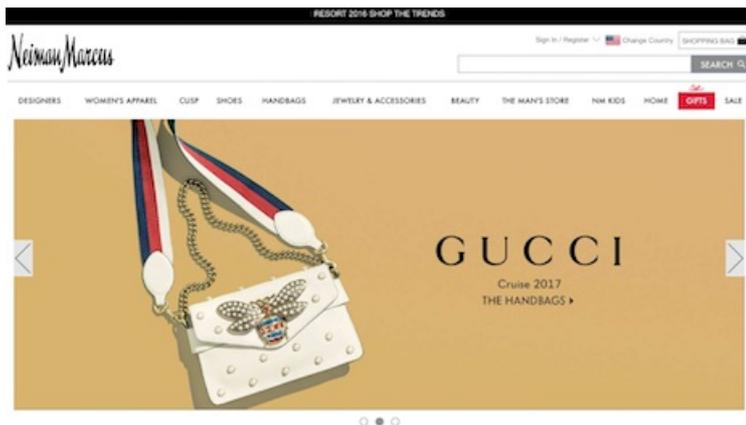


RESEARCH

## How to get mcommerce search right as ecommerce turns mobile first

November 8, 2016



Neiman Marcus makes search a top priority on its PC site, giving even more prominence on mobile. Image courtesy of Neiman Marcus

By [Pavan Vilas Sondur](#)

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Mobile commerce has reached its tipping point. Mobile-optimized sites and shopping applications are no longer a nice-to-have for online retailers, but an absolute must to grow profitability and GMV from mobile channels.

This is because ecommerce has grown to be mobile-first, with the majority of users opting to shop on mobile devices over desktop, accounting for 61 percent of total ecommerce traffic.

However, this is not the complete picture when it comes to understanding this shift.

It turns out that, despite the significant shift to mobile, conversions are lower by 63 percent for mobile as compared with desktop shopping.

Food for thought

By analyzing the site search behavior of mobile shoppers across 500 million sessions and transactions worth \$1.1 billion, we sought to understand what factors are specifically holding mobile back.

It turns out that mobile shoppers are indeed adding items to shopping carts, but ultimately not placing orders.

The share of cart additions on mobile has grown 2.6 fold in the last two years nearly on par with desktop at 43 percent but order volumes remain much lower as compared to desktop.

Mobile users are choosing to add products to cart, but ultimately not completing transactions.

Perhaps this is due, in part, to the fact that the nature of mobile shopping is biased towards short, snackable sessions.

With constant notifications and alerts drawing shoppers away to messaging, calls and other apps, attention spans on mobile are very short.

Our research indicates that mobile shoppers browse in multiple, separate sessions for this reason, with repeat sessions clocking in at 43 percent shorter in duration compared with desktop sessions.

Given these tendencies, how can ecommerce retailers work to increase mobile sales and capture more revenue

from potential mobile shoppers?

X factor

A key strategic approach to combatting these hurdles is to enhance the mobile site search experience.

Our studies demonstrate that 70 percent of mobile shoppers prefer to use site search over category browsing or organic search for its ease of use and shorter path to purchase.

However, this preference means that the search experience is particularly susceptible to drop-offs.

Mobile shoppers are 74 percent more likely than desktop shoppers to bounce because of a poor search experience.

