother's Day, Thank You, Get Well, etc.).

Two retailers made it seem like the buyer had a minimum purchase requirement much higher than what was actually available. Only once the buyer started digging around did it become clear that the

minimum purchase price was far lower. In both of these cases the real minimum price (\$5 or \$10), was located in an otherwise-sequential drop down menu after \$50 or \$100. Retailers need to be careful that in their efforts to drive up purchase amounts, they don't lose sales instead – a \$5 gift card may well turn into a much larger-size purchase, with the added benefit of no outstanding balance to account for on the gift card itself.

Superfluous Steps in the Buying Process

One retailer interrupted the buying process with a popup window of an irrelevant offer. Another featured popups that would not go away, rendering them one of the five retailers whose process was too broken to continue.

Another retailer made the buyer select a store as his/her local store before checkout could proceed. Not a relevant point when purchasing a digital item.

Mobile Hiccups

One retailer offered the ability to send a digital gift card via SMS text message that didn't work.

Two retailers made it look like they sold gift cards via their mobile app, but the links took the buyer to a promotion, with no apparent ability to buy a gift card.

Another two retailers sold digital cards on a mobile-optimized site, but did not offer a mobile-optimized digital gifting experience. Clearly gift cards were not a prioritized component during the extensive mobile site redesign process.

Where The Purchase Experience Excels

Purchase-side positives can be segmented into four themes this year: prioritized gifting, customer-focused buying options, creative delivery and notification tools, and the ability to link gift card purchases to loyalty programs.

Prioritizing Gifting

It doesn't matter how streamlined or effective a gifting program is if consumers can't find it. In years past, many retailers have fallen flat in this regard – burying gift cards within homepage menus, or, worse yet, somewhere in the fine-print footer of a page. This year, 48 retailers made gift cards easy to find across their channels: a marked improvement from even just a few years ago.

Furthermore, 17 retailers prioritized gifting as a selling strategy. Granted, not all retailers have ancillary gift offerings. For example: a restaurant would have little need for a gift registry. However, for those retailers that serve as popular gifting destinations (e.g. department stores, home furnishings, and specialty retail), the ability to quickly access registries, gift ideas, and gift cards in one location is a highly valuable feature.

One of the most potentially confusing aspects of buying a gift card has long been determining just what's being sold. Is it a digital gift card, or is it plastic? Some retailers still muddy the waters here (Target has a particularly confusing system, whereby the consumer doesn't realize most graphically represented cards can be purchased in either format until well into the process). But 37 retailers offered integrated gift card purchases for both plastic and digital cards. Sears' desktop site is a particularly strong example of this done well.

Customer-Focused Buying Options

Fifty-one retailers offered custom denominations and allowed low minimum purchase amounts. At this point, giving consumers the ability to set their price – and set it low – should be table stakes for all retailers. As the saying goes: a little bit of something is far better than a whole lot of nothing.

Bulk gift card purchase offerings still have a long way to go. Very few retailers offer much specificity about how to purchase multiple cards in bulk until that process is in session. However, this year, 44 retailers at least support purchasers that want to buy gift cards in bulk in some measure. While the functionality may not yet be sleek, it is at least present.

While gifting a digital card to a recipient’s favorite brand automatically makes it more personalized than sending cash, the more personalization options a retailer provides, the more thoughtful the gift becomes. Four retailers offered video personalization of gift cards – not an easy task, but one that is guaranteed to create a stronger connection between the gifter and the recipient.

In a related fashion, 37 retailers offered multiple delivery options beyond email (including print, SMS, or social media delivery options). These represent further opportunities to make the gift experience seem more personal.

Creative Delivery and Notification Tools

Given the very last-minute nature of many gift card purchases, speed to delivery is vital. A full 35 retailers offered near real-time delivery of digital gifts, another 7 delivered within 15 minutes, and an increasing amount are able to deliver within hours or at least the same day as purchase.

In recent years, too many retailers have done a poor job of keeping the buyer up-to-date on card delivery, offering only a sales confirmation. This year, 54 retailers offered delivery notification options above/beyond purchase, lessening the need for a buyer to awkwardly ask a recipient if they’d received a gift.

Furthermore, two retailers – Dell and Ann Taylor – let the buyer know if the card had not been viewed after three days. This presented an opportunity to make certain the card hadn’t been sent to a mis-keyed or out-of-use email address.

