

5 Ways Social Media Impacts Online Shopper Behaviour

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Whether or not you've jumped on the So-Lo-Mo bandwagon yet, shoppers definitely have. Don't believe it? The best brands and retailers out there sure do, and they're capitalizing on the social space as we speak in order to get a piece of that shopper pie. In order to better understand and react to shopper's activity online, social media is a key component begging to be studied. Luckily, many have started the movement—according to a new [series of social media-focused reports](#) from [Mintel](#), here are the top 5 ways social media impacts online shopper behaviour. Shopper marketing savants, check them out:

PEER POWER.

Naturally, social media has opened the door for shoppers to get more and more input on their purchases before they make them, but not every product is equal. According to the [findings](#) from [Mintel](#), for products that are more high-value or considered as infrequent purchases (in other words, splurge items), shoppers are most likely to gather purchase opinions from friends and family. However, for more affordable everyday products, social online chatter revolves more around shoppers' post-purchase opinions and experiences.

MURMURS ON MOBILE.

“According to consumer research run for Mintel’s Social Media series, an average 16% of people look up reviews of mobile phone brands. Despite long-term mobile phone contracts, an average of just one in ten mobile phone users researched reviews of mobile service providers online. As the battle between the iPhone and Android continues to rage offline, these are the two brands that people are most likely to search the internet for reviews on as they seek to make up their own mind about taking the plunge or switching to the other side,” says Mintel’s Gabi Lieberman in the official [release](#).

Additionally, [Mintel](#) also found that iPhone is currently winning the race when it comes to more online discussion: the iPhone boasts 8.7 million online mentions between August and December 2012, while the Android only had 4.7 million.

CHARACTERS LEAD TO CONVERSATION.

Big brands’ usage of (often funny) fictional characters or spokespeople are key to driving shopper discussion online and on major social platforms. Why? According to [Mintel](#), the use of friendly characters often makes the brand (and, by extension, the product in question) more approachable and easy to discuss, especially if it’s for a more embarrassing consumer issue. Good example: the “[Mr. Mucus](#)” character for Mucinex, and [Flo for Progressive](#) car insurance—both make their respective “product” more fun or easy to discuss.

ONLINE ACTIVITY = IMPACTFUL.

This finding isn’t so hard to believe: shoppers’ online behaviours are becoming increasingly impactful on overall consumer behaviour. Just look at some of the biggest brands on major social platforms, and see their ease of interaction. Some of the best examples, according to [Mintel](#), are in the Health & Beauty categories. “With rising broadband penetration and smartphone ownership, would-be consumers are increasingly turning to information online to guide purchase decisions and opinions,” said [Mintel’s Gabi Lieberman](#).

INNOVATION IS INFLUENTIAL.

The key to capturing shoppers’ attention on social? Don’t just be creative, be *innovative*. The main takeaway from [Mintel’s](#) series is that brands that are willing to take risks, as well as find ways to stand apart from the crowd, really reaped the benefits. Prime example from the findings include: Lay’s “[Do Us a Flavor](#)” campaign, which included images and infographics on the most submitted flavors, as well as curated data on regional flavor preferences; and [Domino’s](#) and their commitment to full transparency in all of their marketing and ad campaigns post-pizza makeover.

ABOUT POPAI

POPAI is the global association for marketing at retail. With over 1,700 member companies, representing Fortune 500 brand manufacturers and retailers as well as producers and agencies, its focus is on research, education, globalisation, technology, advocacy and networking.

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