

Shoppers increasingly turning to social media for inspiration, new research reveals

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UK consumers are 79% more likely today to discover new products on social media than they were just two years ago, new research reveals.

A study of UK shopping habits shows this shift is largely driven by Instagram, which has seen a 64% increase in shoppers finding inspiration on this platform. More than one third of UK consumers surveyed said they visit a brand's social media feed explicitly for the purpose of being inspired by the products and content featured there.

The survey, by social commerce company Curalate (<https://www.curalate.com/>), polled 2,000 consumers aged 18 years and upwards to understand how social media fits into their shopping habits and influences purchasing decisions.

Of those surveyed, 62% said their main aims when they go shopping are to stumble across products they never knew existed, as well as buying what's on their shopping list. When they spot a product that catches their eye, most (77%) are motivated to find out more.

"One of the joys of shopping is the thrill of the find," said Apu Gupta, CEO of Curalate. "Larger numbers of people are turning to social media for inspiration and making considered purchases, which highlights one of the key shortfalls in ecommerce today: brands are outsourcing discovery to social media."

While consumers said they are discovering products on social more often, they're still as hesitant today to make an impulse buy via social as they were two years ago. Only 8% of consumers are ready to buy immediately after discovering a product (up from 4.5% in 2017). Most UK consumers -72% - said they still need to research a product and brand, often citing the need to browse additional items in a brand's product catalogue before making a purchase.

The research also revealed that 59% of consumers are impacted in positive ways after seeing customers' pictures from a brand's Instagram feed on its website, including spending more time browsing and purchasing new products.

Meanwhile, celebrities appear to be having little sway with consumers. The study showed that over double the number of people discovered products they were interested in buying on a micro-influencer or blogger's social media account, compared with one belonging to a household name.

"Our research shows consumers are leaning towards more authentic experiences, with customer content a key part of the buying process," Gupta continued. "As brands build a more inspirational shopping experience online, they need to invest in creating those experiences with content that's a blend between the traditional, aspirational approach and the more authentic approach found on social media today."

About Curalate

Curalate (<https://www.curalate.com/>) is the leading social commerce company, enabling brands to use social content and social audiences to sell more effectively online. Over 1,100 brands and retailers use Curalate to turn images and videos into shoppable content on their sites, social channels, ads and emails. Clients include QVC, Arcadia, Karl Lagerfeld, Louis Vuitton and River Island.

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