

UPS Study: Purchases From Marketplaces Nearly Universal; Retail Now Global As E-Commerce Shoppers Cross Borders

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The study – which captured the changing behaviors and preferences of online shoppers in six markets including the U.S., Asia, Europe, Canada, Mexico and Brazil – details how these behavioral shifts seek better prices, and more choice, control and convenience. It also captures geographic differences, information essential to retailers as e-commerce increasingly transcends geographic borders.

“Understanding shoppers and meeting their demands is crucial in this rapidly changing landscape,” said Alan Gershenhorn, chief commercial officer for UPS. “To stand out, smart companies must recognize that, with competition now coming from around the world, consumers want different ways to make purchases, more convenient ways to receive them and innovative experiences from start to finish.”

Almost all online shoppers in the markets surveyed shop at marketplaces, which are third-party e-commerce sites that let multiple merchants sell products. In Mexico, 99% of shoppers reported making a marketplace

purchase, compared with 98% in Asia and 96% in both Europe and Canada. The top reasons for using marketplaces are better prices and free or discounted shipping.

The study also showed that global competition for customers is increasing, with a significant number of online shoppers in Canada (83%), Brazil (81%) and Mexico (78%) making purchases from international retailers. In the U.S., nearly half (47%) of shoppers made international purchases. Consumers shopped internationally primarily for better prices and access to specific or unique products.

The majority of global shoppers also use mobile devices to search for products, compare prices, locate stores and track deliveries, all the more reason retailers should think ‘mobile first.’ At least 70% of respondents in all regions used smartphones to compare prices while in stores.

Meanwhile, shoppers expect quick fulfillment of online orders and speedy delivery across all regions, but expectations for what counts as quick delivery differ. Consumers in Asia, Mexico and Brazil expect to be able to place orders later in the day and still be eligible for same-day and next-day delivery.

Across all regions, consumers make online return purchases. Shoppers in the U.S. (44%) are the most likely to return an online

purchase, while shoppers in Mexico are the least likely (22%). When both return options are available, shoppers in Asia and Europe prefer to ship online purchases back to retailers compared to consumers in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Brazil, who prefer to return online orders to a physical store. Among those who prefer to ship returns to a physical store, ease and free shipping returns are the leading reasons for this preference across all regions.

New developments in the retail experience that may play a role in the future of the industry include online marketplaces and new technologies such as robots and chatbots, according to the study. Consumers are more open to some new technologies in the retail landscape but skeptical of others. When asked about the appeal of robots in stores,

more than half of consumers in the U.S. and Canada are not convinced, preferring to interact with a person. While face-to-face assistance is preferable in-store, respondents prefer self-service options online. The comfort level with using chatbots for tasks like getting product information is highest in the U.S. (65%) and lowest in Mexico (45%).

The study divided the results into three sections: Constants, areas of the retail experience that remain important year after year and influence purchase behaviors; Movers, areas where consumers have shown significant growth in recent years; and Emergers, newer areas of retail that may play a role in the shopping experience of the future.

Source: [UPS](#)

