



I-Want-to-Buy Moments: How Mobile Has Reshaped the Purchase Journey

Written by
Allison Mooney
Brad Johnsmeyer

Published
May 2015

For today's constantly connected consumers, shopping never sleeps. Whether making an everyday purchase or researching a big-ticket item, we reflexively turn to mobile. These I-want-to-buy moments are important for consumers, and they're critical for brands. Are you winning these micro-moments?

think with Google™

Giana was in her local drugstore, trying to understand why two brands of the same type of treatment differed in price by \$15. (The more expensive option coming in a smaller tube, no less.) “I thought there had to be a difference,” she recalls. So she pulled out her smartphone and searched for product reviews, right there in the store aisle. She ended up going with the higher-rated, yet higher-priced product. Looking back, Giana realizes that had she not had her smartphone she probably would have bought the cheaper one.

Erica was at the airport, killing time before a flight, when she searched for a mortgage calculator. She wanted to figure out whether she and her husband could really afford a new home. That first smartphone search led to many more in stolen moments throughout her day as she researched the purchase step by step. “Being able to do it in the moment makes it more fun and less daunting,” says Erica. “I can space it out throughout my day.”

For today's constantly connected consumers, shopping never sleeps. Whether we need to make an everyday purchase or research a big-ticket item, we reflexively turn to our devices. This happens in hundreds of [micro-moments](#) throughout the day when we're making purchase decisions. (What's the best choice? Can I afford to buy this? Is it worth it?) These I-want-to-buy moments are important moments for consumers, and they're critical for brands. They're opportunities to connect, especially on mobile: 93% of people who use a mobile device for research go on to make a purchase.¹

“After reading something on a smartphone, nearly one in four shoppers has changed her mind about buying something while in the checkout line.”

Read more about Giana's and Erica's stories in our [forthcoming Micro-Moments research](#).

Mobile: The new shopping assistant

We don't go to a store without our wallets; many of us say the same thing about our smartphones. In stores, 82% of smartphone users turn to their devices to help them make a product decision.² What they find online can influence their decisions right down to the very last minute before a purchase. After reading something on a smartphone, nearly one in four shoppers has changed his or her mind about buying something while in the checkout line.³

Some marketers might see this as a threat and wring their hands about "showrooming," because they are concerned that consumers will end up buying products elsewhere. But savvy brands see it differently. "We think one of the biggest opportunities that we have in retail is for our customers to leverage their phones as a shopping assistant when they're standing in the store," says [Sephora's vice president of interactive media, Bridget Dolan](#). To assist shoppers in these moments, Sephora designed its app to pull up product ratings and reviews when an item is scanned. "Having access to this information is that perfect new moment for customers to find everything they're looking for and get advice from Sephora."

Dolan and her team also realized that people were searching for products on mobile *before* heading to a physical store. To reach shoppers in these critical moments, Sephora began using local inventory ads to let customers know when particular products, such as lipstick, eyeliner, or perfume, would be available at a nearby store. This helped drive shoppers into stores, and they often bought more once they arrived. "A client that really knows exactly what she's buying—all the reviews and all her options—is actually a happier client and will come back and shop with you more often," says Dolan.



Top Rising Beauty Searches on Google Shopping

Source: Google Data,
April 2015.

instantly ageless
flash tattoo
jamberry nail wraps

best foundation
eyebrow extensions
younique makeup

neutrogena hydro boost
best under eye concealer
best eyeliner

From product review to purchase

We think one of the biggest opportunities that we have in retail is for our customers to leverage their phones as a shopping assistant when they're [standing in the store](#).

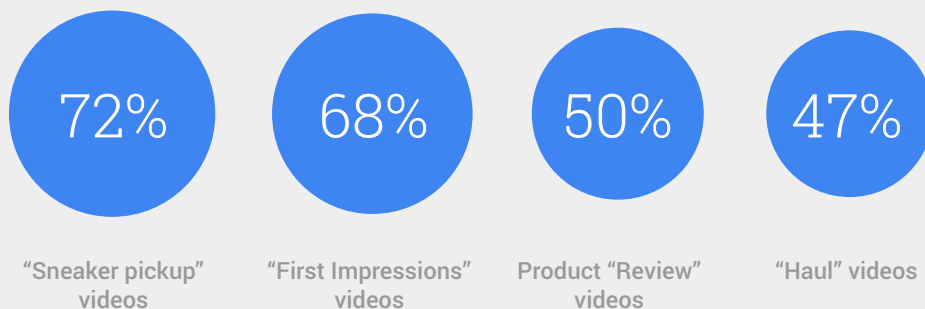
When searching in the moment, we often rely on reviews. In one study, more than half of millennials surveyed said they check product reviews on their phones while shopping in a store⁴—and YouTube has become a top source for reviews.

There are more than 1 million YouTube channels with product reviews where creators, brands, and experts share their opinions about a range of products, from [consumer electronics](#) to [cars](#).⁵ These reviews take many forms. For example, “first impression” videos feature creators, such as [Lauren Curtis](#), opening a product and giving their immediate take. In “[Haul](#)” videos, shoppers show off their new purchases (usually [clothes](#) and [beauty products](#)) on camera. And in “[sneaker pickup](#)” videos, sneakerheads share stories of scoring a prized pair of kicks. The audience is bigger than ever; views of product review videos have grown 50% year over year.⁶

“These I-want-to-buy moments are important moments for consumers, and they’re critical for brands.”

