

Millward Brown Reveals Top Reason People Prefer To Holiday Shop In Stores Rather Than Online

Contributed by Millward Brown
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Atmosphere, Inspiration, Thoughtfulness and the “Touch” Factor Drive People to Stores for their Holiday Shopping

Millward Brown today revealed findings from a recent U.S. study that looked at why people continue to shop in stores despite the convenience of online shopping. Of those surveyed:

- * Half said they shop in stores rather than online because they like the ability to see and touch items before purchase;
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- * 49 percent said they like the ideas they get while browsing;
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- * 42 percent said they enjoy the atmosphere of stores during the holidays;
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- * 22 percent believe that the act of personally going to a store to buy something adds value to the gift.

“With its obvious convenience, why don't more people do their holiday shopping online? We set out to understand this phenomena,” said Ann Green of Millward Brown. “Bricks-and-mortar retailers enjoy advantages that are hard for online retailers to overcome. No description of cashmere can match the sensation of actually feeling it, and the inspiration people gain by shopping in physical stores cannot be ignored. According to Millward Brown, these findings have implications for both brands and retailers.

For brands:

1. Distribution through physical retailers will net sales that might not be realized online. Prime display space is worth fighting for.
2. Wherever possible, give people a chance to touch your product. If the packaging prohibits this, provide a sample.

The implications for retailers are:

1. Bring shoppers into your store and keep them there. Invest in seasonal promotions, activities, and entertainment.
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2. Know your customers, and know how they celebrate. Macy’s is one of a number of retailers that has adopted a localization strategy; retailers should likewise strive to understand the holiday traditions of local shoppers, particularly their own clientele. No chain can afford to ignore the sense of locality afforded by specialty stores and boutiques.
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3. Keep the merchandise accessible and attractively displayed, but allow enough floor space for shoppers to move around comfortably.

This study was conducted online from November 5 through November 7, 2010 among 1000 U.S. adults aged 18 to 64.

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