



7 ways the mobile consumer changes everything

How always-on mobile and consumer feedback combine to create huge opportunities for brands



Shopper's mobile use in research and buying is exploding. Currently, eight in ten¹ smartphone owners are smartphone shoppers. And by 2016, 85% of all digital shoppers will be mobile shoppers as well.²

It's no longer enough to think of consumers as online vs. in-store. The mobile shopper is neither and both of these, fast becoming the norm rather than the exception.

1 Reviews double mobile conversion

Nearly half of mobile users actually rely exclusively on mobile³ for their pre-purchase research. But mobile devices aren't around just for research anymore – people are quickly warming to buying via mobile as well. The number of people who buy via mobile will increase 65% between now and 2016². In Europe, Forrester predicts that mobile e-commerce revenues across will rise from €1.7 billion in 2011 to €19.2 billion by 2017, reaching 6.8% of web sales. And that's nothing compared to Australia, where mobile sales in 2012 accounted for ~30% of all digital sales⁴. That number continues to grow as more Australians obtain smartphones.

Just like their desktop counterparts, mobile shoppers who read reviews and other customer-written content are far

more likely to convert than those who don't. Across the Bazaarvoice client network, **mobile shoppers who view customer content like reviews show 133% higher conversion rate**. Even brands that don't sell online should gather reviews to syndicate across their retail networks' mobile sites and apps, to capture more share.

Mobile shoppers increasingly seek out reviews online. Year over year mobile traffic to customer content grew 60% from July 2012 to 2013 on our network. The share of shoppers who view reviews is about the same across devices – 12.8% of mobile shoppers view reviews, versus 14.3% of desktop shoppers. The difference may just be lag in the usability of review content on mobile sites.

★ *Include reviews and other customer content in your mobile experience, and format the content for mobile consumption.*



2 Holidays attract new mobile shoppers - and permanently change behavior

Across our client network, December typically sees a spike in mobile traffic. Shoppers who experiment in mobile during the holidays tend to convert to ongoing mobile shoppers – mobile traffic across our network doesn't return to pre-holiday levels once the season ends.

 Push your mobile presence during the holiday season to convert new, lifelong mobile shoppers.

Black Friday weekend 2013 (the heavy shopping weekend following Thanksgiving in the US), saw sharp growth in mobile use. Mobile traffic grew 61% year over year, and mobile sales reached [25.8% of total online sales](#)⁵ for Thanksgiving. While smartphones drove more traffic than tablets (20% versus 9%), tablets drove a higher percentage of sales.

The steady creep of mobile shopping into the holiday buying process has even changed the time of day deals get done. 2013 Christmas sales in the UK, for example, started earlier than ever, says [Laura Wade-Gery, digital director at Marks & Spencer](#)⁶:

“Early morning has never before been a big shopping time, but an increasing number of sales are now made online between 6am and 8am. People use their phone as an alarm, then check their emails, follow a link, and are shopping before they even get out of bed.”

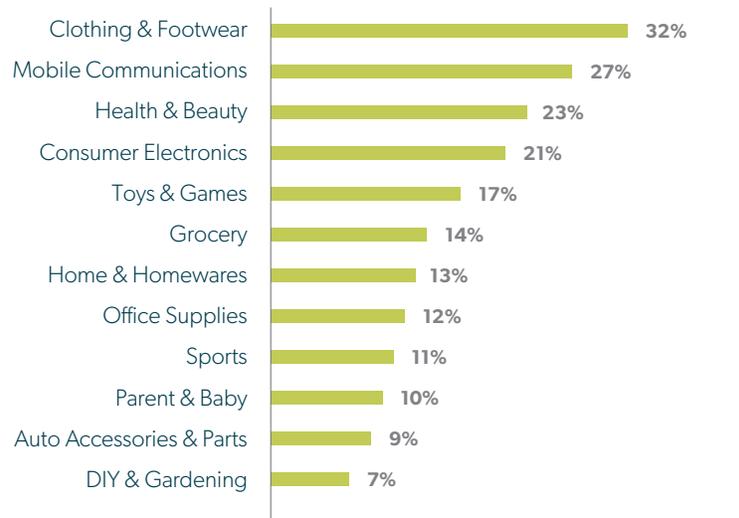


3 Apparel, beauty, and electronics top mobile research

Globally, clothing and footwear are the most researched non-digital products on mobile, with 32% of global mobile shoppers having browsed these categories. Health and beauty follows at 23%, with consumer electronics (21%) and toys and games (17%) not far behind.

