



NFC labels have the potential to transform customer experiences — here's how

[Americans look at their phone as much as 96 times a day](#). Spaced out evenly over the course of a day, that amounts to once every 10 minutes.

At this very second, there's a good chance your target consumers' have their smartphones on-hand, and that device has the power to transform how your brand engages with them.

So, what is your brand doing to harness that power?

For many, the answer is simple: "Nothing."

But for those willing to invest in near-field communication (NFC) labels to reshape customer journeys, there is a blue ocean of opportunity to drive purchases, retention and loyalty with today's mobile-first consumer.

And many organizations across industries — retailers, breweries, vineyards, coffee shops and more — are already seizing it.

In this article, we'll show you what's possible with NFC technology by:

- Giving a quick primer on how NFC labels can transform customer experiences
- Highlighting five examples of how brands are leveraging NFC labels to transform the

consumer experience, detailing the experience from the customer's perspective and the benefit to the brand

The technology behind digital customer experiences

[NFC labels](#) are labels equipped with an NFC chip, enabling secure, two-way communication between the label and an NFC-ready smartphone. (For a full explanation of what NFC labels are, [check out this guide to smart labeling](#)).

Essentially, NFC smart labels turn any physical product into a uniquely identifiable asset in the cloud. When a consumer taps their smartphone to an NFC label, you know exactly which surface or product they tapped. And you can also use the customer's unique device ID to track their engagement with a label over time or understand how many unique taps are made on a particular NFC-enabled package per day.

When [paired with robust cloud infrastructure to guide the rules of the digital experience](#), NFC labels transform any surface into a smart, interactive experience:

- Tap the label on a luxury product to authenticate it
- Tap a drink coaster in a restaurant to order food or request your server
- Tap the label on an empty hand sanitizer dispenser to notify staff that it needs to be replaced
- Tap the label on a consumable product (like wine or high-end cosmetics) to reorder via e-commerce channels
- Tap the menu at a bar to retrieve the digital drink menu

To show you what's possible — and the tangible value NFC smart labels promise to your brand — let's dive into a few real-world use cases. As we do, keep in mind that these are but a few examples of the limitless possibilities for your brand to apply this technology. Quite literally, anything is possible.

Example 1: Virtual tastings for VIP club members

From the consumer's perspective

You pick up a six-pack of your favorite beer and, as you take your first sip, you notice a callout on the label to tap your phone to access more information about their brand. After spending a few minutes watching videos and reading about the ingredients they use, you sign up for their club membership.

They send you a welcome package with NFC-enabled swag. You tap your phone against the NFC chip and notice that a virtual happy hour is happening the following Thursday, so you sign up.

During the happy hour, you learn more about a sour you've never tried. The other members are singing its praises, so you decide to tap on the NFC label on the last beer in your fridge and order a

case of it for delivery.

The benefits for your brand

- **Build customer loyalty from far away** — On-premise consumption is no longer an option in many places, which can spell disaster for breweries, wineries and distilleries that rely on tasting room traffic to survive. At the same time, direct-to-consumer delivery of alcohol (including wine, spirits and beer) is [on the rise](#). Play into this trend — and develop a smart, mobile VIP membership experience and host virtual events. These virtual experiences could be the key to driving engagement and building loyalty during this time.
- **Drive remote product sales** — Remove friction from the purchasing process by allowing consumers to easily order or re-order your products by simply tapping on the smart label.

Example 2: Contactless ordering

From the consumer's perspective

You enter a coffee shop, find an empty table and sit down. You tap your phone to the NFC chip on the tabletop and the digital menu appears. You order coffee with two creams and wait. A few short minutes later, an employee walks directly to you, hands you your coffee in a reusable cup and you're on your merry way.

The benefits for your brand

- **Contactless ordering and payment** — With consumers more aware of keeping their distance than ever, no one wants to wait in lines or exchange cash directly with a clerk. Contactless ordering offers a safe alternative as the world returns to its new normal.
- **Easily re-order by tapping your phone to your cup** — If your cup is reusable, and has an NFC-enabled label, next time the guest comes, they can tap their phone against the cup to order without waiting in line.

Example 3: Gamified virtual tours and tap-to-book reservations

From the consumer's perspective

You arrive at a department store in one of New York City's hottest shopping destinations. And this isn't a normal department store. It has enough to keep you and your family occupied all day — multiple stories of salons, restaurants and shopping displays.

Upon entry, you're given a [temporary tattoo decal that's NFC-enabled](#). You tap your phone to your arm and unlock virtual tours, real-time cocktail delivery service (no waiting at the bar!) and games you can play to earn points and win prizes.

You tap your tattoo to schedule a blowout at the salon, while your husband takes your children on a virtual tour of the facility. You reunite for a dinner reservation you made by tapping your tattoo. The

restaurant tables are NFC-enabled, too, so you tap the tabletop anytime you need your server's attention.