Loyalty Links

New this year, we wanted to know if retailers allowed buyers to purchase gift cards with the loyalty points accrued on their major credit cards. As it turns out, 29 retailers offered the option – 22 via Discover’s loyalty program, nine via American Express’s program, and two allowed both.

On The Recipient Side

Opportunities To Improve

Visual Misfires

Mobile is becoming an increasingly important experience for retailers. Depending on a retailer’s customer demographics, their customers may be engaging with them primarily through mobile email and either the mobile web or the retailer’s mobile app. Still, 22 retailers did not offer mobile-optimized recipient emails in any form.

Two retailers' recipient emails had missing images, regardless of operating system used. This begs the question: if you are to undertake the effort of putting images into emails, isn't it worth ensuring they display properly?

Cross-platform issues arose, as well. Six retailers' recipient emails would render fine on a desktop or laptop experience, but wouldn't render on mobile. Another retailer allowed recipients to save a digital gift card to their mobile wallet, but recipients could only see the option if they were looking at a mobile email.

Flat-Out Delivery Errors

Lastly, we've already highlighted the 10 out of 81 retailers who couldn't deliver a card at all. The number could really be 11, as another retailer's "Redeem Now" link in the email led to an error page on the website. We were able to sort that card out with a phone call, but again, many consumers likely would not have known their money (and gift) went to waste.

Where The Recipient Experience Excels

An Engaging Gift Card Reveal

Nothing is more boring than a plain text gift card that conjures a boilerplate experience. This year, 19 retailers offered an engaging reveal, including either animation or personalized imagery. As ever, the goal is to make the experience seem more special than the mere delivery of currency.

Convenient Redemption and Storage Options

In years past, many retailers have treated the recipient's email as nothing short of cash: lose the email, lose whatever dollar value it had. This year, 33 retailers offered to save the gift card to a shopper's account so the recipient doesn't have to keep the email or stress about its location in their inbox/folders.

To take this notion a step further, 14 retailers offered mobile wallet integration, drastically reducing any anxiety or confusion about where the gift card is at time of purchase.

Twelve retailers offered the ability to manage eGift cards in a mobile app, which included the ability to add one or more cards to the app. This is a highly convenient feature if the recipient is having a birthday, anniversary, or similar celebratory situation where several people may be sending them gift cards to the same brand at the same time.

The Ability To Give Thanks

One of the least enjoyable components of giving a gift card is having to ask a recipient if they did, indeed, receive it. Twenty-four retailers offered gift recipients the ability to thank the buyer; a small tech ask, but a very nice touch, nonetheless.

Recommendations

We conduct this research every year to highlight how important it is for retailers to align their gift card functionality with growing demand from consumers, alongside ever-rising expectations from consumers to ***get the process right***.

With that in mind, we offer the following pragmatic suggestions for anyone looking to either get involved in a successful gift card program or, for those already involved, as ideas for how to up their game.

For Those Getting Started

The easiest ways to kick-start your digital gifting program are to:

- Make sure gift cards are easy to find on your site
- Be clear about how the process works and how long it might take to send a card
- Make checkout easy and remove clutter (e.g. favorite store location or shipping address)
- Send a recipient notification that is complete, including letting them know who the gift is from and include enough detail and authenticity to be trust-worthy
- Accept digital gift cards in all channels, not just online – consumers don't care about your channel divisions, and their gift cards shouldn't either

For Those Ready To Advance

When the basics are tackled, it's time to move on to:

- Offer personalization – the more you help a buyer invest their personality into the purchase experience, the more the recipient and the buyer both will be delighted by the end result
- Make available extensive payment options that avoid limiting consumers while also reducing exposure to preventable fraud
- Provide a mobile experience that is optimized for mobile but also consistent with the full site buyer and recipient experiences
- Offer the ability to reload a card, thus creating a path to long-term loyalty for the recipient

For Digital Gifting Leaders

The industry is always innovating and moving ahead. To stay in front, these retailers need to:

- Utilize digital gift cards in innovative ways – for example, as incentives, for signing up for warranties, as buy one / get one promotions, as customer service recovery
- Provide advanced personalization, like multiple choices for an engaging reveal or personalized video or voice messages
- Become more strategic about their gift card opportunities, for example by developing or expanding gifting sections on their site, or by exploring bulk gift card purchases from B2B buyers

