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The Tech 20

RAGTRADER REVEALS THE MOST TECH-SAVVY PLAYERS
IN THE AUSTRALIAN RETAIL INDUSTRY.

1 NICOLE SHEFFIELD WESFARMERS ONEDIGITAL MD

In mid-2022, Nicole Sheffield finalised the Wesfarmers' OneDigital arm, bringing together all the



Group's digitally-native assets including the Catch marketplace, OnePass membership and its analytics software OneData. As a result, the Group's retail divisions are driving deeper customer insights, stronger digital platforms and improved eCommerce capabilities. Wesfarmers now delivers more than 210 million digital interactions with customers per month through its overall digital asset portfolio, including brand websites, transactional and experience-based mobile apps, loyalty programs, chat and help features, social media platforms and how-to videos. As connectivity and engagement increased, the Group's share of sales to known customers grew to 55 per cent in the first half of the 2023 financial year.

2 ERICA BERCHTOLD THE ICONIC CEO

Berchtold and her team gave Australian fashion its first taste of the metaverse in November last year. The Iconic launched its first-ever non-fungible token (NFT) straight off the back of a metaverse-inspired runway

featuring models interacting with giant metamirrors. Berchtold says The Iconic pioneered online fashion when the internet - as we know it today - was really coming to life. Now, she says, we're at the beginning of a new era with web3. "We believe that the blockchain, metaverse, artificial intelligence, augmented reality and virtual reality are set to transform customer loyalty and the way Australians shop in the future, which is why we're leaning in to see what web3 might mean for The Iconic." Following the runway show, Berchtold says The



Iconic is now finetuning ideas such as a token-based loyalty program, metaversal search tools for shoppers and a presence in some virtual worlds.

3 TOM LEAK REBEL GM OF RETAIL

Since joining the brand in April 2020, Tom Leak has been infusing technology into Rebel's physical spaces to boost customer experience. Called rCX stores, the concept aims to deliver an elevated in-store experience with state-of-the-art technology, incorporating interactive zones such as faux-grass soccer pitches with integrated virtual gaming. And with 90% of sales involving a physical transaction across its parent company, Super Retail Group, Leak says he will continue expanding its physical store network. "Physical



retail stores allow Rebel to showcase our in-store experiences to inspire customers, offering the latest in global sporting looks and state-of-the-art technology, as well as incorporating interactive football and basketball zones, so customers can try before they buy." Rebel currently has 13 rCX stores, with plans to finalise two Rebel rCX store upgrades over the second half for FY23.

4 GARY STONE MYER GM OF RETAIL OPERATIONS

Gary Stone is currently on a quest to reduce Myer's transaction times by 20% and improve in-store efficiency. In an 18-month roadmap, him and his team will be adding new Zebra TC57X mobility devices and new NCR point of sale to all stores. The mobility devices are aimed at improving receiving and dispatch, stock take, online fulfilment and inventory enquiry/pricing, and the NCR POS registers are currently being rolled out with new software to enhance customer experience at the checkout. "Myer is embarking on our biggest transformation of store technology in recent history, ensuring a better experience for customers in store," Stone says.

5 IAN TAUNTON THE ATHLETE'S FOOT GM

The Athlete's Foot became the first Australian

retailer to launch a game on the online platform Roblox in a bid to capitalise on the back to school market. The game features three unique worlds where kids can connect, play and share through engaging recreations of the classroom and schoolyard environment. Ian Taunton says the reason his team launched this was because the back to school



period is peak trading for The Athlete's Foot. "We've always done a great job in finding ways to engage our parents, but we set ourselves a challenge to really connect with the children who are the end wearers of the shoes that are bought during back to school."

6 BROOKE EICHHORN EBAY HEAD OF LUXURY

Way back in 2021, eBay tapped into a now-worthwhile market, offering an Authenticity Guarantee program for sneakers in Australia. Two months later, and eBay saw a 51% increase in sneaker sales, with now more than 1.5 million sneakers being authenticated. Then, in May 2022, eBay extended to luxury handbags, where it then saw a new handbag listed on eBay every two minutes. Brooke



Eichhorn says the growing demand for luxury fashion means eBay could

extend the program to other categories, such as wallets. "In the United States, eBay's Authenticity Guarantee includes other categories, including trading cards and watches. Watch this space."

