

4 ways brands can encourage consumers to buy via social media

Article

Social commerce sales are continuing to rise steadily, reaching \$82.82 billion in the US next year, per our forecast. **But it's getting harder to convert new buyers.**

“Most of [that sales growth] is coming from existing buyers upping their spend on purchases rather than new buyers coming in,” said our analyst Jasmine Enberg on a recent Meet the

Analyst Webinar. “The influx of new social buyers that we saw, particularly during the pandemic, is largely over.”

Here’s how retailers can encourage more social media purchases and boost their social commerce sales.

1. Appeal to the right demographics

“Gen Zers are more likely to make purchases on social media than older generations,” said Enberg, noting that the generation is still forming their shopping habits and retailer loyalties.

TikTok Shop, in particular, has the potential to be a big hit among Gen Z consumers.

- Close to 30% of Gen Zers consider **TikTok their go-to shopping platform** ahead of all other social platforms, per a July 2023 Insider Intelligence survey.
- In addition, over half (52.5%) said they had shopped on TikTok within the past month.

As Gen Zers grow up and make up more of the social media user base, their preferences will redefine how social media is used and how people shop online, said Enberg.

They could also speed up new buyer growth, leading to further social commerce gains.

2. Identify what drives purchases and what deters them

The No. 1 factor that drives social media buyers to make a purchase is finding a product they like, according to our June 2022 survey.

- **This highlights the importance of discoverability**: If a consumer has to hunt for your product, there’s a chance they could abandon their search altogether.
- Other important drivers include ads, deals, and ease of purchase.

“People aren’t necessarily going on social media thinking that they’re going to buy something, but they’re stumbling across something in their feed, in stories, or even in DMs or group chats,” said Enberg. “They’re making a purchase because they’re inspired to do so or maybe they saw a deal or an offer that was just too good to resist.”

As important as it is to understand what drives purchases, brands must also be aware of what holds consumers back.

“The No. 1 reason why people aren’t making purchases on social media are trust-related issues,” said Enberg.

- 44% of US social media users said they haven’t made a purchase on social media because they don’t want to give platforms their payment information, according to our June 2022 survey.
- 42% said they prefer to interact directly with a retailer or merchant.
- And 32% said they don’t want to give social media companies more of their personal information, like their shopping history.

“Consumer behavior can be really difficult to change,” said Enberg. “And people already have relationships and a lot of trust with brands and retailers that they’re already shopping and buying from.”

This suggests that social platforms (and brands that sell on them) need to **earn more consumer trust** before they can move the needle on social commerce adoption.

3. Understand the differences between each social platform

“Social commerce is not necessarily one-size-fits-all,” said Enberg. “Shopping experiences on Snapchat, **Pinterest, TikTok**, Instagram, and Facebook are going to be different.”

Take Facebook Marketplace. It’s one of the few areas of Facebook where Gen Z spends time and money, and it’s the biggest reason for **Facebook’s continued lead in social commerce**.

However, it’s also not a platform that consumers generally visit to buy new products—it’s mainly a place where consumers buy secondhand goods from other users, said Enberg.

TikTok, on the other hand, is where consumers go to find product recommendations and shopping inspiration, as well as entertainment.

This behavior could be accelerated by TikTok’s partnership with Google, which could integrate Google’s search prompts and results into TikTok’s in-app search.

“That could help boost both ad spending and social commerce sales on the platform,” said Enberg.

4. Use creators to engage, educate, and inspire

“**Creators package up and deliver inspiration to social users**,” said Enberg, providing consumers with real-life examples of how to use or style a product.

“One of the biggest reasons that people are turning to social media for [their shopping searches] is because they don’t necessarily want a list of links,” she said. “They don’t want a list of product images. They want to be inspired.”

Among US Gen Z consumers, TikTok is the top platform for product recommendations, per an April 2023 IZEA report, but **YouTube** and **Instagram** are also popular among the younger generation.

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