

RETAIL

Personalized CX cannot be overlooked online

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Ecommerce has staying power. Image credit: Glenn Carstens-Peters

By KATIE TAMOLA

The COVID-19 pandemic not only jolted ecommerce, but left consumers with specific, seamless expectations for digital transactions from here on in.

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According to a new **report** from ecommerce fraud solutions company ClearSale, 35 percent of shoppers will cease purchasing if the checkout process is too long or complicated. To keep pace with the vast innovation happening in digital commerce, brands and retailers must continue fostering customer experience and provide seamless purchase experiences, preventing complications and false declines.

"This report shows that every ecommerce business needs to put themselves in the shoes of their customers," said Rafael Lourenco, executive vice president and partner at **ClearSale**, in a statement. "Different customers want different things, but they all want a great customer experience.

"Every part of your business, including your fraud protection, needs to align with delivering personalized and excellent CX."

ClearSale and data and insights platform Dynata analyzed insights collected from more than 5,000 online shoppers across the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Mexico and Australia, based on their ecommerce experiences from March 2020 to March 2021.

Where to go

Seventy-eight percent of respondents said they increased their frequency and/or spend when online shopping since the pandemic emerged, and more than half of those respondents said they are shopping an extra one to two times a month.

Nearly six in 10 shoppers said they were spending on clothing, fashion and accessories, while only 27 percent of respondents said they spent on luxury goods.



Half of respondents under the age of 55 say they shop online at least once a week. Image credit: Blake Wisz

What might assist luxury brands here are hybrid ecommerce options like buy online, pickup in-store.

Brands that have performed exceptionally well since the pandemic are those that had already begun highly investing in their ecommerce offerings, evidenced through 47 percent of ecommerce shoppers saying they have shopped home goods online and 45 percent saying they have used ecommerce for clothing, fashion and accessories, versus only 15 percent of veteran ecommerce shoppers reporting buying luxury goods online.

Luxury brands looking to increase their ecommerce sales can start simple ensuring a clear search bar and clear site navigation for novice online shoppers. Then, other features like personalized item curation and smooth flow from social media ads and mobile sites to desktop sites will also be beneficial.

Disparate age groups continue exhibiting different online shopping habits, as 50 percent of respondents under the age of 55 say they shop online at least once a week, versus only 35 percent of Gen X and baby boomers doing so.

Younger consumers also crave personalization more.



Gen Zs and millennials expressed preference for personalization. Image credit: Nordstrom

When asked what elements would keep them shopping online instead of in-store, 18 percent of respondents under the age of 24 and 17 percent of respondents between the ages of 25 and 39 said "featured items picked just for me based on my shopping habits."

Only 11 percent of shoppers who are 65 and older said they wanted to see product suggestions based on their shopping habits.

False declines and too few payment or pickup options can also detract shoppers.

Forty percent of consumers said they would forever boycott an ecommerce merchant who declines their order in error. More than half said they would abandon a cart due to unexpected extra costs.

However, 60 percent of respondents said they would consider contacting customer service to try again, emphasizing the importance of providing excellent customer experience.

Not wants, but needs

Brands will have to emphasize the customer experience online, as shoppers want to feel as though brands and retailers are being transparent and straightforward.

Some ways to achieve this are including certifications and ratings in the footer of the site, testing and reviewing all pages regularly to find broken links, errors, misspellings or other glitches and avoiding surprise costs and fees.

Last year, British fashion house Burberry began driving growth through inspired customer journeys, bridging the gap between digital channels and stores by leveraging digital technology.

During the National Retail Federation's Big Show digital conference in January 2021, vice president of digital technology at Burberry Rajeev Aikkara shared insight into the brand's efforts to redefine customer experiences and enable cloud-based business agility. In conversation with global retail lead at Amazon Web Services Tom Litchford, they discussed different ways brands can leverage digital foundations for successful businesses ([see story](#)).

In 2020, British automaker Bentley Motors announced it would deploy Salesforce cloud solutions to give its employees a 360-degree view of consumers.

Digital is quickly becoming fundamental for companies, making high-touch, personalized digital services essential to building stronger relationships with prospective and existing customers. In addition to its advancements toward sustainability through products and supply chains, Bentley began transforming how it engages with a new generation of eco-conscious consumers looking for transparency ([see story](#)).

Ultimately, it is imperative that brands continue fostering what works and identifying what does not, as ecommerce is here to stay.

"When a customer can go online, make a purchase, and then turn around and send it right back if they're not happy with it, that's convenient," said David Fletcher, senior vice president at ClearSale, in a statement. "The pandemic might have forced consumers to have to shop online, but now that busy families realize they can quickly get the items they need at the same in-store price and with the same level of convenience without ever leaving the house, there's a lot less reason for them to go back into a store."