

RESEARCH

Checking product inventory goes mobile this holiday season: report

November 4, 2015



Image courtesy of Michael Kors

By CHANTAL TODE

A new survey reveals the sophistication of mobile shoppers, who are not simply planning to research products via their devices during the upcoming holiday season, but also to engage in an array of activities, from creating shopping lists to checking product inventory.

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It should not be a surprise that the 2015 GPShopper/comScore Holiday Mobile Shopping survey found 54 percent of mobile shoppers plan to research products from their phone this holiday season. However, some may be surprised to learn that 35 percent plan to create shopping lists and 24 percent plan to check product inventory from their phones.

"The most surprising finding to me was that nearly a quarter of mobile shoppers rely on their phones to check product inventory status in stores," said Bill Siwicki, vice president of mobile strategy and research at [GPShopper](#). "That's not a simple usage like locating a store or browsing products or even purchasing a product, for that matter.

"Product inventory status is a very helpful tool, and not the first thing that comes to mind for many consumers," he said. "The fact that about a quarter of shoppers now use this feature shows how savvy mobile shoppers are becoming in their use of their phones to make the most of their time while shopping.

"And I believe we will see more and more shoppers embracing mobile tools that ease both online shopping on phones and in-store shopping."

Retailers' apps

Key findings from the report include that 83 percent of mobile shoppers will use their phone for holiday shopping.

Increasingly, mobile shopping is about purchasing, with two-thirds of these consumers making purchases on their phones.

Applications will be a big part of the mobile shopping experience this holiday season, with 55 percent of mobile shoppers planning to use their favorite retailer's mobile app to track deals and prices. GPShopper reports that 75 percent of mobile shoppers have their favorite retailer's mobile app on their phones and two-thirds of these have had the app on their phones for six months or longer.

Screen Shot 2015-11-02 at 1.50.02 PM

Shoppers will use their phones in a number of ways to engage with retailers: 54 percent plan to research products; 46 percent to compare product prices in-store; 39 percent to communicate with friends about gifts; 35 percent to create shopping lists; 31 percent to seek product information in-store; 28 percent to find stores, and 24 percent to check product inventory.

Black Friday deals

In terms of the site or app features that mobile shoppers plan to use this holiday season, mobile coupons lead at 49 percent, followed by customer reviews at 46 percent, loyalty account 37 percent, store locator 35 percent, bar code scanner 29 percent, product recommendations 24 percent and local inventory status 22 percent.

When it comes to engage with their favorite retailer's app, 42 percent of mobile shoppers plan to shop for deals rather than go to the store; 47 percent plan to shop for Black Friday or Cyber Monday deals; 47 percent plan to buy gifts for others and have them shipped, and 55 percent plan to rack deals and prices.

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"The big news for merchants is that consumers are probably more omnichannel than they are," Mr. Siwicki said.

"The survey results reveal that mobile shoppers are using their phones as personal shopping assistants and making robust use of phones to help shop across channels, especially in stores."

"Retailers clearly should be proceeding with the understanding that mobile devices have never been more important to holiday shoppers," he said. "The importance of mobile devices to online and store shopping grows every year.

"There are about 20 million more shoppers armed with smartphones this holiday season compared with last holiday season, according to research firm eMarketer. And phones have become the command center for consumers' lives."

Final Take

Chantal Tode is senior editor on Mobile Commerce Daily, New York