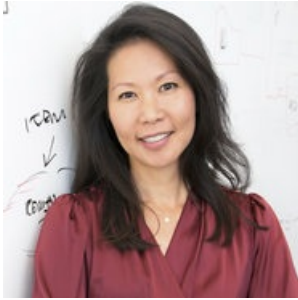


COLUMNS

Consumer shopping experiences set for rapid changes

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Eileen Kim is vice president of shopping at Local Corporation

By **Eileen Kim**

Seven years after the launch of the first iPhone, smartphones are now ubiquitous. Millions of consumers walk around with powerful pocket-sized personal assistants that give them direct access to unrivaled content. Whether via mobile sites or applications, this information advises and impacts every step of the consumer's purchase decision-making journey.

Multiple reports and studies have examined specifically how consumers' use of mobile devices is affecting and influencing their purchase decisions.

Retail detail

Our study, *Mobile Momentum: Spotlight on the Mobile Local Shopper*, further supported the idea that smartphones are multi-purpose shopping utilities that give connected consumers access to essential store and product information and inventory availability, which speeds purchase decision-making.

The research revealed that consumers use their smartphone to do the following:

Access information about a local store: 76 percent

Check inventory at a local store: 59 percent

Download apps that allow them to browse their favorite retailers: 67 percent

Have the ability to browse and preview their emails from retailers and sometimes make a purchase directly on their smartphone: 65 percent

Download apps that make in-store shopping more productive: 64 percent

In 2013, comScore recorded that more than half of the total U.S. digital population accessed the Web via multiple devices mobile and desktop versus just a desktop computer, and this number is expected to only increase.

Previously, comparison-shopping was a much more manual and tedious process since most data such as pricing and product information has been controlled by retailers. Now, however, the consumer shopping experience faces rapid changes:

Local-product-driven mobile advertising: Despite the hue and cry from some industry experts about underperforming mobile ads, we are still in the very early stages of figuring out what really works within mobile advertising.

Digital marketing product data and marketing techniques can target mobile users with special offers based on their

rich, real-time product data and remarketing techniques can target mobile users with special offers based on their exact location, existing searches and purchase intent. In this way, smartphones are virtually transformed into living, breathing personal assistants that customize the consumers' shopping experience for optimal convenience and speed.

Social-mobile: Mobile devices have become the perfect social media tools. Consumers can take and then share photos, update their status or mood, check-in to physical locations, and engage in a myriad of other activities via mobile.

Social has also emerged as a prominent method for coupon delivery and sharing. Consumers can use smartphone apps such as Wrapp or social platforms including Facebook to gift their network of friends with coupons or share deals and discounts via their newsfeeds. They not only provide information about specific products and purchases but also mediate the social shopping conversations in which consumers take part

Mobile-optimized Web sites and apps: Consumers demand complete optimization that goes beyond creating a mobile version of an existing site.

An entirely streamlined online-to-offline mobile shopping experience has the power to drive consumers to a make a purchase from their mobile device. This experience consists of connecting shoppers to preferred local stores through their brand's Web site, apps, social channels and rich media advertisements. This experience means delivering dynamic pricing and real-time stock availability to consumers who are engaged in online, pre-purchase research.

THE FACTS ARE in. Smartphones are quickly becoming the shopper's new best friend that speed up the purchase process by telling shoppers what to buy, where to buy, when to buy, and how to buy. And this may eventually go beyond just mobile devices to smart appliances, cars, store window displays and more.

Who knows? Eventually, we might have a device that actually drops off our clothes at the drycleaner and walks our dog, too.

Eileen Kim is vice president of shopping at [Local Corporation](#), Irvine, CA. Reach her at ekim@local.com.

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