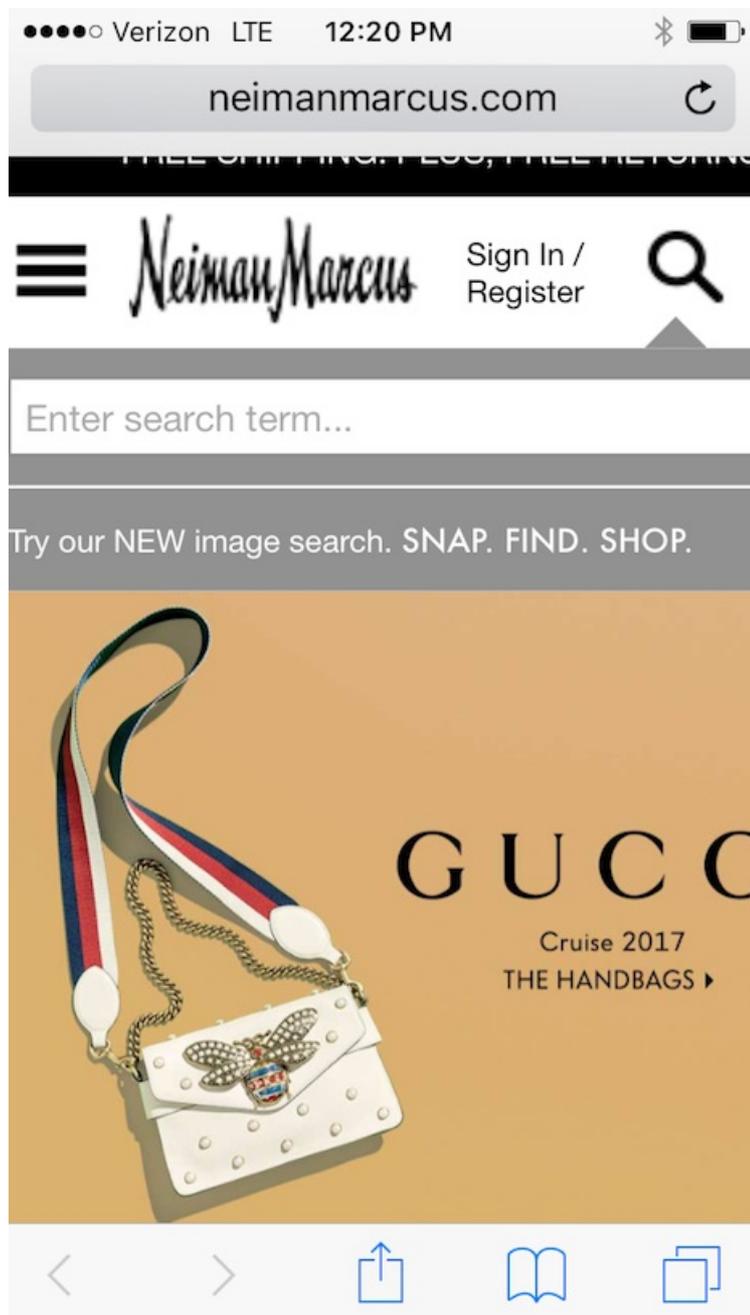
Personalizing the search experience is key to successfully engaging and re-engaging users, and increasing the potential lifetime value of those shoppers.

The likelihood of purchase is directly proportional to the number of visits, so if a shopper is returning to you for the 10th time, she is 5X more likely to purchase.

When it comes to session duration, mobile shoppers who cross the 10-minute mark are your most valuable.

The largest cohort of mobile shoppers spends between 1 to 5 minutes shopping, but getting shoppers to spend more than 10 minutes on your site can yield 10X-plus higher conversion rates, and 21 percent higher average order value.

By understanding user product discovery behavior and how it varies across verticals, retailers can tailor the mobile search experience to individual segments of users.



*Neiman Marcus' mobile site offers new image search that allows shoppers to snap a product with their phone camera, find and shop on the site. Image courtesy of Neiman Marcus*

## Screen and spree

Personalized search requires a number of considerations, the simplest of which are device screen size and location.

Not all mobile devices provide the same user experience and, therefore, the same potential to drive sales.

We have seen that search on phablets convert 6X higher as compared with smaller-sized phones.

In this case, it is absolutely worth considering how you might distinguish the search experience on large versus small phones to maximize opportunities.

Similarly, shopper location can affect product discovery behavior and be used to better structure and present search results.

Shoppers who view products via site search on mobile often have a local purchase intent, with 76 percent visiting a nearby store on the same day. Twenty-eight percent of these visits result in a purchase, and six out of every 10 shoppers check product availability in their nearby stores, on mobile.

NOW THAT mobile traffic has crossed the tipping point, ecommerce retailers must take advantage of on-the-go shoppers and leverage intelligent, machine learning site search to drive them into the purchase cycle and raise mobile conversation rates.

A smarter approach to search will enhance the experience for your shoppers and pave the way to cultivating loyal customers.



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