

Just 40% of shoppers trust retailers to fulfill orders as promised

New global research released by Zebra Technologies Corporation reveals a large trust gap between shoppers and retailers. More than half of decision-makers surveyed (55%) believe they are completely trusted to fulfill online orders as promised, but only 38% of shoppers indicate complete trust in retailers.



Source: Supplied

This is according to the [14th Annual Global Shopper Study](#), which surveyed over 5,000 shoppers, store associates and retail decision-makers globally to gauge the opinions and expectations on today's shopper experience, technology usage and fulfillment.

The study results showed that even retail associates are wary of their employers' capabilities, with only 51% completely trusting their employer's ability to deliver or fulfill customers' online/mobile orders as promised.

To improve this level of trust, retail decision-makers are increasingly embracing solutions that elevate the contributions of front-line staff and improve how inventory is planned and executed in stores and the broader supply chain.

A return to stores but not to pre-pandemic behaviours

Though two-thirds of shoppers plan to return to brick-and-mortar locations in the coming months, most (73%) want to get in and out of stores quickly.

Sixty-five percent are still worried about exposure to others, and not as many trust retailers to adhere to health and safety mandates or protocols in stores as they did in 2020. Some shoppers don't even want to go in a store to make a purchase.

Nearly three-quarters (73%) would prefer to have items delivered to them rather than pick up orders at the store or other location. And over three-quarters (77%) say they have placed a mobile order, with over half of Boomers taking advantage of mobile commerce (m-commerce) options.

Thirty-five percent of Boomers also say they have used mobile apps for grocery or food delivery specifically.

Interestingly, shoppers are also researching product pricing (50%) online before they leave home. And nearly one-third are checking store inventory before they leave home, while only 19% were doing so in 2019.



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New omnichannel shopping behaviours in physical stores

About one-third of consumers say they use their mobile devices to look up competitive prices or browse online websites for products during shopping trips. More than 70% confirm they have recently left stores without all the items they wanted, with nearly half citing out-of-stocks as the reason for not making an in-store purchase.

Consequently, 58% of shoppers say it's faster to lookup information on their smartphones than ask associates for help, and the majority of associates (64%) agree, leaving retailers unaware of when in-store customers are contemplating m-commerce purchases, possibly with competitors.

More than 25% of surveyed shoppers have placed click-and-collect m-commerce orders while out shopping, with some even completing mobile orders for home delivery.

Eighty-four percent of retail decision-makers know this "do-it-yourself" (DIY) trend is taking hold, and many are taking a closer look at how technology can be utilised to meet customers' expectations and save sales. That's good news considering a majority of shoppers don't want to spend their money with another retailer.

More than six-in-10 say they would be willing to purchase out-of-stock items before leaving the store if they could pick those items up at another one of the retailer's nearby stores or the items could be shipped to their homes.

"Consumers appreciate the convenience of click-and-collect and home delivery options, especially as retailers have added new fulfillment options and incentivised m-commerce transactions," said Bill Inzeo, global retail technology strategist, Zebra Technologies.

"Many retailers have adjusted processes to account for the popularity of these new retail experiences, and their perspective on the importance of technology is changing."

Online order processing and fulfillment efficiency

With retail channels blending more than ever, over three-quarters of decision-makers say increasing the efficiency of online order processing and fulfillment is a priority. Nearly nine-in-10 decision-makers confirm their company is now looking at ways to improve in-store pick and pack as well as warehouse fulfillment.

Over one-third of decision-makers are now converting store space into designated pickup and returns locations, which could help divert traffic away from a central customer service desk.

“Even a single out-of-stock could drive an in-store customer to abandon their entire cart on the spot if they can place a mobile pickup order elsewhere and get everything they need,” explained Inzeo.

“Therefore, associates need to be equipped with mobile devices and applications that enable them to help shoppers complete their in-store purchases using alternative fulfillment options.”

With labour shortages and associate satisfaction also impacting retail store execution, most decision-makers say they plan to deploy workforce and task management software in the next year.

This is positive feedback considering 70% of associates view their employers more positively when they are provided with technology. And over 80% say they could provide a better customer experience if they had mobile computers and barcode scanners in hand.

Retail associates also believe analytics will help them have better daily experiences and prefer to manage their tasks and schedules using mobile apps and devices.

Key regional findings

Asia Pacific (Apac)

- Apac saw the second-highest jump in shoppers using mobile ordering year over year (81% in 2021 versus 72% in 2020), but the region's retail decision-makers aren't seeing mobile ordering activity at the same rate as decision-makers in other regions.
- Nearly seven-in-10 Apac shoppers surveyed agree they have a better shopping experience when associates use the latest technology to assist them.

Europe

- Seventy-two percent of European survey respondents say they have used mobile ordering.
- Only 59% of European survey respondents plan on shopping more often in stores as the pandemic recedes, the lowest score compared to other regions.

Latin America

- More Latin American shoppers are embracing m-commerce. Nine-in-10 say they have placed a mobile order, and eight-in-10 say they've used a mobile app for grocery or food delivery.
- Eighty percent of retail associates in Latin America agree shoppers can find information faster on their smartphones than if they ask an associate for help, the highest compared to other regions.

North America

- North America saw more shoppers using mobile ordering year over year (68% in 2021 versus 58% in 2020), but the region still ranks last in mobile ordering. More shoppers said they used mobile apps for grocery or food delivery (51% in 2021 versus 36% in 2020).
- Eight-in-10 North American shoppers prefer retailers that offer easy returns. However, only six-in-10 retail associates say their companies are highly experienced with online returns and believe their process is very streamlined.

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