For All Retailers

No matter where you are in digital gifting maturity, all retailers – including our high-performing retailers evaluated in this report – should keep in mind:

There Are Two Customer Experiences To Every Gift Card Purchase

Purchasing digital gift cards is a customer experience. Receiving digital gift cards is a customer experience. Retailers need to pay attention to both! Indeed, the person making the purchase may not be your typical shopper; they may not even be intimately familiar with your brand. However, they know your brand has real value to the person they are buying for, and their experience within your digital channels could well determine whether they will be a repeat consumer: either for themselves *or* for the recipient in the future. By the same token, delighting the recipient only provides more opportunity to generate increased loyalty from someone who is likely already familiar with your brand. Both are equally important.

Pay Attention To Mobile

As retailers add more complex capabilities, particularly on mobile, they need to make sure they are tracking these experiences as closely as any other customer experience they offer – that includes the purchase, receipt, and redemption of digital gift cards. At a minimum, retailers need to monitor these processes to make sure they are still functioning. Which leads to our most important recommendation:

Shop Your Own Offerings!

This year, we learned something critical. It is more important to have a technically inferior digital gift card offering *that works* than it is to have a feature-rich program *that breaks*. Our advice is clear: yes, customers want increasingly interesting gift card offerings. But with each ratcheted-up feature to make these offerings more personalized, opportunities for the process to fail only increase. The simplest way to combat such errors is to assign someone within the enterprise to shop not only your digital gift card offerings, but *all* of your digital offerings across every touchpoint where commerce transpires today. Many – if not all – of the myriad of obstacles we discovered this year would have been avoided if every retailer allocated someone to do just that.

Appendix A: Overall Rankings

Company	Total Score
Sephora	55
Starbucks	50.5
The Home Depot	46.5
Dunkin' Donuts	44.5
Amazon	43
lululemon athletica	41.5
Bed Bath & Beyond	41
Williams-Sonoma	41
JCPenney	41
The Cheesecake Factory	40.5
Gap	40
Best Buy	40
Subway Restaurants	39.5
Sears	38
Dell	35
TGI Fridays	35
Crate and Barrel	34.5
Panera Bread	34.5
IHOP Restaurants	34.5
Toys"R"Us	33.5
REI	33.5
Target	33
ascena retail group, inc. (Ann Taylor)	33
QVC	33
Barnes & Noble	33
L.L.Bean	32

Buffalo Wild Wings	31
Texas Roadhouse	31
Chili's	31
Nordstrom	30
DICK'S Sporting Goods	30
DSW	30
Kohl's	29.5
Olive Garden	29.5
Red Lobster	29
CVS Pharmacy	28
Cracker Barrel Old Country Store	28
Apple	27.5
Macy's	27.5
Lands' End	27
American Eagle Outfitters	27
Coach	26.5
Outback Steakhouse	26
Lowe's	26
Neiman Marcus	25.5
Tory Burch	25
Applebee's	25
Cabela's	23.5
Overstock.com	23.5
L Brands (Victoria's Secret)	23
Pizza Hut	22
Wayfair	22
GameStop	21.5
Nike	20
Foot Locker	19.5
Etsy	19

Adidas	19
Polo Ralph Lauren	19
Walmart	18.5
Abercrombie & Fitch	17
Urban Outfitters	17
Kate Spade	16.5
J. Crew	16.5
Musician's Friend	15.5
Burger King	15
Hayneedle	15
Southwest Airlines	14.5
Under Armour	14.5
EXPRESS	13.5
ShoeBuy	13
Alaska Airlines	12.5
Chico's	12.5
Hudson's Bay Company	12
Disney Store	11.5
Deckers Brands (UGG)	11.5
Air Canada	11
Estee Lauder	10.5
Fanatics	9.5
Delta Air Lines	9
American Airlines	8
Google Play	4
United Airlines	0
Eddie Bauer	0
Newegg	0
Belk	0
Costco	0

HSN	0
Canadian Tire	0
Walgreens	0
Avon	0
Restoration Hardware	0
Build.com	0
RONA	0
Denny's	0
McDonald's	0
The Wendy's	0
Taco Bell	0
Chick-fil-A	0
KFC	0
Advance Auto Parts	0

