



This Holiday Season, Watch for These Three Shopping Trends

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Whether looking for gift ideas for grandma or that must-have toy in stock nearby, shoppers will use smartphones this winter gift-giving season, but just how they do that is changing. Here are the latest consumer shopping trends that every retailer needs to know.

think with **Google**

The most important thing for retailers used to be foot traffic—getting a shopper into a store. Today, [shopping happens everywhere](#): in stores, on the web, on the web while in stores. And it happens all the time, in [micro-moments](#) throughout the day and night. In fact, 4 in 5 smartphone holiday shoppers used their phone during spare moments or while doing other activities last year.¹ This means that attention is at a premium, and retailers need to be present wherever and whenever someone is shopping.

How can retailers make sure they reach shoppers this upcoming holiday season? We looked back at last year's holiday season and analyzed the latest retail trends to help marketers get a head start on their holiday plan.

Sight, sound, and shopping

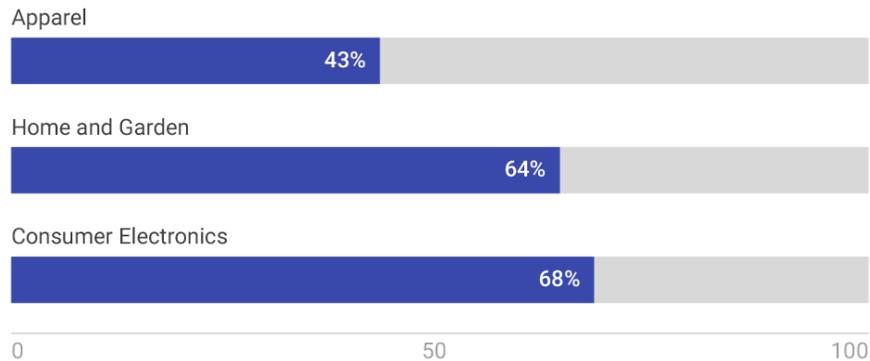
When they start shopping for the holidays, most people—nearly 7 in 10—are totally undecided or considering multiple gift options.² To get ideas, they used to thumb through catalogs or walk by store windows. But today, [oversized catalogs](#) fall under fire, and the web, rich with visuals and videos, is where people go to browse.

On YouTube, gift guides are a popular and growing trend during the holidays. In this genre of video, creators like [Grace Helbig](#), [Zoella](#), [iJustine](#), even [Kid President](#) dole out advice on the perfect gift and often endorse their favorite products to buy. Most of the time (70%), these videos are watched on mobile.³ That "anywhere, anytime" access adds up; in the time people spent watching gift guide videos on YouTube last holiday season, you could watch "It's a Wonderful Life" well over 300,000 times.⁴

Videos really do guide gift buying. In the consumer electronics category, for one, 68% of smartphone shoppers turn to YouTube for ideas about what to buy.⁵

% of Smartphone Shoppers Who Turn to YouTube for Ideas About What to Buy

Source: Google/
Euromonitor
International, "Retail
Micro-Moments," U.S.,
apparel, consumer
electronics, home &
garden mobile shoppers,
n=500 for each category,
Jun. 2016.



Quest for the best

Once they have an idea of what to get, today's shoppers face an overwhelming number of options, especially online. Want to get mom a scarf? Amazon sells roughly 225,000. Deciding which to buy can leave shoppers [stressed](#), [unhappy](#) and [paralyzed](#). (Maybe that's why, last season, nearly 7 in 10 holiday shoppers said they received a gift card.)⁶

To narrow down the options, shoppers look for (what else?) the best ones. In the top retail categories, mobile searches on Google related to "best" products have grown by more than 50% in the last year.⁷ And more than ever, shoppers are relying on product reviews in these ["which-one's-best" moments](#). Last holiday, reading reviews was one of the top three actions shoppers took while shopping on mobile, up significantly from the previous two years.⁶

Source: Google Data,
U.S. searches related to
apparel, home & garden,
beauty & personal care,
computer & electronics
and gift, May 2015 vs.
May 2016.



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Mobile is local

When holiday shoppers are ready to buy, digital will play a big role, but it's only part of the equation (read: don't count on shorter checkout lines). People still value [touching a product](#), but now they're tapping a screen at the same time. Mobile searches in stores are up by over 30%.⁸ Often, shoppers will buy on their smartphones right there in the aisle. Forty-three percent of mobile shoppers in consumer electronics have purchased products on their phones while looking at those products in the store.⁵

Mobile in-store searches are up by over 30%.

What it really comes down to is convenience—what marketers call "[frictionless shopping](#)." It should be as easy as possible to buy something no matter where someone is. Nearly 7 in 10 people say it's important that a retailer offers multiple ways to buy a product, such as buying online or picking up in-store.² And when they do buy online, shoppers look for free shipping; it was the promotion that shoppers most used last holiday season, more than coupons or discounts.⁶

As shoppers look for the perfect gift this season, there's no one perfect way to reach them. Rather, it'll require a combination of tactics to get their attention. The one common denominator—mobile. It lets marketers be everywhere in every moment. That's true holiday magic.

Sources

- 1 Google/Ipsos, "Post-Holiday Shopping Intentions Study—Total Shoppers Report," base: used smartphone for holiday shopping, n=410, Jan. 2016.
- 2 Google Consumer Survey, U.S. online population aged 18+, n=1,513, June 2016.
- 3 Google Data, U.S., classification as "gift guide" video was based on public data such as headlines and tags, and may not account for every such video available on YouTube, Dec. 2015.
- 4 Google Data, U.S., classification as "gift guide" video was based on public data such as headlines and tags, and may not account for every such video available on YouTube, Oct. 2015–Dec. 2015.
- 5 Google/Euromonitor International, "Retail Micro-Moments," U.S., apparel, consumer electronics, home & garden mobile shoppers, n=500 for each category, Jun. 2016.
- 6 Google/Ipsos, "Post-Holiday Shopping Intentions Study—Total Shoppers Report," base: U.S. holiday shoppers, n=1,500, Jan. 2016.
- 7 Google Data, U.S. searches related to apparel, home & garden, beauty & personal care, computer & electronics and gift, May 2015 vs. May 2016.
- 8 Google Data, Aggregated, anonymized data from a sample of U.S. users that have turned on Location History, May, 2016.