



**WHO SHOPS HOW, AND WHERE?
TAILORING YOUR ECOMMERCE STRATEGY
TO ADDRESS THE GENDER DIVIDE ONLINE**



It turns out there may still be some relevance in the notion, men are from Mars, and women are from Venus – at least when it comes to the way we shop in-store and online.

We might have come a long way since John Gray published his 1992 gender studies guide, but when we think about how men and women shop, not much has changed; as confirmed by “The Future Shopper,” a new report from Salmon, a Wunderman Commerce company, into online shopping habits across the UK and USA.

According to academic studies on the psychology behind shopping, it's simply down to our psyche, our noggins, our way of thinking, typically characterised by our gender – it's built into our DNA. Behind every decision we make, is a complex range of influencing factors – some conscious, some subconscious, some rational and some irrational – and how we make purchasing decisions typically falls into one of two categorised mindsets – hedonic or utilitarian. We've termed this “Mindset-Driven Purchasing”. It isn't just an outdated gender stereotype, or a long running gag, there really are differences in how we shop, and understanding these variations is important to any brand or retailer wanting to sell to, well... anybody.

So, what's the impact for your multichannel eCommerce strategy?

A hedonic mindset will see individuals purchase out of pleasure, with an emotional involvement (think retail therapy); they're thorough in their decision making, and commonly associated with the female gender. Whereas, the utilitarian mindset is goal-orientated, practical and will purchase to fulfil a need, more often witnessed in males (think buying bread and milk).

But that isn't to say it's as black and white as that, or that some men and women aren't the opposite, some women hate shopping, whilst some men genuinely enjoy it. It also isn't to say there is no cross-over in certain purchasing scenarios. When a woman is doing the weekly shop, she is much more likely to be thinking with her utilitarian hat on. Sometimes, we might approach it with both, for example when buying a car. The utilitarian view might explore the functionality of the car, that's why we typically take it for a test drive, but during that journey, we'll also be thinking about how it feels to drive, how it looks, and how you look to others whilst driving it – a hedonic mindset. So, when talking about general traits in large studies of female and male consumers, men and women tend to fit into these select categories.

The behavioural psychology of consumers has long influenced the conditions of bricks-and-mortar retail. Specific merchandising and store layouts are used to influence consumers in their decision making. Many retailers and brands have spent vast amounts of cash getting it right. Just last year, German supermarket chain Aldi, spent in the region of \$1.6 billion on its new store layout.

Wunderman Commerce Consultant Chloe Cox addresses the question: *“Is this truly reflected online? Arguably not. Some digital channels do currently provide a very different environment to in-store retail. Yet, with an effective omnichannel strategy, when it comes to online it shouldn’t be any different.”*

By designing online experiences that appeal to specific mindsets, retailers and brands can influence shoppers’ purchasing decisions before they checkout. Research from The Future Shopper report has revealed that on average 41% of consumers do at least 50% of their shopping online, and notably, 63% feel they are more digitally advanced than some of the retailers and commerce services they use. So, retailers and brands might be wise to invest in their digital floorplans – or eCommerce sites, sooner rather than later.

Men buy, women shop

It’s a commonplace belief that women prefer to immerse themselves in the shopping experience more than their male counterpart; it’s enjoyable, it’s thorough, a sport of some kind. She’ll try a number of perfume testers before deciding on the victory bottle; she’ll try jeans, in multiple colours, multiple styles and even from multiple stores before she walks out, bag in hand. How do they look? Are they worth the price? Can I get them cheaper elsewhere? Will they last? For men, it’s much simpler than that; do they fit? Do they look ok? They’ll do. It is a case of get in – get out, minimal trauma, a means to an end. It’s the same when it comes to online.

Men appear to be more brand loyal

When it comes to brands, our report suggests men are more loyal. 44% of men, compared to 35% of women rate the brand being ordered as very important when buying a product online, regardless of the site they shop through. However, the research also found that women are 5% more likely than men to go through a specific brand website when shopping online.