Leaders By Industry Category

Accessories / Footwear

DSW	30
Coach	26.5
Tory Burch	25

Airlines

Southwest Airlines	14.5
Alaska Airlines	12.5
Air Canada	11

Apparel

Gap	40
ascena retail group, inc. (Ann Taylor)	33
American Eagle Outfitters	27
Lands' End	27

Computer / Electronics

Best Buy	40
Dell	35
Apple	27.5

Department Stores

JCPenney	41
Sears	38
Nordstrom	30

General Merchandise

Amazon – Top 5 Finish	43
Bed Bath & Beyond	41
QVC	33
Target	33

Health & Beauty

Sephora – Top 5 Finish	55
CVS Pharmacy	28
Estee Lauder	10.5

Home Goods / Furnishings

Williams-Sonoma	41
Crate and Barrel	34.5
Wayfair	22

Home Improvement

The Home Depot – Top 5 Finish	46.5
Lowe's	26

Restaurants - Casual

The Cheesecake Factory	40.5
TGI Fridays	35
IHOP Restaurants	34.5

Restaurants – Quick Serve

Starbucks – Top 5 Finish	50.5
Dunkin' Donuts – Top 5 Finish	44.5
Subway Restaurants	39.5

Specialty Retail

Toys"R"Us	33.5
Barnes & Noble	33
GameStop	21.5

Sporting Goods / Outdoors

lululemon athletica	41.5
REI	33.5
L.L.Bean	32

Appendix B: Criteria and Ratings

Evaluation Criteria

Category	Points Available
Discoverability/Awareness	
Gift cards are easy to find - desktop and mobile web	<p>3 – Offering is featured above the fold on desktop and on homepage in mobile web. Available in a persistent manner across pages (e.g., as a menu item)</p> <p>2 – Offering is persistent across pages (and/or as a menu item across pages), but not above the fold on desktop and/or not on homepage on mobile web</p> <p>1 – Offering is on the home page, but not persistent across pages</p> <p>0 – Option is not visible on the home page</p>
<p>Gifting prioritization</p> <p>Note in the evaluation the cases where the retailer does have a registry and if it leverages gift cards.</p>	<p>3 – Retailer has overall gifting landing page where all options are made available (registry, cards, recommendations)</p> <p>2 – Retailer has individual links on homepage for gift cards/registry/ideas</p> <p>1 – Retailer has gift card and/or registry, but they are not linked together</p> <p>0 – No gifting options prioritized</p>
Integrated gift card purchase	<p>3 – Gift cards can be purchased through the same shopping cart, whether plastic, digital or print</p> <p>2 – Gift cards can be purchased through the same shopping cart, but it's not clear that the process is the same (unclear whether the selection is digital or plastic, or unclear if that purchase process will be the same)</p> <p>1 – Plastic gift card purchases are featured on the same page, but each leads to a separate purchase process</p> <p>0 – Plastic and eGift cards are not featured together</p>
Support for purchasers that want to buy a large number of gift cards at one time	<p>3 – Full online self-registration with web purchase experience. Bulk gift card purchase is offered alongside individual card purchase.</p> <p>2 – Phone number to call or email address to contact available on site, offered alongside individual card purchase.</p> <p>1 – Evidence of a bulk gift card purchase program on website, but not alongside individual card purchase (e.g., it's hard to find)</p> <p>0 – No evidence of program on website</p>

Gift cards are easy to find - mobile app	<p>3 – Offering is featured on the home page</p> <p>2 – Offering is available as a menu item</p> <p>1 – Offering is on the home page, but "below the fold"</p> <p>0 – Option is not visible on the home page</p>
Mobile app optimized for purchase	<p>3 – App optimized for mobile e-gift card purchase, including integration with phone capabilities (adding a photo, accessing address book)</p> <p>2 – App optimized for gift cards but without leveraging phone capabilities</p> <p>1 – Gift cards are available in the app, but take you out of the app for purchase</p> <p>0 – Not able to make a gift card purchase through the mobile app</p>
Mobile web optimized for purchase	<p>3 – Web optimized for mobile eGift card purchase, including integration with phone capabilities (adding a photo, accessing address book)</p> <p>2 – Web optimized for gift cards but without leveraging phone capabilities</p> <p>1 – Gift cards are available via mobile web, but take you out of the mobile optimized experience (i.e., to desktop) for purchase</p> <p>0 – Not able to make a gift card purchase through the mobile web</p>
Ability to use credit card loyalty points to purchase gift cards	<p>3 – Offers at least eGift cards in both programs (AMEX and Discover)</p> <p>2 – Offers at least eGift cards in one program</p> <p>1 – Offers at least plastic in one program</p> <p>0 – Not available in any form in any program</p>

