

RETAIL

Ecommerce continues to surge for holiday shopping: Bazaarvoice

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Only 56 percent of shoppers said they would be doing in-store shopping this year, reflecting an 8 percent drop. Image credit: Bain & Company

By KATIE TAMOLA

Consumers are steadily and happily returning to holiday shopping this year, with a continued reliance on ecommerce.

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A new [study](#) from ratings and review provider Bazaarvoice found that more than half of consumers said they are shopping online now more than they were pre-COVID-19, indicating a need for brands to continue highlighting and polishing their online offerings. Sixty-four percent of respondents also said that while they shopped at physical stores for holiday gifts in the past, only 56 percent said they would be doing in-store shopping this year.

"Because so many holiday shoppers this year are skipping physical stores and shopping online, brands and retailers need to ensure that they're providing as much information on their digital channels as possible to ensure their customers have the same confidence in their purchase as they would in store," said Keith Nealon, CEO of [Bazaarvoice](#).

Bazaarvoice commissioned research in October 2021 by Savanta among 6,011 consumers from the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, France, Germany and Australia.

How shoppers are shopping

More consumers are shopping online than they were pre-COVID, up from 49 percent to 52 percent. Historically, shopping for gifts on brand or retailer sites and opting for home delivery is the most popular trend, which has continued into 2021 with 54 percent of respondents choosing to do so.

Sixty-five percent of shoppers report buying gifts at a physical store, 23 percent plan to buy gifts on a brand or retailer website with in-store pick up and 13 percent plan to through social media with home delivery.



The majority of online shoppers are buying gifts on Amazon. Image credit: Adobe

If forced to pick a method, 44 percent of shoppers will pick a brand or retailer site with home delivery while 36 percent would go to a physical store.

When asked where they shop for gifts, 59 percent of shoppers said Amazon, 46 percent said retailer websites and 40 percent said brand websites.

Regarding whom they are shopping for, 52 percent of shoppers said they are buying gifts for their partners or children. Forty-seven percent said they are shopping for their parents, 36 percent said for their siblings, 32 percent for their close friends and 25 percent said for their extended family.

A majority of shoppers, 53 percent, say that COVID-19 is not impacting how much they are spending on gifts this year.

With COVID-19 conditions steadily improving, more shoppers are opting for experiential gift purchases this year.

Eighty-one percent of shoppers bought physical gifts last year, while 78 percent did this year, representing a 3 percent drop. Twenty-six percent of shoppers are buying experiences as a gift this year compared to 21 percent from 2020, representing a 5 percent increase.

The most popular gift categories are apparel at 55 percent, beauty at 48 percent, electronics at 47 percent, home goods at 32 percent and food and beverage at 30 percent.

Forty-six percent of shoppers indicated that they begin their shopping in the month of November.

Aiming for a seamless ecommerce experience

Price is the most important point to shoppers when deciding between gifts at 67 percent, followed by value at 49 percent, availability at 47 percent, with both reviews and delivery options at 38 percent.

With so many shoppers going digital in obtaining gifts, brands must continue to provide seamless ecommerce experiences.



More shoppers are gravitating to home delivery. Image credit: Rupixen.com

In August, personalization software platform Qubit found that 85.9 percent of consumers plan to continue shopping the same or more online, even as most stores are reopening around the world. With the study also finding that the 2021 holiday season could be the biggest online shopping stretch yet, luxury brands must continue to make their ecommerce experiences seamless and personalized to maintain consumers and expand their audiences ([see story](#)).

The role of reviews and user-generated content continue to also play a large role in consumers' sentiments regarding online experiences.

With the current expansive shopping landscape, reviews and ratings are becoming increasingly important in consumers' shopping journeys.

In earlier Bazaarvoice survey, 89 percent of respondents reported they always or mostly consult ratings and reviews before making a purchase. Consumers are looking for specific features reflected in their reviews as well to reflect that the feedback and suggestions are authentic and relevant to their needs ([see story](#)).

"Every brand should be utilizing user-generated content (UGC) such as ratings and reviews, and customer photos and videos in every avenue they can, from their website to their social pages," Mr. Nealon said.

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