Digital Coupons Rival Print Counterparts In Effectiveness

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Deals spur PC users to perform product research, make purchases

The battered US economy has driven price-conscious consumers online to do research before making a purchase, and eMarketer estimates that there will be 92.5 million online coupon users by the end of 2012.

Those savings-savvy consumers will no doubt be helped by electronic circulars, which now rival their print counterparts in penetration, according to a November 2011 study of US internet users by Yahoo! and Ipsos.

The poll found that 27% of respondents preferred receiving digital coupons and deals as opposed to getting them offline, compared with 33% who still preferred print versions. Of those that favored digital, eight in 10 said the convenience of digital deals made them preferable, especially their direct delivery to email inboxes. Seven in 10 liked the ease of management that digital deals offered, saying they facilitated comparison shopping and were easy to share.

According to the research, email was the most powerful digital channel for coupons and dealsâ€”64% of respondents subscribed to at least one regularly delivered discount email newsletter. And of those who received newsletters, about half checked them at least once a day.

The study also found that compared to their mobile and tablet counterparts, PC users were more likely to be motivated by digital circulars to conduct product research after receiving a discount promotion. Almost half of PC users said they would do more research on a product after receiving a deal email, while only one in five of those on smartphones or tablets had a similar response.

Additionally, 37% of US PC users responded to a digital circular by making a purchase based on an offer contained within, well more than the 13% of mobile users and 17% of tablet users who did so.

As digital deals catch on, marketers should make sure to assess customer usage and engagement patterns to stay on top of consumer demand.

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