Buyer Experience	
Speediness of delivery	<p>3 – Instant delivery is possible</p> <p>2 – Delivery within the same day is possible</p> <p>1 – Delivery within 24 hours is possible</p> <p>0 – Retailer does not provide information about how quickly the gift card will be delivered</p>
Faceplates and Personalization	<p>3 – Retailer offers upload your own video or the ability to include dynamic video content such as JibJab, as well as photo upload, message personalization, and multiple categorized faceplates</p> <p>2 – Retailer offers upload your own photo or other personalization beyond faceplate options/personalized message, but not as sophisticated as upload your own video or dynamic content</p> <p>1 – Retailer offers a personalized message and multiple faceplates</p> <p>0 – Retailer does not offer multiple faceplates</p>
Choice of denominations	<p>3 – A custom denomination can be entered, or standard denominations can be selected. The retailer offers a low minimum purchase</p> <p>2 – A custom denomination can be entered, but with a high minimum purchase. Or, the retailer offers standard denominations with low minimums</p> <p>1 – Retailer offers a few standard denominations with a high minimum purchase required</p> <p>0 – Retailer offers few denomination options</p>
Multiple delivery options	<p>3 – Retailer provides flexibility for delivery - email, social, SMS, card-oriented printing at home, setting date/time for delivery</p> <p>2 – Retailer provides email options and card-oriented print options, with delivery flexibility (no time, date only)</p> <p>1 – Retailer allows email or print delivery, with little flexibility (no date or time)</p> <p>0 – Retailer offers email delivery only</p>

<p>Omnichannel payment options</p> <p>Beyond credit/debit card payment options, are merchants enabling consumers to purchase gift cards with PayPal and Private Label Credit Card (PLCC) in store, web and app?</p>	<p>3 – Supports at least one payment alternative to standard credit/debit cards (e.g., PLCC, PayPal, ACH, VISA Checkout, Apple Pay, Android Pay, OpenTable, etc.) and can purchase gift cards with this payment method across all digital channels: web, mobile web and mobile app</p> <p>2 – Supports at least one payment alternative to standard credit/debit cards (e.g., PLCC, PayPal, ACH, VISA Checkout, Apple Pay, Android Pay, Open Table, etc.) and can purchase gift cards with this payment method across any two digital channels: web, mobile web and mobile app</p> <p>1 – Supports at least one payment alternative to standard credit/debit cards (e.g., PLCC, PayPal, ACH, VISA Checkout, Apple Pay, Android Pay, OpenTable, etc.), but can purchase gift cards with this payment in 1 channel only</p> <p>0 – Does not support alternative payment methods or cannot buy gift cards with the payment method in more than one channel (web, mobile web, mobile app)</p>
<p>Loyalty and marketing program integration</p>	<p>3 – If buyer is member of loyalty program, eGift purchase counts toward program. If buyer is not member, is prompted to join</p> <p>2 – eGift card purchase is used as a way to drive membership loyalty program or participation in marketing programs (e.g., opt in to email newsletter) in general</p> <p>1 – eGift card used to drive awareness of marketing programs (e.g., links to social media accounts)</p> <p>0 – No integration with any marketing programs</p>
<p>Notification options</p>	<p>3 – Retailer notifies buyer when the eGift card is sent and viewed, and provides a notification if the card is not viewed within 3 days</p> <p>2 – Retailer provides a notification when the card is sent and viewed</p> <p>1 – Retailer provides a notification when the card is sent</p> <p>0 – Retailer provides an order confirmation only</p>
<p>Recipient Experience</p>	
<p>Engaging reveal</p>	<p>3 – Retailer offers an animated, experiential personalized reveal option</p> <p>2 – Retailer offers a stock animated reveal to the recipient</p> <p>1 – Retailer offers a graphics-based gift card to the recipient</p> <p>0 – Retailer provides a text-only gift card to the recipient</p>