And as you're on your way out, your husband mentions that he and the kids won a free dinner by playing the mobile game — and you begin planning your next visit.

The benefits for your brand

- **Increasing the number of services purchased** — After one luxury retail brand deployed a digitized customer experience strategy relying on wearable NFC decals, [20% of visitors were purchasing services](#).
- **Creating a seamless guest experience** — From shopping to dining to indulging, every real-life experience is seamlessly augmented by the mobile-first experience. Guests can simply tap the wearable sticker on their arm to access any info or service — and by making their experience easier, it's also much more enjoyable.
- **Encouraging repeat visits** — By gamifying the experience, and offering rewards like free meals, customers are encouraged to return and redeem their prizes.

Example 4: A more enjoyable Napa Valley vineyard experience

From the consumer's perspective

Imagine for a moment you've taken a weekend getaway to Napa Valley. It's September and the tasting bar is flooded with tourists, sipping the day away.

You tap your phone to an NFC-enabled coaster on the bar to access the digitized tasting menu — which educates you on the grapes in the wines, allows you to meet the winemakers and enables you to vote for your favorite wines. You purchase a glass of wine and, to get away from the noise, wander out to the garden.

Before you know it, you're ready for a refill. So, you tap your phone to the NFC chip on the armrest of your lounge chair and are able to request a bottle without leaving the company of your friends.

Sitting in your hotel room later, you can't remember the name of your favorite wine. So you tap the NFC label on the coaster you left with, pull up your notes from the tasting and order a case to be delivered to your home.

Months after your delivery arrives, you crack open your last bottle. Thinking fondly back on the experience, you tap your phone to its NFC-enabled label and order another case.

The benefits for your brand

- **Driving post-visit purchases and club memberships** — Since each “tap” with an NFC-enabled label is tied to a particular device, each time your customers tap a physical asset — like a digital tasting menu or NFC-enabled package — you can serve them customer-specific

information. After tapping, they can access their unique tasting menu notes and ratings and re-order their favorite wines.

- **Telling their unique brand story** — By tapping smart coasters and labels, guests access videos and stories, allowing them to “meet” the award-winning winemakers behind the wines they’re tasting and learn more about what sets this vineyard apart.
- **Analytics on consumer behavior** — With paper menus, it’s impossible to get insight on which wines visitors enjoy the most. You can “digitize” the menu by encouraging guests to tap their coasters, allowing you to access rich, real-time insights on the patrons of the vineyard — which wines they like most, how watching videos of the winemakers influences purchase decisions, how many people venture out to the garden and how many stay in the bar. This information can be used in the future to fine-tune the vineyard experience to make it more enjoyable for the guests and profitable for the brand.
- **Brand protection** — Counterfeit wine is a pervasive problem affecting luxury brands, and each fraudulent bottle sold is a huge safety and image risk for the brand. NFC allows you to authenticate the wine is real, down to the unique identification code for that particular bottle.

Example 5: Instant product customization and ordering

From the consumer’s perspective

You enter a shoe store, and eye the hundreds of sneakers lining the walls. None of them are quite what you’re looking for and, as you begin to turn around, you notice a display in the back. It says that you can customize your own, one-of-a-kind shoe.

A store employee approaches you as you walk toward the display and says that all you have to do is tap the shoe you like most to begin customizing it. You grab your favorite pair, tap your phone against the NFC-enabled tag hanging from the laces and a landing page pops up. As you click through your color choices on your phone, you settle on a colorful, illustrated pattern. Then you place your order.

The benefits for your brand

- **Accurately attribute e-commerce sales to brick-and-mortar stores** — Each NFC tag is assigned not only to the shoe (so the right page populates when a consumer taps it), but also to the store. This means all e-commerce sales from this campaign can be accurately attributed to the right store.
- **Differentiate your brand by offering personalized experiences *and* products** — This NFC application plays perfectly into the [mass personalization consumer trend](#). 41% of consumers are interested in buying completely unique products and 32% reported they find designing custom products themselves fun, according to a survey from Deloitte.

Go from thinking about “what’s always been done” to “what’s possible”

And the answer to that question — what is possible with NFC labels? — can be summed up with one

word: Anything.

The above examples only begin to scratch the surface of the near-infinite applications for your brand to drive efficiencies, consumer engagement and sales with NFC labels.

If you want to learn what's possible for *your* brand, [then reach out to our team](#). With 20 years of experience manufacturing smart labels for some of the largest consumer goods brands, we have the expertise and industry connections to make any idea a reality.

Or, if you'd like to learn more about smart labeling technology, [download this guide](#). It will walk you through the types of RFID and NFC labels, as well as other use cases for deploying this technology.