Online and In Store Shopping Trends

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The purpose of this paper is to learn and compare the latest shopping trends and their impact on the shopping experience by comparing online shopping trends with physical shopping. The strategies of online shopping retailers and traditional retailers have been analyzed. Users have multiple options to purchase one product online or physically. In this report, I compared two online retailers (Amazon and Apple) with two physical stores (Best Buy Mobile and Apple Store) for purchasing iPhones. Finally, I have discussed some recommendations for improving online and in-store shopping experiences.

Background

I have selected the Apple iPhone as the product to compare the two shopping experiences. When a user goes to purchase a product online or from physical stores, he/she has plenty of options to do. For example, if a customer considers online shopping for an iPhone, a lot of websites, including Amazon and the online Apple store, along with websites for particular mobile brands, are available. A user can go to any of the websites and purchase the product according to their preferences. However, if a user wants to buy the product from a physical store, he/she will encounter numerous options to do that, ranging from Apple physical stores to other retailers selling the same product.

There are some key factors every user considers while purchasing a product. The first element is the price. The user will look for the lowest price possible. If online stores are offering a discount, the customer will more likely purchase the product online. The second element is the delivery charges or shipping charges and the return policy on the product in case of damage (“Returns & Refunds,” 2018). If the shipping charges are high, consumers may consider physical store shopping. The third factor is how convenient it is for the user to go and find the desired product and how much time it will take. The fourth element is the variety of the products the shops have. Customer demands variety and prefer to purchase the product from where they can get maximum options.

Shopping Comparison

The four-element user considers before purchasing a product is price, delivery charges, convenience, and variety. Now, I will compare both shopping trends based on these four criteria. First comes the price. I need to purchase an iPhone, so I will search online for the lowest prices and compare the online pricing each website is giving me. Starting from Amazon, I will check the price and go to the online Apple store to compare the prices both websites are giving me. After finding the lowest online

price, I will check nearby physical stores such as Apple store and Best Buy Mobile stores to see the price (Best Buy, 2018). If I get the low price at the physical store, I will prefer to buy an iPhone from there.

The second factor is considering shipping charges or re-shipping charges in case of a damaged product from an online purchase. Amazon offers free shipping in the USA and takes 7 to 9 business days to deliver the product, while Apple offers free shipping too but charges tax according to the state, which makes Amazon a better option. If the actual price and shipping price together are higher than the price I was getting at the Apple physical store or Best Buy store, then the second option will be better to shop for the iPhone.

The third element is convenience. Online purchasing is considered best in regards to convenience. It saves time, energy and the money I have to spend on gas and parking. I don't have to spare time and drive somewhere to buy a product. I can just place an order on one of the websites and wait for my package to arrive on the due date. Online shopping has drastically changed the traditional way of shopping because of its time convenient use. Another important advantage of online shopping is that users can access the website from anywhere and place an order. No need to go to a particular place to find the nearby store. One disadvantage I am facing while shopping online is not being able to physically touch and feel the product and check if everything looks fine. Apple store and Best Buy Mobile have relaxed, a friendly, comfortable environment where I can sit and examine my iPhone before purchasing it. Another insecurity I am facing is giving my credit card information online, as now I am vulnerable to cyber-attacks.

The fourth element has variety. Amazon has a wide range of mobile phones on its website featuring almost all major brands, while Apple has a brand-specific website and only has Apple products (Amazon.com, 2018). I want to purchase an iPhone, but I also like to go through other major brands, such as Samsung. It is easy to make a comparison on Amazon with other brand phones. Physical stores usually have larger stock as compared to the online store and have a good range of variety overall. Best Buy Mobile has the same advantage over Apple stores as Amazon has on Apple's online website. It has more variety regarding mobile brands and accessories.

Recommendation

I prefer online shopping as compared to going to the store. The most important aspect of online shopping is a user-friendly, easy and clean website. When I visited Amazon for the purchase, I could not figure out where to go. It was so crowded with data that it confused me. Apple, on the other hand, has a much cleaner website and is easy to use. I recommend having less information on a current web page and focusing only on the product the user wants to purchase. Apple's website should categorize the new products instead of showcasing only one banner. To improve the Best Buy Mobile and Apple store shopping experience, I would recommend multiple store locations and improved customer care services.

References

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