

SALSIFY | Ebook

How Brands Can Simplify the Path to Purchase

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The Path to Purchase Has Changed

Consider how the customer journey has changed since the rise of the digital shelf. The path to purchase for a shopper previously involved a single visit to a brick-and-mortar store. This journey now spans numerous Google searches, online product reviews and ratings, a wide selection of retailer sites, social media, and many other avenues.

The traditional, two-dimensional path to purchase has evolved. Once a bedrock of corporate strategy, this model is quickly losing relevance as customers continue to adopt nonlinear, omnichannel approaches to researching and making their purchases.

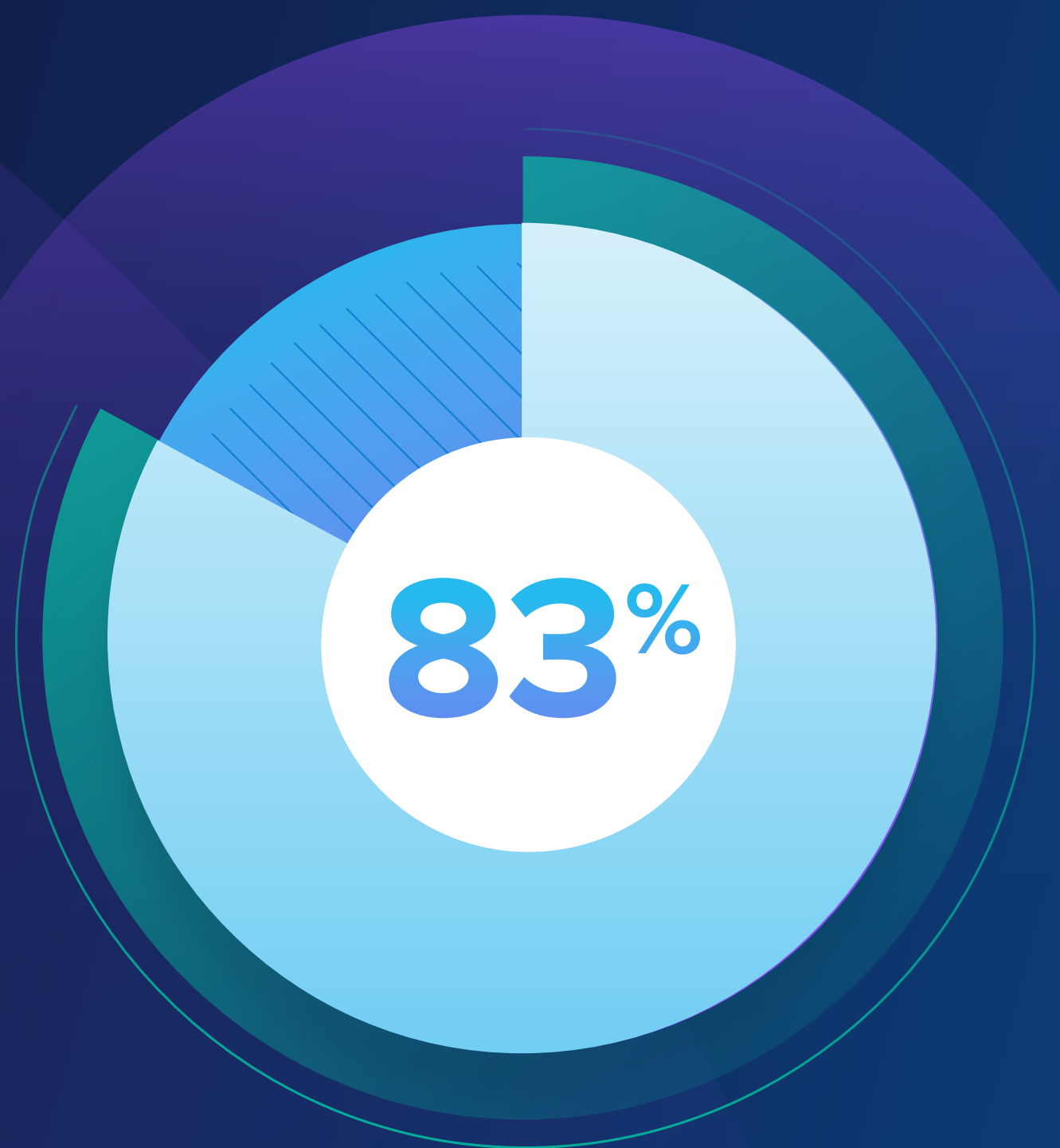
This change has given consumers unprecedented access to choice and differing opinions when considering their purchases. Customers want relevant, accurate product information, but often find themselves overwhelmed trying to find it.



