

COLUMNS

7 ways to reduce shopping cart abandonment on mobile

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Shop till you drop?

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The smartphone is quickly taking center stage in ecommerce. Next year for the first time, more than half of digital buyers will use a smartphone to complete their purchase, according to eMarketer.

Indeed, based on this year's Black Friday weekend sales data, record traffic is heading to mobile. At the same time we all know that purchasing via phone can actually be a painful experience.

A recent Bizrate survey showed that customers are annoyed at having to pinch and zoom to read text and find the right places to click.

As any consumer can attest, having to whip out your credit card and enter the 12-digit code plus the three-digit CVV code on the back can be enough to make you think twice about your purchase. No wonder, shopping cart abandonment rates on mobile are higher than on desktop and driving the global abandonment rate up to 73.4 percent.

Obviously, there is room for improvement.

As the smartphone becomes the main event for online retailing, the industry needs to figure out how to keep consumers engaged and committed to their purchases.

Here are a few suggestions to keep shoppers from abandoning their carts:

1. Optimize your site for mobile: Going into 2017, you should have done this already and if Google has not coerced you to do so, now is the time.

In addition to pinching and zooming, slow load times and hitting accidental links can drive shoppers to distraction literally. In general, your site should include larger text and fewer links than the desktop version.

2. Many happy returns: Companies such as Zappos have set the tone for the industry with liberal return policies.

A KPMG survey of 250 retailers and brands during the 2015 holiday season also showed that free returns drove extra

online purchases and additional store traffic. Offering easy returns will address the hesitation a consumer might feel before hitting the buy button.

3. Get personal: This is the age of personalization.

Use data you have gleaned about the consumer to suggest items with which she is likely to be interested.

4. Add some urgency: If an item is on sale for a short period of time, a ticking clock can work magic.

Reminding consumers of shipping deadlines is also effective, especially during the holiday season.

5. Make registration easy: Offer guest- or social media-based checkins.

If at all possible, make sure that the consumer does not have to re-enter everything if she got one detail wrong or left a field blank. Keep those forms as brief as possible too.

6. Offer full disclosure: One of the biggest causes for cart abandonment is the discovery of hidden charges such as postal fees and taxes. Such charges can make your deal seem like not much of a bargain.

A cart recovery message, however, can be a good opportunity to remind shoppers of any clickand-collect or alternative delivery options you offer.

7. Reassure: Before the buyer commits to the sale, there is usually a moment of hesitation.

You can ease those fears by giving reassurance with a recovery message that points out your returns policy, any money-back guarantees you offer and if you deliver for free.

NO MATTER what you do, the shopping cart abandonment rate will never be zero.

There will always be extenuating circumstances that drive a consumer to abandon a sale, whether it is an offline distraction or a text from a friend.

Still, by looking at the data, you can give your brand the its best shot of holding the consumer's attention. This should be a self-reinforcing process in which your methods get better over time.

At the very least, your numbers should be going in the right direction.



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