Ease of redemption	<p>3 – Card is redeemable in all retailer's available channels (e.g., in store, online, mobile web, mobile app). The retailer offers online/digital storage, barcode and gift card number. Can print the eGift card from the site</p> <p>2 – Has all but one of the following: print eGift card from site, in-store bar code and number, online storage, redeemable in all available channels</p> <p>1 – The email is the card for online pure-play and/or no in-store bar code and/or not redeemable in all available channels</p> <p>0 – The email is the card. For multi-channel retailers, the card is NOT redeemable in one or more of the available channels</p>
Recipient "thank you"	<p>3 – Retailer offers a personalized way to thank the buyer with media (photos/video)</p> <p>2 – Retailer offers a way to thank the buyer directly through personalize message</p> <p>1 – Retailer offers a way for a recipient to thank the buyer with a stock message, or opens a blank email</p> <p>0 – Retailer does not offer a way to thank the buyer</p>
Mobile wallet integration	<p>3 – Retailer makes clear that a card can be added to the consumer's choice of mobile wallet (Google/ Passbook) on both mobile and desktop versions of the card</p> <p>2 – Retailer makes clear that a card can be added to a mobile wallet at least on mobile versions of the card</p> <p>1 – Retailer offers alternative ways to save a card to a mobile device</p> <p>0 – No wallet offering</p>
Gift card is reloadable?	<p>3 – Yes</p> <p>0 – No</p>
Add/manage eGift Cards in mobile app Note if plastic cards can also be added.	<p>3 – You can add multiple cards to the app</p> <p>2 – You can add a card to the app</p> <p>1 – You can check a balance on the app</p> <p>0 – No card management via the app</p>
Time to receipt	<p>3 – Within 5 minutes of promised delivery</p> <p>2 – Within 15 minutes of promised delivery</p> <p>1 – Within 30 minutes of promised delivery</p> <p>0 – Greater than 30 minutes from promised delivery or no promised delivery time is available</p>

Extending Brand Engagement with Gift Cards	
Bonus Category – Award up to three points for promotions and behavior changes using gift cards	<p>3 – Currently offering on the home page a behavior changing promotion that uses gift cards as the reward (spend at least \$X on merchandise, buy a specific product, download the app, sign up for registry, enroll in loyalty program, apply for PLCC, etc.)</p> <p>2 – Currently offering a gift card promotion of buy one, get one on the home page</p> <p>1 – Currently offering a gift card promotion that is on the gift card landing page only</p> <p>0 – Doesn't meet criteria above</p>
Bonus category - Award up to three points for organizations that are innovating in the way they sell, use, deliver, etc. gift cards	<p>3 – Very innovative and unique and had the potential to have a big impact</p> <p>2 – Interesting and only a small number are doing something like this and it has the potential to have an impact</p> <p>1 – Different than the norm, but doesn't seem all that impactful</p> <p>0 – Not doing anything different than others</p>

Appendix C: About Our Sponsor



CashStar, the industry-leading provider of prepaid commerce solutions, enables the world's top retailers and restaurants to grow and innovate in the rapidly evolving retail environment. CashStar provides best-in-class capabilities, revenue-optimizing risk management and a client success model based on aligned growth, to optimize digital gifting and prepaid commerce experiences. CashStar powers more than 300 leading brands worldwide including Best Buy, Brookstone, Coach, Crate & Barrel, Dell, Dunkin' Donuts, Gap, lululemon athletica, Nine West, Office Depot, Petco, Pottery Barn, QVC, Sephora, Staples, Starbucks, The Cheesecake Factory, The Home Depot, Ulta Beauty and [Williams-Sonoma](#). To learn more, please visit www.cashstar.com, follow [@CashStar](#) or e-mail info@cashstar.com.

Appendix D: About RSR Research



Retail Systems Research (“RSR”) is the only research company run by retailers for the retail industry. RSR provides insight into business and technology challenges facing the extended retail industry, providing thought leadership and advice on navigating these challenges for specific companies and the industry at large. We do this by:

- **Identifying information** that helps retailers and their trading partners to build more efficient and profitable businesses;
- **Identifying industry issues** that solutions providers must address to be relevant in the extended retail industry;
- **Providing insight and analysis** about a broad spectrum of issues and trends in the Extended Retail Industry.

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