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this Black Friday and Small Business Saturday.

Nov. 27, 2013



Brick and mortar stores still reign during holiday shopping, especially on Black

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just in pursuit of the ultimate deal, but rather, the ultimate experience. WD Partners, a customer experience expert for global food and retail brands, published a recent consumer study which explores what the in-store shopping experience can offer that online shopping can't.

The study, "[Amazon Can't Do That](#)," identifies what consumers are looking for in a shopping experience and presents a roadmap for physical stores to beat online retailers.

When asked to rank the best features of online and in-store shopping, consumers overwhelmingly ranked in-store features as more appealing.

The top five exclusive attributes that an in-store shopping experience offers that online shopping can't deliver are:

- **Get it now.** Next day delivery still isn't as satisfying as get-it-now shopping, according to 79% of consumers who rank instant ownership as a top factor in influencing how they shop.
- **Look at the real product- and touch it.** Stores offer a sensory experience and immersion into the product that online retailers cannot, according to 75 percent of consumers.
- **Human connection.** There's no match for the emotional experience of interacting with live human beings in a compelling store environment.
- **Community.** The store remains America's equivalent of the town square, a time to shop with family and friends.
- **Personal service.** Store employees make a difference. Consider Nordstrom, Apple or Whole Foods, three of the industry's top-performing retailers. They invest heavily in store employees – and shoppers love it.

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“The store should be a place of inspiration and ideas that leaves shoppers with a high or sense of euphoria. The in-store shopping experience must offer more than a warehouse does,” said Lee Paterson, executive vice president of creative services of WD Partners. “Retailers who provide this type of shopping experience will be successful this holiday shopping season.”

The study is based on quantitative and qualitative shopper research by WD Partners. In May 2013, more than 1,700 consumers were surveyed using a nationally syndicated panel. Following the quantitative study, focus groups were also conducted among the three generations of consumers – Millennial, Gen X and Boomer.

“Our research found that consumers expressed sadness for struggling chains, sympathy that some chains couldn't get it together to beat Amazon,” said Peterson. “Yet there was no lack of desire for a human-driven store experience and nostalgia for retail's more glamorous past.”

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