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Mobile is most popular method for researching products: report

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Mobile outshines other methods of product research

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Mobile is now more popular than in-store browsing or window shopping as a method for researching products before making a purchase, with 52.8 percent of consumers doing so on a mobile browser and 19.6 percent in an application, according to a new survey from SessionM.

In comparison, 48.3 percent use a desktop or laptop computer to research products while just 27.5 percent research products in stores. Other key findings include that a majority of consumers are now making purchases on their smartphones, with 63 percent having made a purchase via their smartphone in the past 30 days.

"The big news is the primacy of mobile to commerce," said Patrick Reynolds, vice president of marketing at **SessionM**. "Browsing one's phone is now more prevalent than window shopping.

"The growth of the direct relationship between brands and the customer via mobile is breathtaking," he said. "Ten percent of those surveyed have more than ten branded apps."

SessionM surveyed more than 5,300 consumers about their mobile use, brand communications and shopping preferences on smartphones.

Driving sales

Of those who have made a purchase from their smartphone in the past 30 days, 33 percent report having made one to three purchases while 30 percent made four or more purchases.

The survey also found growing interest in receiving push notifications from brands, with nearly half saying they would like to receive these messages from their favorite brands. However, the tolerated frequency for push notifications varies, with 34.1 percent wanting only one message per month or less while 13.8 percent would like them once per week or more.

Push notifications are proving effective at driving sales, with 30 percent having made a purchase sometime in the past three months as a result of a push notification.

Branded apps are still an important way of reaching consumers as 31.5 percent report having one to three branded apps on their smartphone, 38.5 percent have four or more and 10.3 percent have more than 10 branded apps.

Getting personal

Consumers are also looking for personalization in their marketing communication. SessionM found that 17.4 percent of consumers are open to seeing ads when the advertised product is relevant to them while 12.2 percent are open to ads when they come from a company the consumers like or trust.

With mobile the number one way that consumers are researching products, this means that marketers need to be strategic with tactics such as personalization and technologies such as push notifications to be successful, per SessionM.

"I think the data show that mobile has evolved beyond where is the nearest...?' to be absolutely foundational for actual sales," Mr. Reynolds said. "Customers aren't just 'show rooming,' they're transacting.

"Mobile is a principle point of contact for the relationship between brands and their customers," he said. "We're way past responsive design and well into 'responsive marketing.'

"The customer is in your app, right now. What are you going to do about it?"

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