

Are we there yet? Mcommerce isn't working

Just 4% of UK consumers find making mobile purchases pain free

06 July 2010: The vast majority of brands are losing sales and failing to meet UK consumers' expectations when it comes to mobile commerce, according to the 2010 Brandbank Mcommerce Content Report, which polled 2,255 British consumers with YouGov.

Brandbank's 2010 Report shows some major attitudinal differences between consumers that own smartphones (21%) and those who don't (79%), but the overall trend is one of dissatisfaction with current mobile offerings. Only four per per centⁱ of UK consumers claim they find making purchases via their mobile device hassle free, while just 12 per centⁱⁱ claim that they don't find anything irritating about their mobile browsing experience.

Mcommerce limited to smartphone owners

The report reveals that as many as 64 per cent of UK adults claim never to use their phone to help them shop, but this figure masks a major significant difference between those that own smartphones and those who don't. Of all non-smartphone owners, 85% claim they never use their phone to help them shop compared to 19% of all smartphone owners.

While very few non-smartphone owners use their phones at all in their shopping behaviour, the most common way smartphone owners use their devices is in purchasing products directly online, via their mobile browser (47%). The next most common smartphone uses are reading products ratings or reviews online (40%), finding out additional information from a retailer's website (36%), comparing prices online (34%) and searching for nearby high street stores (28%). 26 per cent said they make purchases using specially downloaded applications.

Although online purchases may be the most popular way that consumers use smartphones to help them shop, just 15 per cent of owners say that they find the process hassle free, with 18 per cent saying they find it positively difficult and time consuming.

Display and loading times consumers' biggest gripes

When asked which aspects of their mcommerce experience they found to be irritating, the most frequent response was being forced to zoom in and out to view all the information on a web page (47%ⁱⁱⁱ). This was followed by having to wait for images to load on a page (43%^{iv}) and being unable to see images, videos or hear audio (39%).

Usability issues also appeared to be a concern, with 38 per cent of people being irritated by the amount of information (such as credit card details, delivery address etc.) they have to enter via their key pad or touch screen, while 25 per cent were put off by the number of different pages they have to click through to make a payment.

Rob Tarrant, Managing Director at Brandbank and co-chairman of the GS1 Image Standards Working Group, commented: "Although mcommerce is developing faster than it has done for some time, the

reality is that, like the child in the back of the car's complaint 'are we there yet?', most of the industry is still uncertain as to when it will take off. The findings from our 2010 report confirm what we know from our conversations with our partners – there is still some way to go before mcommerce becomes mainstream. Even for smartphone owners, there are just too many problems with the ways consumers currently access mobile content. Shoppers typically have to access web pages which were originally designed for large rather than small screens and frequently face loading and display issues with the product data and imagery.”

“Retailers and suppliers need to realise that they cannot just re-use traditional online images – the imaging process used to develop a mobile platform is wholly different. Entirely different media specifications and sizes are required as well as alternative display techniques, better suited to the small screen, such as box-outs, hover boxes and embedding information into an image.”

Poor mobile experiences lead to churn

The report reveals that retailers face a serious risk of customer churn as a result of poor mobile offerings. When consumers were asked what their typical response would be to a negative mcommerce experience (such as slow loading times or not being able to see all the appropriate product information), 35 per cent claim they would simply conduct an internet search for the product they were interested in, while 23 per cent say they would look directly at another retailer's website.

Just 10 per cent of consumers claim that would try to reload page more than once, 25 per cent say they would try the page again but wouldn't try twice while 25 per cent say they would never revisit that retailer's website again on their mobile phone.

Tarrant continued: “The cost for getting your mobile offering wrong can be severe. Mobile browsers exhibit very little loyalty and one bad experience can be enough to put them off ever coming back to you. Retailers and suppliers need ensure they have clear processes for working together to maintain up-to-date imagery and data, with different specifications for different types of mobile platforms, for all of their products.”

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Methodology:

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2255 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 25th - 27th May 2010. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

About Brandbank:

Brandbank is the UK's largest producer and provider of product data and multimedia for blue-chip retailers. The company provides a one-stop-shop solution for creating, managing, and automatically supplying live product data, images and video to blue-chip online retailers from more than 2,000 suppliers. Brandbank bridges the gap between retailers and suppliers.

Brandbank has more than a decade's experience setting the highest standards in digital asset management and data syndication. The company works in partnership with GS1 standards and co-chaired the GS1 Image Standards Working Group.

Brandbank's people are specialist, highly qualified data and photography professionals. Brandbank's bespoke creative and data services are supported by its proprietary technology to deliver consistent results for both brands and retailers.

Brandbank works for major blue chip retailers and brands including Coca Cola, Heinz, Absolut, Tesco, Asda and Unilever.

ⁱ 15% for smartphone owners, 1% for non-smartphone owners

ⁱⁱ 10% for smartphone owners, 18% for non-smartphone owners

ⁱⁱⁱ 54% for smartphone owners, 28% for non-smartphone owners

^{iv} 46% smartphone owners, 34% non-smartphone owners