

## Starbucks Reveals Digital Innovations and Re-imagined Store Designs

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Starbucks recently announced its plans for some new and exciting innovations to more than 2,000 of the company's district managers at the Starbucks Leadership Experience conference in Seattle. A few different customer initiatives were also discussed at the conference to enhance the Starbucks Experience in the upcoming 2014 holiday.

Howard Schultz, chair, president, and CEO of Starbucks Coffee Company, states that there was a significant decrease in foot traffic at their stores last holiday season, a trend which accompanied an increase in online shopping. The current company CEO also states that the decreased foot traffic in their various retail locations throughout the country has led them to come up with a number of innovations, some of which are digital, to get back some of their paying customers in the new year and beyond. Starting last winter, Starbucks began to rethink the holiday experience for customers at one of the busiest shopping times of the year. While the company wanted to keep certain traditions, such as their trademark Starbucks cups, they also wanted to make new and unique products available to shoppers.

The Chest Praline Latte is just one of the new innovations that Starbucks has introduced to customers, the first new holiday handcrafted drink in several years. Apart from this new drink, Starbucks will be offering the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Starbucks Christmas Blend and will also release a completely unique set of Starbucks Cards in a complete collection. The coffee retailer is also launching an opportunity for numerous Starbucks customers to win a card that would provide them with Starbucks coffee for life; the winning customers would simply swipe their card or pay with a mobile device.

Starbucks is hoping to reenergize their customer base by offering a lifetime worth of Starbucks coffee as well as introducing a number of new innovations, some of which will be in their brick and mortar retail stores and others that will be online/digital. Mobile ordering and paying is another one of the innovations that Starbucks is planning to offer before the end of the year, allowing customers to place orders in advance as well as paying for their orders with their mobile devices. This new innovation has come about as a result of the proliferation of smartphones as well as tablets and other mobile devices that use Wi-Fi.

Customers who use their mobile devices will find that this coffee company is offering some great new values and benefits with their loyalty program. This loyalty program, called My Starbucks Rewards, delivers a number of relevant rewards to its customers, and they are available at their fingertips with the touch of a screen. Some of the benefits associated with this loyalty program

include access to exclusive events, including the Holiday Share Event, as well as sneak previews of certain new products. Starbucks will open the very first interactive Starbucks Reserve Roastery and Tasting Room on December 5, making available their fairly popular small-lot Starbucks Reserve coffees.