International Post Corporation

Social media and changing purchasing habits drive 11% YOY growth in online shopping spend

13-10-2020

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to an 11 per cent year-on-year increase in the monthly amount consumers spend online, according to Royal Mailâ€™s annual Delivery Matters study. Online shopping helped UK shoppers to get through the early stages of lockdown. The average UK shopper now spends on average £83* a month online** compared to £75 in 2019.

Social media influence continues to grow, with 25 per cent of people purchasing items online after seeing posts or comments by others, with younger shoppers (47% of 18-34s) and women (30%) most likely to have made a purchase after being influenced by online posts.

The reasons for opting to shop online rather than in-store remain similar to last year: ease of comparing prices (53%), more choice (51%), easier to search and buy (49%) as well as the comfort and convenience of shopping from home (44%).

In terms of the most popular days when people like to shop online, Friday and Saturday led the charge. Although 67 per cent said they were not swayed by one day in particular as they would gladly shop on any day of the week. As for the preferred time, smartphone users tend to be night owls (59% shopping between midnight and 6am), whilst those using desktops typically make purchases during the day.

Two thirds of shoppers prefer home delivery but if that option isn't on offer, the Post Office remains the most trusted alternative (73%). Delivery to the local Royal Mail Customer Service Point was preferred by 67 per cent of online shoppers (up from 64% in 2019).

It's also not all doom and gloom for the high street. The research shows that 90 per cent of UK online shoppers continue to purchase in-store as lockdown restrictions ease.

Going green

Environmental concerns are of growing importance to UK consumers. Almost two-thirds (62 per cent) of younger shoppers (18-34-year olds) consider it important that retailers offer environmentally friendly delivery.

With more than 90,000 postmen and postwomen and the UK's largest feet-on-the-street network and trials of alternative energy vehicles in progress, one in five believe Royal Mail offers a green delivery service. This is twice as many as the closest competitor.

Nick Landon, Chief Commercial Officer at Royal Mail, said: "The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has increased the amount consumers are spending online as well as changed online shopping habits. The influence of social media over what people do and do not buy continues to grow. When it comes to having their precious items delivered, online shoppers continue to put their trust in the knowledge, expertise and reassurance of the Royal Mail brand. 77 per cent of online shoppers trust Royal Mail to deliver. That's much more than any other carrier."

Source: Royal Mail

CLASSIFICATION: CORPORATE | WWW.IPC.BE © 2026