

MOBILE

## 51pc of US luxury shoppers expect mobile-optimized site: Forrester Research

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By TRICIA CARR

The luxury sector is slow to adapt to affluent consumers' browsing and purchasing habits as more shoppers are using digital, mobile and social media to assist in their journey to purchase, according to a new report from Forrester Research.

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**Luxury Daily**

The Luxury Retailer's Guide to Agile Commerce uncovered usage habits among luxury online shoppers that prove that this demographic has higher expectations for the brand mobile experience than online shoppers, in general. Marketers that are proactive in combining commerce and content and intersecting all channels will be most relevant to these savvy shoppers.

"It is about having this great digital content, and actually getting that to the consumer when they are thinking about shopping," said Martin Gill, report lead and principal analyst at [Forrester Research](#), Nottingham, England.

"Bring that digital content and take it to shoppers' path," he said.

New shoppers on the block

The report affirmed that luxury shoppers are using multiple devices during the online and offline shopping experience.

Overall, the luxury online shopper is younger than the average online shopper.

For example, the average age of the luxury online shopper is 37 in the United States, while the average age of the mainstream online shopper is 44.

In China, 52 percent of luxury online shoppers are ages 25-34.

Also, European luxury online shoppers are generally more active on social media than those in the U.S. or China.

Consumers who shop for luxury products online are more likely to share personal content and commentary via social media than the average online adult.

Seventeen percent of luxury online shoppers have visited a retailer's social media page in the past three months, according to Forrester's European Technographics Online Benchmark Survey for the third quarter of 2012.

On the mobile channel, 59 percent of luxury online shoppers from the U.S. have made a purchase via a mobile site or application in comparison to 12 percent of all smartphone users.

Luxury online shoppers also have higher expectations for the mobile shopping experience.

Forrester's North American Technographics Retail Online Survey for the second quarter of 2012 asked U.S. luxury online shoppers, "Now thinking of mobile technologies that can be used to enhance customer experience, which of the following do you expect a retailer to offer?"

Fifty-one percent expect the retailer to have a mobile Web site, 49 percent expect the retailer to have a mobile app, 43 percent expect to be able to purchase products/services on a retailer's mobile Web site/app and 35 percent expect to find the same assortment of products/services on a retailer's mobile site/app as its desktop site.

U.S. luxury online shoppers who use a tablet are much more likely to use the device to make offline purchasing decisions. Twenty-six percent of these shoppers own a tablet, whereas 16 percent of U.S. Web users do.

"Think about your mobile strategy and your tablet strategy in the context of your overall strategy," Mr. Gill said.

"Luxury consumers are using smartphones and tablets to do research for their offline shopping experience," he said.

Getting ahead of the pack

Luxury marketers that focus on cross-channel shopping experiences will meet shoppers' expectations.

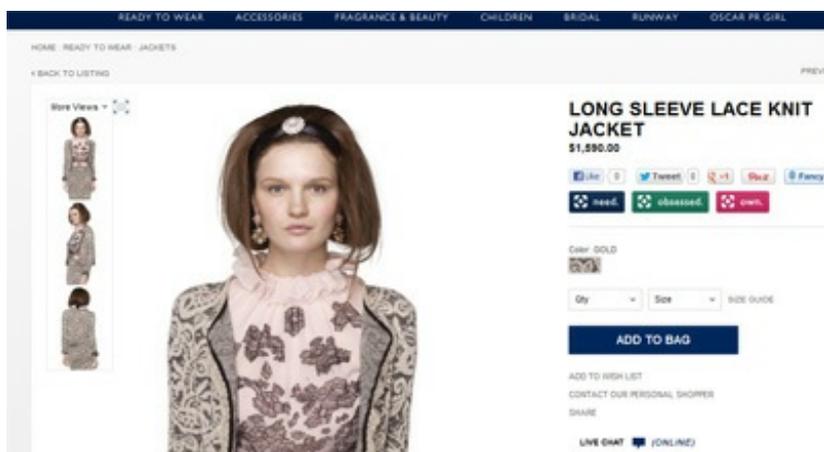
However, there are a handful of effective executions of this cross-channel approach in the luxury sector, leaving room for more.

Some marketers are playing catch up by incorporating social sharing into the shopping experience.

For example, Oscar de la Renta looked to boost social connectivity and online transactions by redesigning its Web site last year.

The site has interactive elements that intertwine the buying and social media experience for a new kind of ecommerce. In addition to putting a product in a shopping bag, “liking” on Facebook, pinning on Pinterest or Tweeting about it, consumers can select “need,” “obsessed” or “own.”

Clicking on one of these options connects the Oscar de la Renta Web site to Facebook, where consumers’ friends can see if they own, want or are “obsessing over” a product ([see story](#)).



*Oscar de la Renta product page*

Nevertheless, mobile cannot be ignored going forward.

For instance, Italian fashion house Gucci is connecting the mobile and physical shopping experience in a brand-controlled setting through mobile point-of-sale technology.

The fashion house is equipping sales associates at select locations with iPhones that contain a mobile point-of-sale program that lets employees process sales, email receipts to customers, access the Gucci Style app and use a translator and currency converter on the spot ([see story](#)).

Indeed, British label Burberry has been a pioneer in connecting its digital and physical channels at its Regent Street boutique in London. The store was designed to be a physical expression of Burberry.com to immerse shoppers in the brand experience.



*Regent Street store*

Also, brand employees carry iPads with apps on them to provide access to purchase history and customer preferences to enable a more tailored shopping experience ([see story](#)).

Luxury marketers should explore ways to cross research and purchase channels in a manner that fulfills the needs of the savvy luxury shopper, both online and universally.

“The level of sophistication in terms of digital strategy lacked a bit when comparing some of the luxury retailers, particularly in the case of multichannel, with what their mainstream competitors have done,” Mr. Gill said.

“Luxury retailers haven’t gotten to this level, and their customers are far more technically savvy than they probably realize,” he said.

Final Take

*Tricia Carr, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*