7 PAUL CONTI COUNTRY ROAD GROUP CUSTOMER LEAD

Nearly all of Country Road customers are multi-channel shoppers, utilising various mediums across online, in-store and through advertising and social media. Paul Conti is honing in on them by giving them more ways to shop, including the launch of a new app in late 2022. Paul Conti says the app already has a



roadmap of new features for the next year. This includes unifying all of its customers' receipts in one place; product recommendations and push notifications; a native wishlist that can be filled through browsing on the app or by scanning in-store; and real-time order tracking and Click & Collect notifications. "Our roadmap for the Country Road mobile app has been driven by the desire to add tangible, functional value for our customer—irrespective of where they choose to make their purchase," Conti says. "We expect the app in 12 months time to look very different from what it looks like today."

8 DION LEE FOUNDER AND DESIGNER



Non-fungible tokens (NFT) were once the pinnacle of the online art scene, but now fashion has made its mark.

Australian designer Dion Lee launched his first NFT clothing collection called 'Façade', the first in Australia to do so. The 550 unit drop consisted of five digital garments and two full looks. Each had been designed by Lee and then converted into 3D, universal format files by NFT artist Sam Walker. The venture is part of the New York-based designer's official launch into Web3 - a decentralised version of the internet - under the name 'Dion Lee Code.' Through the hosted NFT platform Bubblehouse, consumers were able to purchase Dion's full digital looks or individual digital clothing items.

9 DEAN MINTZ CETTIRE CEO

Launching into other markets is a tough feat, with new languages, currencies, and even customs making it tricky. But Australian luxury retailer Cettire made it look easy, and even reported a 101% growth in gross revenue because of its localisation strategy. In the first half of FY23, it deployed multi-language features via the release of a Chinese language site, and launched a Chinese language version of its mobile apps. Now, its emerging markets accounted for 25% of

gross revenue during the first half, compared with the prior corresponding period. "The H1 FY23 result highlights the potential of our unique business model as well as the benefits of our proprietary technology platform as we continue to scale globally." The Company also broadened its partnership with Klarna to selected European markets, including the UK, and has seen growth in both gross and sales revenue of 57% and 65% respectively on last year.

10 SARAH FLYNN CHAMPION ANZ GM

In late 2022, global sportswear brand Champion pioneered a new circular fashion collection with two Australian enterprises. The two enterprises, HoMie and BETA By STH BNK's Future From Waste Lab, heroed 50 unique pieces for the collaboration, including genderless hoodies and tees, developed by repurposing excess



and faulty garments from Champion. To top it all off, the trio collaboration capsule also featured near-field communication (NFC) tags with digital technology that allows consumers to scan and view a mini-documentary about the positive social and environmental impact of the collaboration. The joint venture also forms part of a longstanding partnership between the brands.

11 EVA OU SIGNAL BRANDS AUSTRALIA BRAND MANAGER



From the metaverse to now augmented reality, global retailer Steve Madden makes a mark on this Tech 20 list with its augmented reality campaign it launched in Melbourne, Australia. The campaign featured three celebrities auditioning Steve Madden shoes in a virtual universe called Maddenwood, which features large-scale posters in and around Steve Madden in Highpoint Shopping Centre, Victoria – Australia's highest performing Steve Madden standalone store – and in New York, Los Angeles and other key markets around the world. It was formed under the guide of Eva Ou, Signal Brands Australia brand manager for Guess, Steve Madden and Dolce Vita, alongside her coworker, marketing manager Casey Pascoe-Webbe.

12 SAM HOPGOOD RIP CURL LOYALTY MANAGER

Sam Hopgood and his team at Rip Curl revolutionised the loyalty space with a program that connects its customers' surfing data to their membership account. Through its own SearchGPS Surf watch, Rip Curl customers

can upload data to the app on waves caught, top speed and distance to earn points. These points can be transacted on products or donated to protecting the environment through Rip Curl's partnership with SurfAid. "We have never had a unified customer in our tech stack," Rip Curl loyalty manager Sam Hopgood says. "It's always been siloed between e-commerce and our bricks and mortar stores, so one main goal is to bring those two environments together from a membership and data perspective. For the first time, all our customers will be connected to the one ecosystem where we can create a single view of the customer and in turn deliver personalised communications and create a greater customer experience for our brand advocates."

13 SIMON LOCK THE ORDRE GROUP CEO

The future of luxury fashion authentication is made all the more interesting thanks to Simon Lock's strategic investment in deep-tech company Veracity Protocol (VP). VP offers an optical standard that enables physical products to be linked to their digital identity by scanning their unique material structure (digital fingerprint) using computer



vision and neural networks. VP's non-invasive optical standard is an integral

element of The Ordre Group's new Web3.0 authentication and verification product Authentique, which is being applied to the fashion industry. Lock says the venture will increase authentication opportunities in the fashion industry. "The Authentique App developed with Veracity Protocol is revolutionary in combining blockchain, NFT utility and visual recognition technology to authenticate and verify luxury products to help combat the global trade in counterfeits," Lock says.

