

SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

Are social media buy buttons on the way out?

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Twitter's Buy Button

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Twitter's plans to scale back its buy button alludes to a stalemate for retail on social media as consumers fail to adopt native shopping experiences, although Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest could still prevail.

While Twitter is trying to establish itself more as a image-enabled social media platform, its consumer behavior is rooted heavily in text-based posts where direct purchasing ability is less likely to flourish. Other social platforms with heavier focuses on images may be more successful with buy buttons, but dynamic product ads offer the most potential when it comes to retail-enabled social pushes.

"While buy buttons did not suit well for the setup of the Twitter platform, other social platforms like Facebook and Instagram may be better equipped to cater to consumers who demand more product information to make an informed decision," Sara Berg, content manager at [Shotfarm](#). "Image-focused platforms mimic the feel of many online stores, and playing on the aesthetics of visual content is critical to consumers.

"For Pinterest, Facebook and Instagram, each channel is product image focused, which helps consumers in the buying process," she said. "The current model of social platforms is well known for social networking, but most consumers have never considered a social platform as a source for retail purchases.

"If anything, social platforms are better suited for driving awareness of products, rather than direct sales. At the end of the day, consumer's confidence in the security and accuracy of products advertising on Twitter was too low to be successful."

Buy button back down

While shopping online, users expect a wide range of product information at their fingertips to help them make an informed decision but social media buy buttons lack these details. Online sales are significantly impacted by the amount of product information viewable with 95 percent of consumers claiming this is importance when making a purchasing decision according to the 2015/2016 Shotfarm Product information Report.

image-app-card-screenshots-5

Dynamic product ads on Twitter

Dynamic product ads tap into the substantial audience that social platforms provide by sparking their interests, but then offering a call to action in which interested users can learn more about the product and make an informed decision.

Dynamic effectiveness

Twitter recently noted to shareholders that its dynamic product ads see an average of double the amount of click-through rates and conversions rather than traditional sponsored posts. The social media's buy button card is currently still in existence but there are no team members currently working on them.

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Twitter's Buy Button

Consumers are likely uncomfortable with Twitter's direct purchase experience as it also lacks a user experience that resembles a commerce-enabled platform.

"Twitter's recent decision to scale back the buy button seems indicative of a larger struggle that social sites are facing generating traction for social commerce," said Laura Sossong, senior consultant at Boston Retail Partners. "Though social media has made tremendous gains in popularity, finding new ways to generate revenue and monetize on offerings has been a taxing trial and error process for all companies."

"From a user experience perspective, the real-time, feed-based Twitter platform lacks the natural look and feel of a traditional commerce platform," she said. "Shoppers lack of comfort with buy buttons and their concern about data security has contributed to their hesitation in adopting this technology."

"Social commerce platforms must strike a balance between providing ease of purchasing while at the same time preserving the aesthetic and security elements of traditional e-commerce sites. Until then, use of dynamic product advertising will likely offer more investment potential for social sites."

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