Apparel is also the most-purchased category via mobile, and shows the highest spend. [In one study](#)⁷, 24% of mobile shoppers had purchased apparel products within the last two months. Meanwhile, travel (tickets, airfare, hotel bookings, etc.) is the least purchased category, with only 17% of respondents having made a travel purchase via mobile in the two months period. This may be because travel purchases are less impulsive and more research-heavy than most categories.

Non-Digital Products Most Researched on Mobile Devices



Source: Pinkerton, Malcolm. "Global M-commerce: E-commerce shopper insights." Planet Retail, July 2013.



Consider the nature of your products. Are mobile shoppers likely to purchase in your category, or simply research? For categories with higher likelihood of mobile purchase, use 360-degree, enlarged images on mobile to make items like clothes and accessories easier to evaluate without a trip to the store.



In less mobile-purchased categories like travel, use the mobile app/site to encourage shoppers to continue shopping on your website later. Allow mobile users to save products, destinations, flights, etc. to a list that syncs with their account online, so that they can easily find the items again later on a PC.



4 Mobile showroaming drives in-store purchases

Due to the obvious growth of mobile usage amongst consumers, brick and mortar businesses fear the impact of mobile-aided shopping in stores – of customers who can handle a product on the shelf with one hand while finding a lower price on a competitor’s mobile site on the other. But this version of showroaming is a myth, says [Matthew Quint](#)⁸, Director, Center on Global Brand Leadership at Columbia Business School:

“Our findings debunk many of the common assumptions about the threat of showroaming. Many shoppers care about more than just the lowest price on every item.”

Shoppers are certainly using their mobile devices in stores – [84% of smartphone owners](#)¹ admit it. And it’s not just Millennials; [74% of mobile shoppers](#)⁹ are older than 29. They’re checking reviews (44%)¹⁰, looking for the product at other locations (36%), and, yes, the majority (61%) are checking competitors’ prices. That information does affect consumers’ eventual purchases: In Australia, for example, half of shoppers who use their phone in stores say that it’s [changed their purchase decision](#)¹¹.

Expounds Mark Lewis, Director of Online for EMEA retailer John Lewis:

“Customers are already walking into the store with very sophisticated technology in the form of their smartphones. Increasingly they are using that technology as part of how they shop - be it to scan items, to get extra information about the items, to find reviews, or to pay for items. All those elements are coming our way very, very quickly.”

But retailers shouldn’t dread these price checks, new research finds – they may actually drive in-store purchases. More than [half of mobile shoppers](#)⁹ are more likely to purchase a product in-store when their mobile device helps them find online reviews, information, or trusted advice. In fact, [77% of smartphone-driven purchases happen in stores](#)³ – not on the phone or later online. To capture that purchase-driving power, retailers should encourage shoppers to use phones in stores, keeping them in owned property.

📶 Offer free wifi in stores to speed mobile browsing. Use signage to promote the wifi and mobile site.



5 Store-specific functionality encourages in-store mobile research

Supporting in-store showrooming goes beyond just encouraging it. Recognize the different needs and use cases for mobile shoppers in-store, as opposed to couch surfers at home. While in-home shoppers browse the product catalogue, in-store shoppers are more likely to have a specific product in hand they'd like information on. Barcode scanners let shoppers immediately look up product specific information like additional sizes, reviews, how-to videos, Q&A, availability at another store, and more.

Rewards programs are another way to encourage mobile activity in stores. [Nearly half](#)⁹(48%) of mobile shoppers say being part of a store's loyalty program makes them more likely to buy a product in the store, despite cheaper prices online.

Mobile-enabled sales staff can work just as well. [One in ten shoppers](#)¹⁰ would rather engage with a salesperson using a smartphone to help them check prices, reviews, stock at other stores, or other information, rather than use their own device. Especially older and wealthier shoppers; while they're less likely to check smartphones than younger shoppers, they [appreciate assistance](#)¹⁰ from mobile-equipped sales reps more.

