

MARKETING

## Majority of consumers find digital advertising unconvincing

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*Most consumers do not find digital advertising to be trustworthy. Image credit: Saks Fifth Avenue*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Most consumers are reluctant to believe that their purchase decisions are based on digital advertising, according to a new report.

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Less than a third of consumers surveyed for Trustpilot's "Trustworthiness in Advertising" study reported being influenced by digital ads, ranging from paid search to email marketing. The impact of advertising can vary based on medium and audience, though most consumers do not find digital ads influential.

"Digital ads don't resonate too well, at least when it comes to conversion in real dollars," said Zachary Pardes, director of advertising and communications at **Trustpilot**, New York. "The report shows there's no one real solution to marketing."

Trustpilot's report is based on a survey of more than 2,000 consumers in the United States and United Kingdom. The study evaluated five types of digital advertising, including search advertising, weekly marketing emails, targeted social media ads, sponsored ads on Web sites or social media and commercials on online streaming.

### Digital influences

Consumers cited search advertising as the most effective among the types of placements studied, with 30.7 percent of men and women saying this type of advertising has influenced their purchase decisions.

The remaining categories showed a more apparent gender gap regarding effectiveness.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

ROLLER GIRLS: A late-night skate calls for head-to-toe sequins, animal prints and electric hues to stand out this season. #SaksStyle

A post shared by Saks Fifth Avenue (@saks) on Aug 27, 2019 at 9:45am PDT

### *More women than men use social media*

While targeted ads on social media ranked second with 29.6 percent of respondents finding them influential, these advertisements resonated better among women. About a third of women, 33.1 percent, found targeted ads on social media to be influential, compared to less than a quarter of men.

Similarly, women are more influenced by weekly marketing emails than men, at rate of 32.4 to 27.4 percent. Sponsored ads, whether on Web sites or social media, also influenced women more than men, 27.1 to 23.7 percent.

Overall, commercials played on online streaming platforms were the least effective, with only 24.8 percent of all consumers considering them influential. However, commercials were the third most effective way to reach men, with 26.9 percent finding them influential compared to 23.1 percent of women.



*Commercials were more effective at reaching men than women. Image credit: YouTube*

"It really speaks to the demographics of the platforms consumers are using," Mr. Pardes said. "Studies have found

that women are more likely to use social media than men, so advertisers are targeting them heavily on various social media platforms."

Additionally, Trustpilot found that less than three in 10 respondents trust digital advertising.

Weekly marketing emails are the most trusted method of advertising, though generally U.S. consumers are more trusting than those in the U.K.

#### Convincing consumers

Ultimately, digital advertising aims to create conversion and influence consumers to complete purchases.

More than three-quarters of respondents purchased a good or service because an advertisement notified them of a deal. This could point to the influence of email marketing, which is often oriented around sales and promotions.

Online reviews also help convince consumers to buy products or services. Sixty-eight percent of respondents always or often read reviews before making an online purchase.

Qualities of convincing reviews include images and mentions of positives and negatives. Consumers also will place more value on reviews that were written after using a product or service for some time.

In high-cost categories, including luxury apparel, retailers need to convince consumers that their prices align with product quality. Prominently featuring product reviews, which can serve as digital word of mouth, can help retailers acquire new shoppers, according to an earlier report from Yes Marketing.

More than a third of consumers find a retailer to be trustworthy when it provides sufficient, relevant information about its products. Ten percent also reported that customer-generated content or testimonials shape their perception of a new retailer ([see story](#)).

According to a recent report from Yotpo, 98 percent of shoppers say that reviews are an important factor when buying fashion merchandise online. Additionally, 66 percent of shoppers look to reviews for clues about how an item fits.

Similarly to how written reviews can have an impact, 93 percent of consumers say that being able to see shopper photos is important to them. Additionally, 72 percent consider customer-created videos to be important ([see story](#)).

"Luxury brands should back their brands with great customer service, honest and open advertising and real testimonials from customers through online reviews," Trustpilot's Mr. Pardes said. "This includes improving their online reviews to make a meaningful impact on their businesses."