As I-want-to-buy moments are increasingly also becoming I-want-to-watch moments, brands are amping up their mobile video strategies by creating a range of helpful content. “We’re in a world today where people are on 24/7. They have more choices when it comes to what they look at and when they look at it,” says [Alison Lewis, CMO at Johnson & Johnson Consumer Companies](#). Last year, the company’s CLEAN & CLEAR® brand created more than 100 videos for its YouTube channel, many of which are answers to specific product questions. “It’s the content that consumers are already coming to you for,” says [Kacey Dreby, group brand director at CLEAN & CLEAR®](#). And when people watch these videos, they’re further down in the marketing funnel and closer to the point of purchase, Dreby points out. Indeed, we see that after watching a YouTube video, people actively search for products. Across more than 800 campaigns studied, 65% of campaigns see a significant lift in brand interest after viewers watch their TrueView ad on YouTube.⁷

Growing Genres of Product Reviews on YouTube



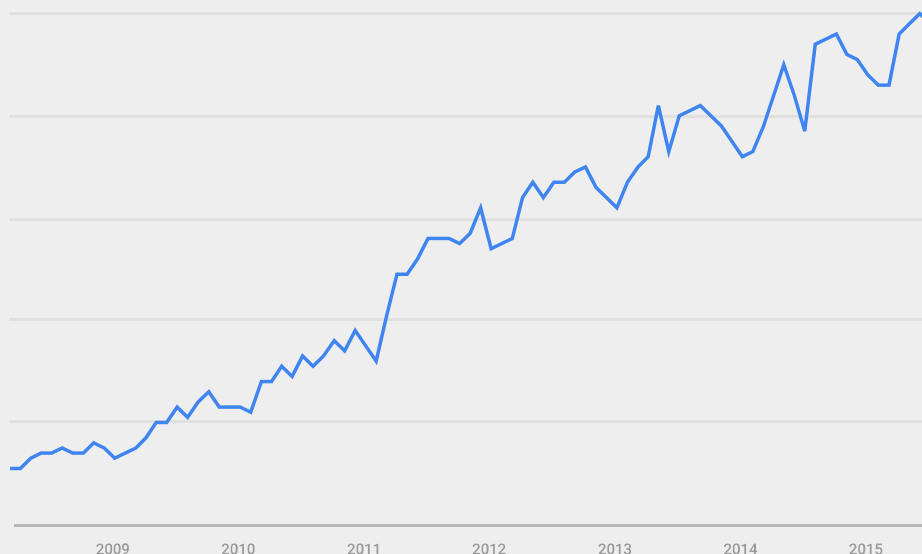
Source: View count growth, Google Data, April 2015 vs. April 2014, U.S., classification was based on public data such as headlines, tags, etc., and may not account for every type of review video available on YouTube.

Big decisions on small screens

I-want-to-buy moments aren't just important for low-consideration purchases. As we saw with Erica, they also happen when we're making big decisions such as investing in a new home, booking a vacation, or buying a car. In the auto category, for example, searches on mobile are growing 51% YoY.⁸ "Today's path to purchase is more dynamic than ever before," says Dionne Colvin-Lovely, director of emerging and traditional media at Toyota. "Car shoppers leverage mobile at the beginning and middle of their purchase process and continue to research and shop online while at the dealership."

This constant access to information means that immediacy and relevance are now table stakes for brands. "Mobile's rapid evolution is changing the expectations of today's car buyer," says Colvin-Lovely. "We want to make it easy for our customers to discover the information they are seeking about Toyota as they search, read, and watch auto-related content. To do so, we leveraged a variety of mobile tactics—from high-impact sponsorships and takeovers to dynamic, hyper-targeted, location triggered placements—to ensure Toyota remains top of mind during these key moments," she says.

Search Interest in “Reviews” and “Test Drives” in the Auto Category on YouTube



Source: Google Trends, United States, 2008–present.

How to win I-want-to-buy moments

Whether they're in a parking lot, in a grocery store, or waiting patiently at the airport, shoppers are using smartphones to help them decide what to buy. Here are five ways brands can win these micro-moments:

- **Identify your consumers' I-want-to-buy moments.** Talk to them—in stores, through surveys, in focus groups and forums—to figure out when and how they're researching and making purchase decisions.
- **Be there in these moments of need.** Create a comprehensive strategy that works holistically across channels such as search, video, social, and display. Keep in mind that consumers may be at home, in store, or somewhere in between.
- **Deliver relevant messaging.** Simply being there in these moments isn't enough. Look at how people are searching—the questions they

ask, the terms they use—and create ads and content that provide helpful answers.

- **Make it easy for them to make a purchase.** The step from research to purchase should be a simple and seamless one. Give the consumer multiple ways to buy—whether that means driving them to your e-commerce site from a YouTube video or from a local inventory ad to a nearby store.
- **Measure every moment that matters.** It's no longer enough to simply measure the online conversion. With mobile, the path to purchase is now fragmented. As a result, advertisers need to measure results online, across devices, in apps, and even in stores.



Allison Mooney
Head of Trends & Insights, Google



Brad Johnsmeyer
Analytical Insights Marketing, Google

Sources

- 1 Google/Nielsen, "Mobile Path to Purchase" study, November 2013, United States.
- 2 Google/Ipsos, "Consumers in the Micro-Moment" study, March 2015, United States.
- 3 Google Consumer Surveys, April 2015, United States, n=1130.
- 4 Google Consumer Surveys, April 2015, United States, n=365.
- 5 Google Data, April 2015, global.
- 6 Google Data, April 2014 vs. April 2015, United States.
- 7 Google Data 2015, United States, brand interest measured via search volume/activity on Google.com
- 8 Google Data, Q1 2014 vs. Q1 2015, United States.