14 HOLLY MURPHY SHEIKE HEAD OF ECOMM AND MARKETING



How do you cut through the noise in the digital space to target your customer effectively?

Holly Murphy knows this after Sheike's customer base flocked to the online space during the pandemic. Due to this, Sheike invested in the omni-channel experience, including automating its site merchandising and digitising its return process. The drive for these initiatives are buoyed by CDP, which Murphy puts down as a key area for Sheike's omni-channel future. The goal is to personalise the brand for the customer, which Murphy considers a "big thing" for the brand. "I see it being a key opportunity for Sheike, and for the online team in particular, over the next year."

15 JOSH WILLOUGHBY SPORTITUDE GM



In September last year, Sportitude revised one of its south Australian stores

to include an assessment treadmill designed for beginner and intermediate runners. The fitting tool has a large, synchronised digital screen that utilises a 3D camera as well as "force plates" to capture specific and highly detailed running movements. The SA store is the only one in the Southern Hemisphere using this technology. GM Josh Willoughby said the data produced helps staff provide personalised shoe recommendations. "We understand that Sportitude was the first location to offer the Video Gait Analysis in South Australia. Utilising innovative technology to help our customers find the best fit is very important to us."

16 ROSS POULAKIS HARROLD'S MD

Harrold's became one of the very few (possibly the first) fashion retailers in Australia to accept cryptocurrency payments in-store and online. In-store crypto payments at Harrold's Sydney and Melbourne boutiques will be made via a hosted page solution that contains a QR code, allowing

clients to then execute the payment from their own crypto wallet. The payment service was launched in partnership with RelayPay. Harrold's now accepts payments in a myriad of cryptocurrencies, including Bitcoin, Ethereum, USDT and USDC. MD Ross Poulakis says Harrold's has always been about community, experiential shopping, and innovation.

17 KRISTY CHONG MODIBODI FOUNDER

Kristy's brand Modibodi has hit the ground running since being acquired by Stockholm-based hygiene company Essity for \$140 million in July 2022. In fact, a



month after being sold, Modibodi launched an undergarment recycling initiative as

part of its plan to reach a carbon negative target by 2023. The pilot program is designed to monitor participation, learn about the age of product being returned, and return volumes. Modibodi head of sustainability and public affairs Sarah Forde says it will not only keep product out of landfill, but it will provide the brand with data to continue conversations with the recycling industry.

18 IAN HILL ADELAIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AGENCY MD There's now one Australian city that has its own dedicated



metropolitan-wide marketplace. Through extensive planning and insight, Ian Hill and his team at AEDA launched byADL, an eCommerce website that brings together more than 60 city retailers and more than 1800 items - which is growing. Hill says the new citywide digital marketplace is a game changer. "Stores on byADL are predominantly small businesses and boutiques, many of which have until now relied on shoppers visiting them in-store. Most also have minimal or no online sales presence." AEDA partnered with South Australian-owned and operated businesses Arcadier (technology) and The Courier App (logistics) to develop and operate byADL.

19 JEREMY TAYLOR YD HEAD OF MARKETING AND CREATIVE

As consumers yearned more for physical shopping across 2022, Jeremy Taylor at YD saw this as an opportunity to rebalance its physical and digital advertising in the largest out-of-home advertising campaign for the brand since 2019. YD's 'Get The Suit' campaign saw assets showcased across 40 locations



throughout Australia, as well as through digital advertising. It also included a

live activation where actual suits can be 'plucked' from billboards, as well as given to lucky winners in YD's 100+ stores 'Willy Wonka-style', through golden tickets inside specially marked suits. "At a time where online shopping has become the norm, we decided to take a slightly different approach to our favourite time of the year; by being more physically present than ever."

20 JONATHAN SALFIELD AFENDS CO-FOUNDER

Afends is on a mission to produce, design and manufacture its future collections entirely in Australia by growing hemp on its



100 acre farm in Northern NSW. It is also preparing to diversify income streams by

being a major supplier of hemp to the Northern Hemisphere. Currently, Afends is in a research and development phase, with the process towards seed-to-skin taking time. Co-founder Jonathan Salfield said it is possible for Afends to grow really high quality hemp in Australia. "And it is possible to export that to markets like Vietnam, China, India, that need hemp to make into textiles. "Most of those big countries that manufacture a lot of the fashion here in Australia, like China, they're in the other hemisphere." Salfield said there is a desire in the Northern Hemisphere to buy hemp from Australia. 