Press release

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Channel collision: drivers of online and in-store shopping are not as sharply divided as you think

Nuremberg, May 05, 2016 – Traditionally, the primary drivers for online shopping are seen as being consumers' desire for better price, time saving and choice, in particular access to the 'long tail'. In-store shopping, on the other hand, is seen as driven by the better experience delivered face to face and the ability to take home your purchase straight away. However, GfK's FutureBuy study reveals that the division is not as clear cut as expected.

GfK asked 23,000 shoppers within 17 industries across APAC, LATAM, Europe, North America and the Middle East to think about the last time they were deciding whether to purchase something online versus in a store, and indicate what swayed their decision one way or the other.

The most important factors that shoppers say swayed their decision to make their purchase online rather than in-store are: saving money (the clear leader at 55 percent), easier shopping (28 percent), a better selection of goods (26 percent) and faster shopping (25 percent). The fifth most popular factor was equally divided, with one in five shoppers (21 percent) saying they chose online because they get better information there, and the same number saying it was because they are routinely shopping there already.

Most important factors driving a choice to purchase *online*		
1	Save money (better pricing, deals)	55%
2	Shopping is easier	28%
3	Better selection	26%
4	Shopping is faster	25%
5=	Get better information	21%
5=	I'm routinely shopping there already	21%

Source: GfK FutureBuy survey of 23,000 shoppers in APAC, LATAM, Europe, North America, Middle East

Overlap in driving factors

However, four of those reasons for deciding to buy online also show up in the top five most important factors that drive people to buy in-store.

For purchases where shoppers chose to buy in-store rather than online, the leading factor swaying that decision are because they can see and feel the products before they buy (51 percent) – no surprise there. However, the next most popular reasons are more interesting.

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A third (33 percent) said they chose to make a specific purchase in-store rather than online because shopping is easier in-store – compare this to the 28 percent who felt that online shopping was easier. The next highest reason for choosing in-store is that returns are less hassle (29 percent), closely followed by the fact that the shopper is routinely shopping there already (28 percent). The fifth most popular influencer for buying in-store was equally divided between getting better information and saving money (both 22 percent).

Most important factors driving a choice to purchase *in-store*		
1	Let's me see and feel the products before I buy	51%
2	Shopping is easier	33%
3	Returns are more hassle-free	29%
4	I'm routinely shopping there already	28%
5=	Get better information	22%
5=	Save money (better pricing, deals)	22%

Source: GfK FutureBuy survey of 23,000 shoppers in APAC, LATAM, Europe, North America, Middle East

James Llewellyn, a director of shopper research at GfK, comments, "These results point toward two key implications. The first is that the drivers for physical retail versus online retail are not differentiated to the extent that we expect. For example, expert advice is not a key distinguisher one way or the other. To sustain footfall, it is therefore imperative that retailers (and their manufacturer partners) innovate to create reasons to visit, to increase propensity to buy your store, category or brand. We expect that, despite a brief hiatus, physical retail touchpoints will become more important than ever.

"The second implication is that, to succeed in the future, retail needs to create synergy between on and offline, not diversity. In the end it's the same shoppers looking to fulfil the same need states with the same products and services. In future there will be less debate about on and offline, and renewed focus on the fundamentals of choice, price, convenience and experience, and how to meet and exceed shopper expectations in each and across all"

More detail on international shopper trends (choice, price, convenience and experience) are available in GfK's Future of Retail report: http://connected-consumer.gfk.com/future-of-retail/overview/

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About the study

GfK conducted an online survey with over 23,000 consumers aged 18 or older in 23 countries across APAC, LATAM, Europe, North America and the Middle East. The survey covered 17 industries and fieldwork was completed in November 2015. Data are weighted to reflect the demographic composition of the online population age 18+ in each country.

About GfK

GfK is the trusted source of relevant market and consumer information that enables its clients to make smarter decisions. More than 13,000 market research experts combine their passion with GfK's long-standing data science experience. This allows GfK to deliver vital global insights matched with local market intelligence from more than 100 countries. By using innovative technologies and data sciences, GfK turns big data into smart data, enabling its clients to improve their competitive edge and enrich consumers' experiences and choices.

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