6 Steps to Simplify the Path to Purchase Online

The need to simplify the path to purchase will only expand in importance as brands face ongoing consumer shifts and the recent spike in ecommerce stemming from concerns about COVID-19. Even before consumers shifted en masse to online channels, 2019 Google research found that the majority (83%) of shoppers who had visited a brick-and-mortar store had used online search first.

As the mass market continues its shift to masses of markets, brands must take steps to simplify the path to purchase for their customers. Here are six steps that can help your brand meet customers at every point in their shopping journeys.



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1. Closely Monitor Customer Behavior

Pay attention to which parts of your path inspire customers to action — and which cause them to bounce. An intimate understanding of your average customer's path to purchase, including which parts of the experience drive satisfaction, trust, and purchases, will [give you the insights you need to adapt](#).

Take steps to reinforce and expand on those elements. Are customers [more likely to purchase when a product page features engaging content](#), such as 360-degree image spins, editorial image galleries, videos, or comparison charts? Are prospects more likely to buy when a product is available for same-day pickup at a retail outlet? Is their experience personalized in such a way that they feel understood and trust your brand?

2. Boost Touchpoint Presence to Stop Drop Off

The same goes for less productive parts of your path. At which parts of this journey do customers tend to drop off? Increase your presence on those touchpoints to guide customers back to the path to purchase.

Consider your options for boosting your touchpoint presence. Could a follow-up text or email get a customer to reconsider her cart abandonment? Would a link to reliable third-party information about your brand or product help ease her concerns?

3. Utilize Personalization

The flipside of knowing your average customer's typical pathway to purchase is knowing your customers themselves. Who is buying your products, and why? Speaking with your customers is the simplest way to gather this information.

Gain insights into the factors that made them decide to click "buy," and those that left them feeling uncertain. Carefully consider your buyer personas, and identify similarities within each buying journey to pin-point the average shopping path.

This information will give you the tools you need to develop more personalized content experiences. Rather than focusing solely on your products, you'll have the information you need to understand how your customers feel at every touchpoint and can speak effectively to those emotions.

4. Optimize Across Devices and Channels

Customer behavior varies widely depending on the means used to access the path to sale. As an increasing number of shoppers use their smartphones for "digital window shopping" and buying, ensure product content is optimized for both desktop and mobile experiences.

Content requirements vary across retailers, and brands must maintain multiple versions of this product content to ensure consistent and engaging experiences across channels. Effective syndication, which is the process of sending product content to retailers, requires [the ability to make quick, channel-specific product content updates](#) using a central hub for product information.

Customers now come to expect a consistent brand experience across multiple touchpoints when considering a purchase. The need for your brand to consistently engage customers across touchpoints is more important than ever.

5. Monitor External Touchpoints

Don't underestimate the power of external touchpoints: Like it or not, today's customers won't rely solely on your direct-to-consumer (D2C) channels to learn about your products. Your customers are also on review websites, social media, and other online communities. These avenues are where they gain a significant amount of their information — and it can often be where they find the data points that lead to final purchasing decisions.

You don't need to cede control entirely. Consider how your company could more effectively monitor these touchpoints, and how you might steer a customer further down the path to purchase — or at least back to your own channels.

If potential customers are posting questions on Quora, is there an advantage in engaging them there? What about on a message board like Reddit, or a service like Twitter? Are there other parts of your messaging you could enhance with these external touchpoints in mind?

6. Be Responsive and Real With Customers

Don't ignore feedback or common questions you receive from customers. Not only can you adopt their language in your marketing materials, but you'll also get a sense of where your information gaps are, and how to best address them.

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You also don't want to overwhelm the customer with pop-ups or gimmicks. Make sure your product content is relatable, which will help move them toward the point-of-sale, where appropriate, in their path to purchase.