E-COMMERCE SUPERMARKET OPENS FIRST VIRTUAL STOREFRONT

This latest development in retail technology could change the face of supermarket shopping, offering customers a completely digital integrated experience.

Spotted: Technology in the retail sector has moved faster than perhaps any other industry. It certainly boasts the most noticeable changes, with innovations targeting both customers and businesses. This smart retail assistant, for example, makes finding the right fit for your clothes possible from home. Blockchain has also enabled customers to track the history of the products they buy. Yet the supermarket industry seems to be the one area where consumers are still drawn to a physical experience, as opposed to an online one. In response to this, Chinese retailer JD.com have modernised their supermarkets in the form of 7Fresh, a new, high-tech supermarket experience.

7Fresh is a system of advanced technology, designed to improve the customer's experience and the overall efficiency of the shop. It uses big data analytics to match its product range to customer desires. This is important, as 75 percent of the supermarket’s food is fresh and relies on a quick turnover. ‘Magic mirrors’, or digital screens, show customers the product’s history and nutritional value. This technology may soon evolve into automated shopping carts, which will guide consumers around the store, based on user data and predictions. A mobile app for use both in-store or to order deliveries to your home, is already in action.

The first 7Fresh store opened in autumn 2018 in Beijing’s Dazu Plaza Shopping Center, near JD.com’s own headquarters. The plan for 7Fresh is to launch across 1,000 stories in China throughout the next
three to five years. In comparison to Western markets, their physical store network is relatively weak, but this investment into smart stores could prove fruitful.

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