Women deliberate, men transact

What do women want? It’s an age-old question. They know, it just takes them longer to figure out. According to *“Mindset-Driven Purchasing and the Female Shopper,”* women spend on average five hours a week browsing retail sites, and 91% carry out online research before making a purchasing decision. Their hedonic mindset means they are far more thorough when it comes to making a purchasing decision. Men, however, are more impatient and less inspired to search around, and more bothered about finding what they want and getting it quickly.

Men demand quick delivery

So, which gender really is more demanding? When it comes to online delivery expectations, the answer is men; 49% demand a speedy delivery of just 24 hours compared with 36% of women, and in addition, 12% more women than men are happy to wait at least two days.

However, when it comes to returns, only 29% of men think it’s important; after all, the jobs done. Whereas, nearly 40% of women say an easy returns policy and process is a key contributing factor to an excellent online shopping experience, with free delivery being the biggest factor for both men and women.

Women engage more on social media

Social media saturates most of our devices. It’s intrusive, it’s addictive and its powerful. According to *“Mindset-Driven Purchasing and the Female Shopper,”* more than a third of women (36%) regularly share images and thoughts on new purchases through social platforms, compared with just over a quarter of men (28%). But, it isn’t just the female shopper that businesses should be appealing to, because whilst women may interact more, 7% of men are more likely to actively purchase through a social platform.

Chloe Cox adds: *“Social commerce is only going to get bigger, so brands need to take advantage of the power of their social channels. Start thinking about using inspirational content and shoppable imagery to help enhance the effectiveness of these platforms in a brand’s eCommerce strategy.”*

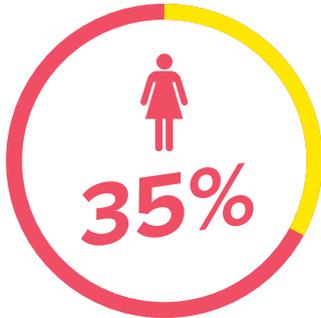
Men are more likely to shop on Amazon

It’s no secret that Amazon is dominating the online market and is increasingly the shoppers’ site of choice, accounting for 52% of total online spend in the US and 35% in the UK. 38% of UK and USA consumers now do at least half of their online shopping through the marketplace giant. And, when it comes to gender, men are 7% more likely to shop through Amazon, with 57% already Amazon Prime members.

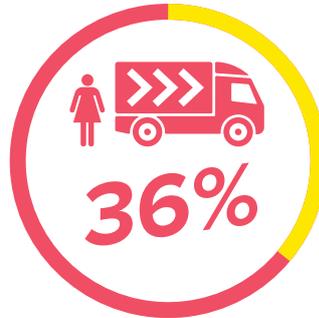
So, there you have it – what matters to each of us, and how our mindsets influence our decision-making when shopping online or offline. Understanding how people make decisions, and how the decision-making process can vary between people, is vital. With research putting the value of the ‘female economy’ alone in the region of \$18 trillion, it clearly pays to get it right.

Vive la différence? That will depend on how well your business is set up to serve us women (who shop) and men (who buy). Over to you!

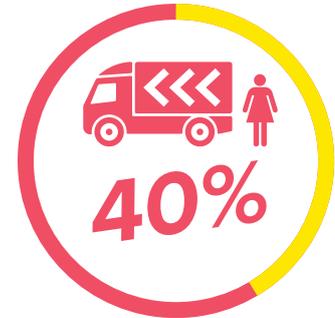
% of online consumers that rate brand as a very important factor when shopping online



% demanding a speedy delivery of just 24 hours



% who say an easy returns policy and process is key to an excellent online shopping experience



Source: “The Future Shopper” survey, April 2018, based on 3,516 online shoppers.

Salmon, a Wunderman Commerce company, has a team of eCommerce multichannel experts who are working with leading brands to address both the opportunities and challenges addressed within this article. These are explored amongst other key themes in its ground-breaking, new report “The Future Shopper”. [Download your full copy here.](#)

In this report, we asked over 3,500 consumers from the US and UK aged between 18-64, and who shop online at least once a month, about everything from automated purchasing and the dominance of Amazon, to the rise of voice-activated devices and the shifting shopper priorities.

[Read the full report](#) “The Future Shopper – 2018 and beyond”

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