

## Interactive Display Technologies for Retail Environments



**Jared Schiffman - CEO**

PERCH is a startup intent on revolutionizing retail by introducing a series of game changing interactive display technologies. We believe there is value in holding a product in one's hands, and in simultaneously having a world of information at one's fingertips. We envision a future in which these two experiences are merged into one coherent, enjoyable and productive shopping experience. Only by acknowledging the importance of both domains will we succeed in creating the future of retail.

**Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine**

**CEOCFO: Mr. Schiffman, what is the concept at PERCH?**

**Mr. Schiffman:** PERCH is about creating interactive displays to revolutionize the retail environment. Our approach is centered around creating an experience that combines interaction with products and interaction with digital media.

**CEOCFO: Would you give us an example or two of how it works?**

**Mr. Schiffman:** We have created multiple shoe displays for a variety of different retailers, and in that case, the interaction is very simple. The customer comes by the table and picks up the shoe. When they approach, they see imagery that the brand or the retailer wants to display. When they pick up a shoe, they are then presented with information and media about that shoe. Having seen that content, they can then touch one of several buttons to learn more. They might want to see the size information or they might want to see additional colors or a video of someone wearing that shoe.

**CEOCFO: Are you targeting high-end retailers or mass retailers?**

**Mr. Schiffman:** We are working with some very large high-end retailers at the moment, but in the long term we are interested in deploying this across the spectrum.

**CEOCFO: I could see it in a high-end store, but if you have hundreds or thousands of shoppers, how are you able to control the use of the system?**

**Mr. Schiffman:** The retail space is a busy and chaotic environment, and that is the reality of retail. That said, we have witnessed people using PERCH at some very busy stores, and in general, things do tend to stay in place. While things might not always look perfect, it is always functional. You cannot break the technology--if you do not put the shoe back in the exact right place, it will still work. Our feeling is that it is better to have an immediate display that is still communicating even if things are not arranged in the exact perfect way that you want them to be.

**CEOCFO: Do you work with the client on what they should be doing and how they should be acting with the media or do they typically know what they want?**

**Mr. Schiffman:** We are very collaborative and very hands on. There are some clients who would like their hand held through the process. We are happy to do so. There are other clients who know exactly what they want, and then we follow their lead.

**CEOCFO: *Has a similar concept been tried in the past?***

**Mr. Schiffman:** Surprisingly not. There have obviously been a lot of interactive displays that have been produced in stores, and there are things that do what we do from the analytics perspective. I think we are the only ones who have combined this interactive experience with products.

**CEOCFO: *Are there particular types of products or types of stores that would benefit more from what you do or that you see as a more natural fit?***

**Mr. Schiffman:** The target areas where we are seeing the most activity in right now are accessories, shoes, consumer electronics and fragrances. It tends to be things that you can pick up and feel, things that have a good story behind them or have features that are not obvious from looking at them. When you look at a cell phone or a camera today, it is not always so obvious what the new feature is this year versus last year. That is a story that the brands really want to tell.

**“For 70 years, we have had advertising that is designed to get a customer to go to a store and buy a product, and then the retailer or brand learns about the effectiveness of that advertising via the sales data that comes out a month later. With PERCH, we are able to take advertising that previously existed outside the store and put it right next to the product. We gain immediate insights into customer behaviors and simultaneously create delightful, engaging experiences for consumers.” - Jared Schiffman**

**CEOCFO: *With so much potential, where do you focus your marketing efforts and how do you reach potential customers?***

**Mr. Schiffman:** We are looking to move into more international projects beyond the US and we are also really trying to focus on utilizing PERCH beyond one off campaigns. It really is designed to be a fixture in a store that you can update on a weekly or monthly basis when new products and new campaigns come in or new products launch, which is all the time in the retail space.

**CEOCFO: *Was there much doubt [about the product working]?***

**Mr. Schiffman:** We are a startup, and we are small right now. I think you see a lot of things online these days where there is a video of some technology, and if you actually studied it you would realize that bits of it are fake or something like that. I think people might have suspected that it was just a concept piece. Now that we have a track record and demonstrations of PERCH across a wide spectrum of retailers, people now trust us to go beyond pilots into 20, 30 or 50 stores.

**CEOCFO: *What were the challenges in getting the technology in place or was it easy once you got the concept?***

**Mr. Schiffman:** We had a working prototype very quickly – maybe within six weeks or two months. The real difficulty is taking that technology and making it easy to adapt and update. At the beginning, anything we wanted to change required custom coding. Now, a lot of the software has matured, we have templates, and we have a lot of key parts in place such that we can execute things very quickly.

**CEOCFO: *Once a system is in place, what is required on the customer’s end?***

**Mr. Schiffman:** In store, the only thing that is required is for the store staff to put the products in place when a new PERCH campaign is loaded. This is a familiar process for stores, even in the absence of technology.

On the corporate side, we usually work with the digital marketing teams to produce the PERCH display. It’s a collaborative effort and resembles the process one would go through to build a very simple website.

Everything else is handled by us. We can login and update the PERCH units remotely and handle all support issues, if and when they come up.

**CEOCFO: *Tell us about the analytics that you offer.***

**Mr. Schiffman:** We created the PERCH Cloud, which stores all the analytics that are generated from each location. Clients can log in, they can see every one of their PERCH units, and they can see on a day-by-day and product-by-product basis how people are interacting with PERCH and with their products.

**CEOCFO: *What surprised you as you have developed the concept, product and service?***

**Mr. Schiffman:** There are many things that are surprising on a daily basis. When we began the process, we really thought that the people we needed to speak to were store designers, because it seemed like an obvious group that would be interested in this sort of thing. It turns out that while store designers are interested, the people who are really making the decisions to put PERCH in stores tend to be the marketing department.

It's also a surprising thing just watching people use PERCH. I think we have learned a lot in terms of what people respond to. To be honest, when we first began, it was very literal. It was about product information and photos from online. What we have realized over the course of the last year and a half is that the things that adults respond to are actually very similar to the things that three year olds respond to – bright colors, delightful animations and playful bits of sound.

**CEOCFO: *Put it all together for our readers. Why pay attention to PERCH Interactive?***

**Mr. Schiffman:** I think what we are doing is unique for three reasons: No other technology combines sensing of product interaction, presentation of digital media and reporting of analytics all in one package. I think it is a powerful combination that surprisingly has not existed before.

For 70 years, we have had advertising that is designed to get a customer to go to a store and buy a product, and then the retailer or brand learns about the effectiveness of that advertising via the sales data that comes out a month later. With PERCH, we are able to take advertising that previously existed outside the store and put it right next to the product. We gain immediate insights into customer behaviors and simultaneously create delightful, engaging experiences for consumers.

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**BIO:** Jared Schiffman lives at the intersection of design, computer science and education. Recently named a "Digital Maverick" by DETAILS magazine, Jared's work fuses the physical world with the digital world and plays with relationship between the two. He is the founder of Perch Interactive Inc, a startup intent on revolutionizing the retail environment, starting with its first product PERCH. He is also a Principal at Potion, an award-winning interactive design and technology firm founded in 2005. Jared is an Adjunct Professor at NYU and holds two degrees from MIT.

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# PERCH

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