

COLUMNS

Mobile shopping spurred on by consumer spontaneity

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According to Forrester Research, United States mobile commerce is projected to hit \$114 billion this year. With the idea of mobile shopping becoming more mainstream, consumers have become increasingly comfortable making payments on their phone and on the go.

According to a Google study, 81 percent of smartphone purchases are spontaneous. Consumers now look to companies such as Groupon and Living Social for product suggestions, packages for last-minute weekend plans or to browse deals and offers during down time as a new form of hobby.

Buying it

Amazon initiated the era of 1-click purchasing, but on June 30 Twitter began publicly testing a "Buy Now" feature that can be embedded in Tweets to allow users to buy a product with a just couple of clicks.

While Amazon shoppers would browse the site looking for specific purchases, Twitter's Buy Now functionality gives users the ability to instantly buy instantly and this presents a huge opportunity for marketers.

Twitter is already a real-time source for news, photos and video clips, so it only makes sense for the social network to enter the space of real-time ecommerce deals as it looks to broaden its revenue stream.

The Twitter Buy Now feature is a great outlet for companies looking to sell time-sensitive items such as event tickets and travel deals, and social media platforms including Twitter and Snapchat have made it easy for brands to advertise new deals and similarly made it easy for consumers to access these deals easily with simple purchasing.

Brands such as GrubHub and Chat Sports have already leveraged Snapchat to tap spontaneous shoppers by creating contests, posting daily deals and giving away prizes. Snapchat Stories preserves a post for up to 24 hours, which provides an effective platform for brands to post flash deals and unveil content.

For example, food-delivery service GrubHub offered free grub to customers through a weeklong scavenger hunt. The company posted a new story everyday onto Snapchat and invited customers to take part in the challenge for a chance to win \$50 of free food.

The activity helped GrubHub accumulate a large amount of new followers on Snapchat and reach a younger demographic of diners who are interested in these types of flash deals. This was more of a branding exercise that proved effective, but Twitter is taking the extra step to become an ecommerce platform.

Location is also key to spontaneous shopping and mobile apps such as Yelp, Sosh and Bandsintown have done an excellent job of providing local deals and event information in an accessible and convenient manner.

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Event and sport ticket providers such as SeatGeek and GameTime can especially benefit from the growing spontaneous purchase trend, along with the online travel industry, and we see more interest from marketers to capitalize on the spontaneous shopping trend.

To take full advantage, both brand marketers and media providers must work closely together to build the optimal approach based on the target audience. These include:

Media providers

Continue to create ad formats that make it easy for brands to advertise last-minute deals

Provide a simple way for consumers to make their purchases, such as a three-click maximum

Incorporate a layer of targeting so the advertised daily deals appeal to the right audience, in the right place at the right time

Brand marketers

Develop a marketing message that is directed towards the right audience so their content is elevated in a meaningful manner

Consider investing in multiscreen advertising to retarget and sequentially deliver messages to the right audiences

Test and learn between paid, owned and earned media channels

Analyze results and develop an understanding of what channels work for daily deals

THE ADVANCEMENTS in technology and digital tools provided to mobile shoppers is the most important change in shopping behavior.

There is also a huge opportunity for features like Buy Now to be used in retargeting programs to reengage users that may have gone dormant.

Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook can target users based on their previous shopping history, and then with the ease of purchase it provides, the Buy Now feature has the potential to be a major source of revenue for Twitter, as well as brands.

With the era of spontaneous shopping set to continue, marketers should recognize the potential of formats such as the Buy Now button and act on it to capitalize on the new era of spontaneous shopping.

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