Desktop could make a comeback for Christmas 2020 fashion shopping - report

By Sandra Halliday - 23 October 2020

Fashion retailers need to think carefully before they go all-in for mobile campaigns this Christmas season because, despite mobile surging last year, 2020 could be quite different.

That's according to the new CJ Affiliate Holiday Intelligence Report. It says that webstores shouldn't dismiss desktop completely or go for mobile-only campaigns this festive season. "Shoppers are still buying higher value orders on desktop," it explained. "The AOV for desktop was £93 during the 2019 holiday season, whereas mobile phones were 27% lower at £68 per order".

It's true that shoppers' use of mobile phones for orders exploded during last year's peak shopping period – which included Black Friday-centred Peak Week, through to Boxing Day. This further reduced desktop and tablets' share. During that time, 35% of retail orders were tied to mobile phones, a 10% year-on-year increase, showing that mobile was increasingly being used to place orders rather than simply browsing products.

In categories such as clothing and apparel and beauty, mobile phone orders were even higher, at 40%, and 44% for accessories.

But desktop remained dominant – between November 1 and December 31 2019, 62% of orders were placed on desktop. However, tablets looked to be in terminal decline with only 3% of orders being placed on them during the holiday season. That said, orders placed through tablets were higher than those via mobile with an AOV of £74 last year.

Meanwhile, desktop's conversion rate was 7.7%, compared with mobile's 3.7%, and 5.1% for tablets.
And of course, with fewer shoppers being out and about this year, desktop (and perhaps tablets) could mount a counter-offensive against the growth of mobile.

In recent years, we’ve seen more and more fashion shopping happening via smartphones while consumers are commuting, during office workers’ lunch hours, and even while they’re out shopping in physical stores with their friends.

The pandemic has seriously curtailed these activities and kept consumers at home, which means they could be more likely to opt for the larger screens of a computer or tablet rather than the portability of mobile.

“While mobile is growing, desktop remains the preferred method for ordering among shoppers, as proven by the greater order values and conversion rates,” said CJ Affiliate’s Regional VP, Jules Bazley. “However, advertisers shouldn’t overlook the potential disruption that COVID-19 will cause this coming peak shopping season.

“With more consumers working remotely and potentially on the move less due to pandemic restrictions, this could affect the volume of mobile orders and favour desktop and tablet, since their superior user experience is preferable to mobile for many consumers. Publishers should therefore be prepared to sustain, possibly even increase, their investment in tablets and desktops this year, and not put all their eggs in one basket with mobile.”

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