

Shoppers' State of Mind Affects Customer Experience

Frustrations include poor service, slow load times and confusing store layouts

ARTICLE |

Krista Garcia

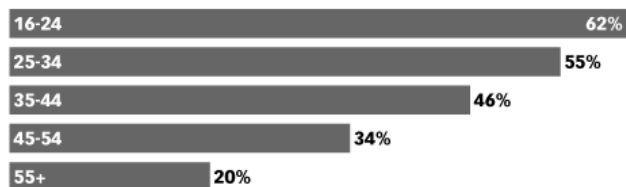
Based on the titles of two new studies, “Stress Shopping” and “Retail Nightmares,” it’s a sad state of affairs for shoppers, in-store and online.

Emotions play a role in shopping behavior even if consumers don't think that they do. According to a recent survey of UK and US internet users by analytics firm [Clicktale](#), 78% of respondents believe they are rational when they shop.

Yet 40% said they shop to calm down, and 74% said they have "stress-shopped" in the past. Younger shoppers and women were more likely to engage in this behavior; 62% of those ages 16 to 24 stress-shop and women were 12% likelier than men to shop for this reason.

UK and US Consumers Who Stress Shop*, by Age, March 2018

% of respondents in each group



Note: *defined as using shopping as a way to relieve feelings of stress, i.e., retail therapy

Source: Clicktale, "Stress Shopping," June 12, 2018

238921

www.eMarketer.com

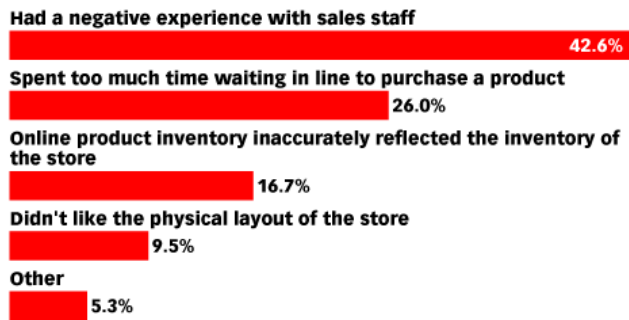
As far as stress-inducing situations go, in-store shopping was considered more stressful than online. Close to one-third had lost their temper while shopping in a store, while 15% lost their cool with a mobile app or ecommerce site.

What's the problem with brick and mortar? According to Clicktale, it's the staff and the store, equally. Fully 83% of respondents cited both frustration with hard to navigate store layouts and being followed by sales associates.

Humans were also the source of in-store problems per an April 2018 survey of US digital shoppers by voice of the customer analytics provider [Usabilla](#). A negative experience with sales staff was the primary reason (42.6%) that would cause them not to return. Meanwhile, 45% of respondents would prefer a sales associate to be available but not to approach them. And 49% had lied to a salesperson to get out of a conversation.

Primary Reason that US Digital Shoppers Would Likely Stop Returning to Physical Stores to Make Purchases, April 2018

% of respondents



*Note: ages 18+; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: Usabilla, "Retail Nightmares," June 18, 2018*

238913

www.eMarketer.com

Poor customer service has **more impact on the shopping experience** than many brands think.

When shopping digitally, the Usabilla data showed encountering too many ads was the biggest frustration, felt by a majority on desktop (53%) and to a lesser degree on mobile (40%). When buying items, having to re-enter information during checkout was the leading frustration for 34% of desktop shoppers and 31% of mobile shoppers.

In both studies, time-wasting was a stressor. Transactions that took too long was the leading pain point for 22% of mobile shoppers and 19% of desktop shoppers, according to Usabilla, while 81% of respondents in the Clicktale survey said ecommerce sites that loaded too slowly were a source of stress.

Conversely, speed was the leading factor (94%) that contributed to a great online experience, according to digital buyers in the US, UK and Australia surveyed by remarketing firm **Cloud IQ** in September 2017.

According to a September 2017 **Astound Commerce** survey, the top two factors that US digital buyers cited as influential on purchasing were very fundamental: quality of the website experience (61%) and quality of the physical store experience (52%).

Improving the customer experience is a **priority for most marketers**, but **getting it right** takes more than basic demographic or behavioral data. Just 22% of marketers in North America used psychographic data for

segmentation and only 11% employed intent analysis, according to a March 2018 survey by [CMO Council](#) and [RedPoint Global](#). Understanding emotion and putting it in context are the missing variables.