-  *Arm store staff with smartphones and tablets to provide additional information for in-store shoppers.*
-  *Equip staff devices with mobile checkout for a quicker customer experience.*
-  *Build in-store specific functionality into your mobile site or app, and call it out. Consider a separate mobile site for in-store shopping tools.*
-  *Link mobile app usage to loyalty program points to encourage mobile activities that drive purchases, such as reading reviews and making mobile shopping lists.*



6 Responsive design creates an effective web experience on every screen size

One size does not fit all in mobile. Many websites format poorly on smartphones – small text, images, and buttons; tiny menus impossible to navigate with thumbs; checkout experiences designed for desktops that don't translate to the mobile user. It's bad news for businesses, as [65% of shoppers¹](#) prefer mobile sites to apps. These frustrations can send shoppers elsewhere, sometimes for good.

On the flip side, when businesses present excellent mobile experiences, delighted shoppers may even spend more. Nearly half (46%)¹² of Italian mobile shoppers are encouraged to increase spend online if the website is mobile optimized, and 39% of German mobile shoppers agree.

But with the multitude of smartphone and tablet screen sizes, it is impossible to design for every screen size individually. Choosing to design for just some of the possibilities – the most popular or revenue-driving mobile devices, for example – is just as ineffective. Android has more market share ([four of every five smartphones shipped in Q3 2013¹³](#)), but Apple owners spend more; [iOS accounted for 12.8% of online sales⁵](#) on Black Friday in 2013, versus 2.8% for Android.

The answer: Responsive design. Responsive design automatically resizes websites to fit the screen – making the site display properly on any device. But effective mobile sites must do more than appear unbroken on smaller screens. The user interface significantly impacts the mobile shopping experience.

To plan for an excellent small-screen experience:

- **Use large buttons** for finger navigation on important calls to action, such as the main site navigation.
- **Simplify content.** Use less text and more pictures. Recognizing that shoppers have different intentions on tablets and smartphones, be thoughtful about what content to show on each as your site recognizes the device used.
- **Choose scrolling over pagination.** Scrolling saves shoppers the hassle of loading multiple pages on slower-speed data plans or wifi.
- **Scale important information like reviews and images.** Make sure star ratings and links to full reviews are clear. Ensure that images scale down nicely, and hold up to retina displays when shoppers zoom.
- **Eliminate pop ups entirely.** Clicking a photo for a larger size or a link to more product information should lead to a new page, not a difficult-to-close pop up window.



7 Mobile optimized emails double response rates

Marketing emails and review submission forms are still largely designed for laptop/desktop use. But 38% of email is opened on mobile devices¹⁴, and 32% of reviews across our client network are submitted via mobile. Add in the fact that the vast majority of review submissions across our client network come from post-purchase email review requests sent by the retailer or brand, and the need for mobile-friendly email and review submission becomes critical.

Designing email templates and subsequent landing pages for mobile goes against common design best practices. It leads to linear, practically image-free, text-based – in a word, boring – templates that most designers would frown at. Yet the result is a highly-readable, fast-loading, functional message or page for mobile readers.

Which leads to conversions. In a test with our client Buckle, our designers reformatted the retailer’s review request emails, and the submission pages readers reached, to just such simple designs, and used responsive design to ensure that the pages appeared correctly on any size screen.

The result was an astonishing 146% increase in review submissions¹⁵. The mobile-friendly, responsive templates outperformed the classic, desktop-based templates in every way, achieving 30.4% open rate and 11.25% click-through rate.

 *Simplify email and forms for mobile readers and visitors.*

Conclusion

Mobile shoppers are always on.

Their ability to research and buy any product at any time means that businesses can reach them any time as well. Businesses that cater to mobile shoppers needs by including reviews, in-store functionality, mobile-optimized sites and email templates, and more in their branded mobile efforts will win these “anytime shoppers” – and as their numbers grow, so will your revenues.



About Bazaarvoice

Bazaarvoice connects businesses together to amplify the authentic voices of people where they shop. Each month, more than 400 million people view and share opinions, questions and experiences about 20 million products in the Bazaarvoice network. The company's technology platform channels these voices into the places that influence purchase decisions, helping businesses gain access to a wider audience of shoppers and trusted consumer content to improve sales and marketing. Headquartered in Austin, Texas, Bazaarvoice has offices across North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific.

For more info, visit...

www.bazaarvoice.com

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Unless otherwise specified, stats in this paper refer to US consumers.

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