

JEWELRY

## While ecommerce thrives, 70pc of British consumers still buy jewelry in-person

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*Consumers still want jewelry options online however. Image credit: The Knot*

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By DANNY PARISI

Much has been made of the rising importance of ecommerce for luxury consumers, but in Britain jewelry shoppers still prefer to purchase in-store rather than online.

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Around 70 percent of consumers in the U.K. prefer to shop for jewelry in a specialty store with a real person guiding them, rather than pick out a piece online, according to research from Messe Munchen. This can be attributed to the unique facets of diamonds and other jewelry that are best appreciated in person, where their look and feel can be better appreciated by customers.

### In-store commerce

It is no secret that ecommerce is the dominating topic in the retail landscape today.

Brands from across the luxury world are reinventing their online presences to account for the surge in desire for online shopping and digital tools.

However, that does not mean that customers are not still interested in shopping in-person. In fact, some sectors still see the most revenue from in-person sales.

According to Messe Munchen, luxury shoppers looking for jewelry overwhelmingly prefer to make the final purchase in person.



*Diamonds are a big investment. Image credit: GIA*

This can be attributed to a number of factors, most notably being that diamonds and other jewelry are big investments and require a tactile sense before fully committing to buying.

After analyzing responses from more than 1,000 consumers throughout the U.K., Messe Munchen also found that those shoppers still want digital tools. Forty percent of respondents said they wish their preferred jeweler had more of an online presence.

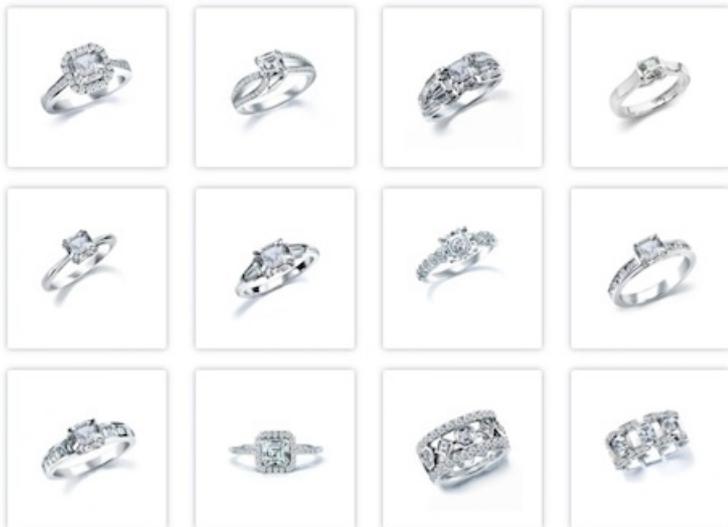
The key difference between online and offline shopping preferences is price. According to the survey, the more expensive a piece of jewelry is, the more likely customers are to want to purchase it in person rather than through the Internet.

#### Negotiating channels

Luxury products are often purchased as much for their emotional value as for their practical value, and no product comes with as much emotion as a diamond.

Speaking at Initiatives in Art and Culture's Annual Fashion, Jewelry and Design Conference on Nov. 10, a panel of experts from the jewelry world spoke about the special significance of diamonds and the feelings they evoke in customers. The crux of the discussion was that two diamonds with the exact same technical qualifications could have entirely different emotional effects on the consumer ([see story](#)).

For this reason, it makes sense that customers would want to get as much in-person time with a piece of jewelry before they purchase, so as to determine if it truly speaks to them.



*Online options can help customers make informed decisions. Image credit: Royal Asscher Diamonds*

This is especially true given new research that shows couples are shopping for engagement rings together more often.

While wedding proposals are often depicted as momentous and surprising events, a new study found that the majority of proposals are known about by both parties beforehand.

Even though this may make the actual moment a bit less spontaneous and romantic to some, it also means that

increasingly couples are collaborating on their engagement plans with more communication over the perfect ring to buy, an important bit of data for the luxury jewelry industry. This information comes from The Knot, which released its 2017 Jewelry & Engagement Study to give jewelry brands a better idea of how couples are tying the knot today ([see story](#)).

But jewelry brands cannot neglect the digital component, and smart brands will find ways to give as much digital information as possible so customers can smoothly transition from online research to in-store purchase.

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