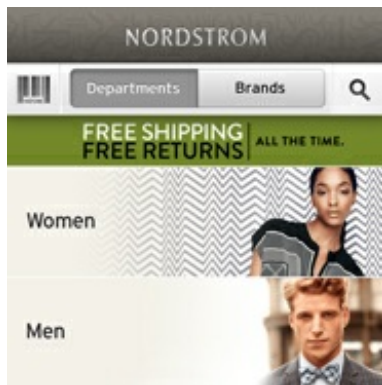


MOBILE

49pc of consumers desire seamless store, digital, mobile experience: Accenture

April 16, 2013



By ERIN SHEA

Forty-nine percent of consumers believe that the best improvement to the shopping experience would be better integration of in-store, online and mobile channels, according to a new survey from Accenture.

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The Accenture Seamless Retail Study indicates that consumers want a seamless shopping experience and want to be able to make a purchase in whichever way is most convenient for them. This means that retailers need to have a strong presence on all channels.

“The study delivers the message loud and clear that, above all, U.S. consumers want a seamless shopping experience across all channels,” said Renato Scaff, managing director of the [Accenture](#) retail practice, Atlanta.

“However, in many cases, we found a significant gap between consumer expectations and the reality that retailers are delivering,” he said.

“Most consumers we surveyed expect a retailer’s pricing and promotions to be the same online as in the store, but our analysis of retailers indicated that only 16 percent of retailers offer the same prices online as they do in the store.”

The Accenture Seamless Retail Study compiled data from an online survey of 6,000 adults in eight countries, out of which 750 were U.S. consumers. Also, Accenture consultants benchmarked retailers using a list of 80 questions to assess the multichannel offerings of 62 of the world's largest companies.

Seamless shopping

Many consumers seem to want more out of the shopping experiences across all platforms.

Eighty-nine percent of survey respondents said that it is important for retailers to let them shop for products in the way that is most convenient for them, no matter which channel they choose.

Although consumers want a more seamless shopping experience, 94 percent said the in-store shopping experience is easy.

However, 74 percent said online shopping is easy and only 26 percent found mobile shopping easy.

In addition to a seamless experience, consumers want to see the same pricing across all channels.

Seventy-three percent of consumers expect a retailer's online pricing to be the same as its in-store pricing, and 61 percent expect a retailer's online promotions to be the same as its in-store promotions.

Accenture's analysis found that 73 percent of the retailers studied offer the same promotions both online and in-store, while 16 percent offer the same prices online as they do in-store.

Retailers should look to keep the shopping experience as seamless as possible since many consumers check online before going to a nearby store to make a purchase.

"The biggest surprise in our research was how important inventory visibility is to consumers," Mr. Scaff said.

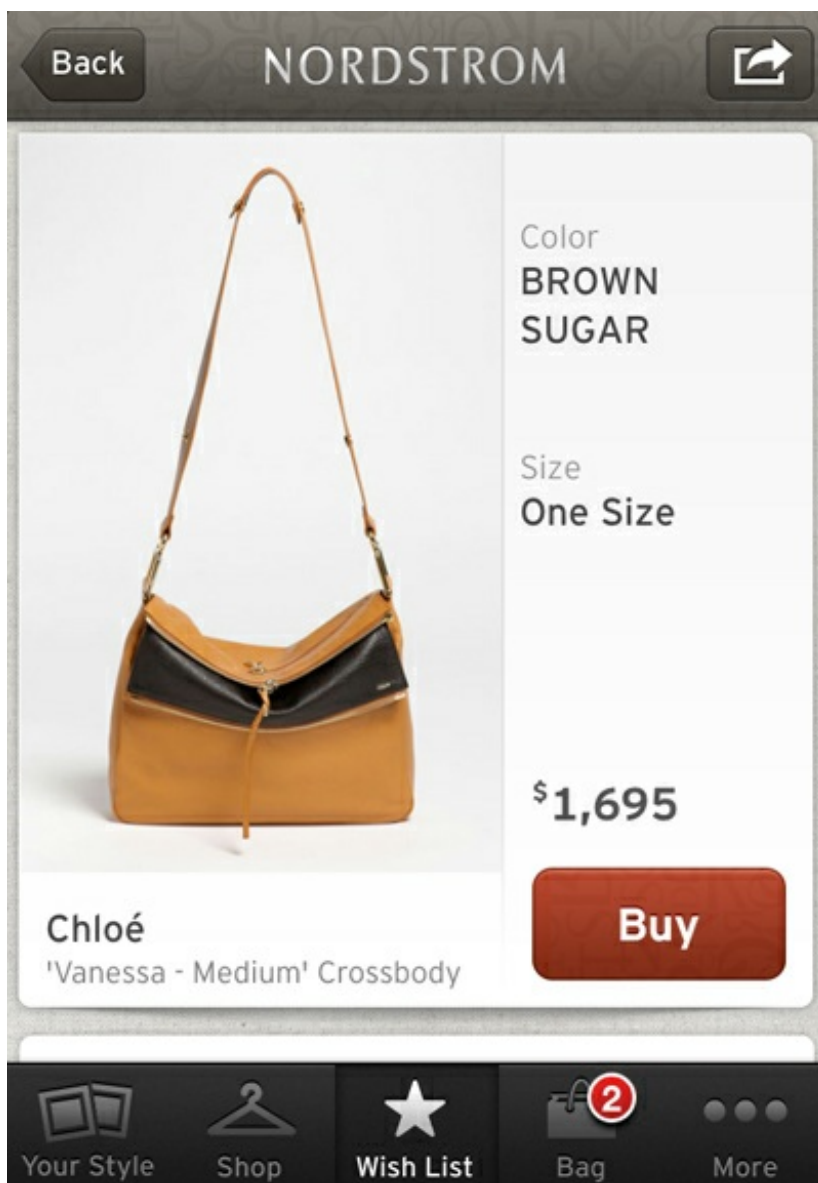
"Before they take the time to go to a store, consumers want to know if you have what they want in-stock before getting in their cars," he said.

What consumers want

Some luxury retailers are getting ahead of the competition by boosting the shopping experience with mobile.

For instance, department store chain Nordstrom recently enhanced the consumer experience on its iPhone application to include product sharing via SMS and user reviews.

The functions of the app will help consumers share their opinions on Nordstrom's products with their friends and fellow shoppers ([see story](#)).



Nordstrom app

Also, department store Barneys New York gives in-store shoppers a more personalized checkout experience through a partnership with Infinite Peripherals that equips sales associates with mobile point-of-sale devices at its flagship location ([see story](#)).

Since many consumers are expecting mobile and digital integration in the in-store experience, marketers that have not yet incorporated technology in their physical store need to catch up to keep customers satisfied.

“Increasingly, consumers are expecting a level of seamlessness that many traditional retailers are struggling with,” Mr. Scaff said.

“The integration of typically disparate organizations, processes and systems will require significant effort and investment in order for retailers to provide their customers with the experience that they expect,” he said.

Final take

Erin Shea, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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