

Last Five Years Sees 18% Growth In The UK Menswear Market

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Ahead of LC:M (London Collections: Men) latest research from Mintel finds British men really are dedicated followers of fashion, as the UK menswear market grew by an impressive 18% between 2008 and 2013 to reach £12.9 billion in 2013. During 2013, as many as 91% of all British men bought clothes.

And it seems that menswear is moving out from the shadow of womenswear as the men's clothing market has outperformed women's clothing in the past year, growing by almost 5% (4.8%) between 2012 and 2013, compared with 4.6% for womenswear. As British men become more aware of their appearance and more interested in fashion, clothing retailers have increasingly turned their attention to menswear.

The report finds it is men aged 25-34 who are leading the way in the fashion market, with as many as 94% of this age group having purchased clothes in the past year, the highest rate of all age groups. This group have also become as fashion conscious as their younger counterparts (those aged 16-24), some 22% of both age groups claiming to always keep an eye out on the latest trends.

Tamara Sender, Senior Fashion Analyst said:

“Menswear has benefitted from a growing interest in fashion amongst Britain's men, with the under 45s showing a strong interest in fashion trends. Men's fashion has also been less susceptible to discounting than women's, as Mintel's consumer research shows that men are less drawn to bargains.”

“British men are becoming more aware of their image, and men in the 25 to 34 age group have become as fashion conscious as their younger counterparts. While the menswear market is still underserved compared to womenswear, more retailers are moving into the sector creating more choice on the highstreet for men.” Tamara continued.

And it seems, British men are giving women a run for their money when it comes to fashion. Indeed, compared to women - Britain's younger men are surprisingly more fashion conscious. Today, as many as a quarter (26%) of British men aged 25-34 admit they are driven by the latest fashion when buying clothes, compared to just 17% of women of the same age. Meanwhile, men are twice as likely as women to prefer branded clothes (19% versus 8%).

And while men continue to show an element of caution following the economic downturn and have adapted their shopping behaviour, they are still buying new clothes. Mintel's quarterly Fashion Tracker found that (during the first three months of 2014) male clothes shoppers were more likely than female shoppers to have spent more on clothes than they did before, some 14% of men agreeing with this compared with 11% of women. Young men have also cut back less on clothes spending than women. Around a quarter (27%) of men aged 15 to 24 have become more careful about what they spend on clothes compared to two fifths (41%) of women of the same age.

When it comes to shopping online, some 60% of men have bought clothes online in the last 12 months, with under 55-year-olds showing a preference for browsing for clothes online rather than looking around on the high street. And looking at how men shop for clothes, as many as 66% browse for clothes online, while just 42% look around on the high street. Meanwhile, a fifth (20%) of working men can't resist a spot of online shopping during their lunch break.

Top five priorities for the nation's men when shopping in-store are - 1. Value for money (74%), 2. Product quality (58%), 3. Availability of size (46%), 4. Special offers/sales (35%) 5. Wide selection of brands (20%).

For online shopping, the top five factors are 1. Cost of delivery (56%), 2. Speed of delivery (44%), 3. Special offer (41%), 4. Online customer services (25%) and 5. Returns policy (25%).

“In order to drive online fashion sales among men, retailers will need to provide more flexible delivery options that fit in with consumers' busy lifestyles. It is becoming increasingly important for retailers to not just provide speed, but also a defined delivery window and clothing retailers will need to follow the lead of grocers and give more specific arrival times. There is scope for retailers to introduce more tailored delivery options to suit specific customers.” adds Tamara.

London men step out in style

Finally, it seems that London really is the fashion capital when it comes to clothing. Indeed, while an average of 14% of male clothes shoppers feel the latest fashion is important when buying clothes in store - this rises to almost three in ten (27%) living in London and compares to just 5% of Brits living in Yorkshire/Humberside.

What is more, while one in five (19%) male clothes shoppers say they prefer to buy branded clothes, this rises to almost

three in ten (28%) living in London. And while 13% of male clothes shoppers say they like to keep an eye out on latest trends, this rises to a quarter (23%) of those living in London.

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