Mobile Social Media Usage Affects Shopping Habits

Contributed by eMarketer
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Consumers trust friendsâ€™ opinions and access them on the go while shopping

As more consumers access social media via mobile devices, it changes the way they research and shop for products and services offline.

Knowledge Networks and MediaPost Communications surveyed teen and adult social media users for â€œThe Faces of Social Mediaâ€• study and found that, in May 2011, 40% of respondents accessed social media via their mobile phones. This was an increase from 28% who reported doing the same in September 2010.

Additionally, 37% of US social media users trust what their friends and family members say about a brand or product on social media, compared to only 10% who trust what strangers say.

Drilling down to specific social elements, 26% trust what friends and family members say in blog posts, 25% trust their posts on social media sites and 20% trust their tweets. This is compared to 7% who trust the blogs and posts of strangers, and 5% who trust strangersâ€™ tweets.

Additionally, an April 2011 study from ROI Research found that 60% of US social network users were at least somewhat likely to take action when a friend posted something about a product, service, company or brand on a social media site.

As more consumers access social media on the go, their in-store shopping decisions will be affected by these same influential brand discussions. The Knowledge Networks study found that 27% of US mobile internet users turned to social media to compare or check prices before, during or after shopping, while 24% checked reviews and 16% got coupons or discounts for local businesses. Overall, half of mobile web users interacted with social media at some point in the shopping process.

This makes social media, where consumers connect with their friends and family, an important destination for researching purchasing decisions in-store. This is an added challenge for retailers and marketers, as they must focus on keeping customers happy on the go and remember how much influence a customerâ€™s social media posts can have on their friends and family members.

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