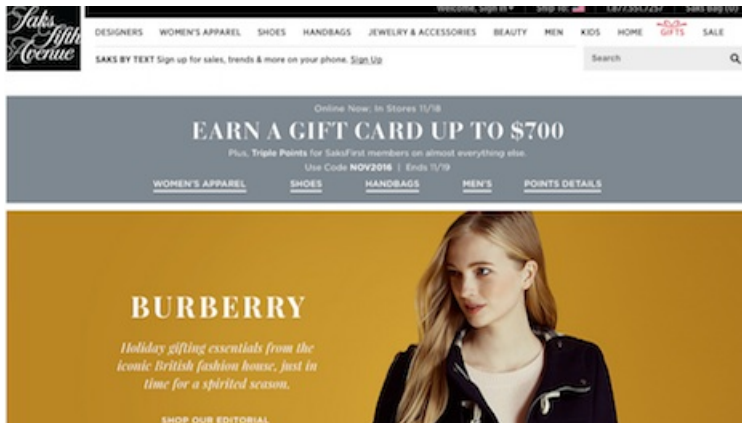


RETAIL

Affluent holiday shoppers to spend 57pc online: report

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The Burberry holiday promotion on Saks' homepage. Image courtesy of Saks Fifth Avenue

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

The luxury market had a difficult year, but the upcoming holiday season could give the sector a much-needed push as general sales are set to increase by more than 4 percent, according to Deloitte.

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Deloitte's holiday retail forecast predicts that sales will reach more than \$1.04 trillion. The study also shows that disposable income will be more present than last year, with 81 percent of survey takers claiming their financial situation is better than last year.

Holiday shopping

Affluent individuals whose net worth exceeds \$100,000 plan to do 57 percent of their holiday shopping online and 39 percent in store.

Gifting is not the only spending that will be occurring during the holiday season, as half of consumers say they will shop for themselves while shopping for others this year.

Digital interactions will be more important than ever this year, with 80 percent of individuals saying they will purchase their gifts in late November, but digital will push these decisions on where and what to purchase now.

Free shipping is becoming more important in the general market, with 88 percent of individuals saying that free is more important than fast.

More than 64 percent of respondents said they will not pay more for two day shipping. However, consumers will pay less than \$4 extra for next day shipping.

Consumers want to be able to shop close to Christmas Day and still receive free shipping, after Dec. 17 specifically. More than 72 percent of those surveyed say they will take advantage of free shipping.

Shoppers are looking to in-store pickup motivated by fast and free. Those who are looking to utilize in-store pickup say that home appliances, electronics and clothing will be the top categories.

While the majority of sales will take place in store, the majority of product search will happen online.

Additional insights

Since 1999, the retail industry has faced declining sales in the wake of falling foot traffic brought about by ecommerce.

Rather than fighting against the ecommerce wave, a new report from L2 suggests that retailers need to embrace the possibilities of having both a physical and digital presence to strengthen both entities. This is especially true for high-end department stores, who tend to be less digital-focused than mass retailers ([see more](#)).

While digital is a vital aspect of retail, in-store associates are not useless and are proving to be an essential part of the customer experience, according to consumers.

A new report from Astound Commerce shows that 52 percent of consumers think it is vital for store associates to be able to place an order and 46 percent believe they should have access to inventory information. However, online shoppers are having extremely positive experiences as well, with 86 percent claim their customer service interactions were great, and 42 percent saying excellent ([see more](#)).

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