

How Can Retailers Fight Showrooming?

Written by Marco Attard
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According to a recent IDC survey the current "showrooming" trend will affect up to \$1.7 billion in 2012 holiday retail sales in the US. How can retailers take the upper hand in the fight for customer spending?



Showrooming involves the use of internet-connected mobile devices while shopping, be it for price comparisons or simply checking specs, descriptions and reviews.

The IDC survey is based on 1000 online consumers, and estimates around 48 million US-based shoppers (one can safely assume European shoppers will mirror the trend) will showroom during the holiday season-- a 134% Y-o-Y increase, since 20.5m shoppers showroomed in 2011 according to the analyst.

The showroomer numbers will only grow in the future, reaching 59m in 2013, 29m in 2014 and 78m in 2015.

When it comes to CE retail, IDC says 7-13% of shoppers use smartphones "at least once" in stores, with showrooming touching 1.4% of sales.

But what can retailers do to combat the trend? The survey suggests the pursuit of "omnichannel" strategies, such as full-featured mobile websites, convenience across both store and website, smartphone shopping apps and even price comparisons via QR codes.

IDC describes today's customers as the "5I shopper"-- consumers who, via mobile devices, are Instrumented, Interconnect, Informed, In-Place and Immediate. 5I shoppers want their brick and

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mortar shopping experience to be as smooth as its online equivalent, preferably in the company of a "knowledgeable, trustworthy associate" in the shape of proper retail staff.

Top notch customer service, loyalty schemes and private/exclusive brands are also "the most promising strategies for dealing with showrooming."

"For online inside 51 shoppers the distinction between the world of physical stores and their online experience is a distinction waning as showrooming waxes," IDC concludes. In other words, the adoption of the appropriate strategies is key.

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