

RESEARCH

## 83pc of affluent consumers shopped online in last three months: study

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By ELIZABETH ZELESNY

Affluent consumers are increasingly turning to the Internet to research brands and products, form connections and make purchases, according to a study from Unity Marketing.

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The study found that 83 percent of luxury shoppers made online purchases in the last three months. This number rose from 68 percent from an identical survey fielded in the same time frame one year ago.

“We conducted the same survey from 2010 to 2011, but we added mobile in this years survey,” said Pam Danziger, president of Unity Marketing, Stephens, PA. “In 2010, the average number of hours the consumers shopped online was four hours.

“In a year, it has grown to five hours,” she said. “From four hours to five hours, thats a pretty significant increase.

“Gifting was the No. 2 increase in terms of what people were doing on the internet year-over-year.”

**Unity's** study surveyed 1,237 affluent consumers who use the Internet, social media and mobile devices, with average incomes slightly more than \$300,000 per year. The survey

was conducted this month.

## Importance of mobile

Mobile devices are increasingly important for luxury brands to connect with affluents, especially young ones between ages 24-44. This age group uses mobile applications at a rate two-times more than mature affluents between ages 45-70.

Connecting with friends via social networking Web sites ranked No. 1 as the most popular use for mobile devices.

Researching restaurants and getting news and information about local businesses and events are the second and third most important, respectively.

The report includes an in-depth look at how consumers use their mobile devices for various reasons.

## Findings

Ms. Danziger says luxury marketers should be embracing the Internet as a 24/7 opportunity to sell, provide information and form relationships, all without the overhead associated with a bricks-and-mortar store.

According to the survey, getting coupons and special offers is the top reason why affluent consumers friend luxury brands on Facebook.

This is an essential way for marketers to hook affluent consumers and convert them from visitor to friend. Affluents want a tangible benefit, such as coupons.

They also friend brands because they are existing customers and want to connect.

Affluent consumers like to find out about and learn about new products, interact with the luxury shopping community and give feedback.

Since 2010, affluent consumers are less interested in friending brands to learn more about the brand.

According to the 2011 study, they are more interested in learning about new products offered by the brand.

"Luxury brands were so slow to get on the Internet," Ms. Danziger said. "I don't know how they are going to deal with this new media.

"I think its calls for them to understand who is using it, why they are, and break through all the app-noise," she said. "The biggest challenge is how to become top-of-mind."

## Final take

*Pam Danziger discusses why luxury consumers matter*

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