

Q&A: Google Shopping brings value and inspiration to the forefront in the shopping experience

Article

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Insider Intelligence spoke with Martha Welsh, who leads strategy, operations and go-to-market initiatives for Google Commerce, which includes Google Shopping, Travel, Payments, and Next Billion Users. The Google Shopping platform allows shoppers to compare products and prices from various retailers, while giving vendors and retailers an avenue to reach new customers.

Insider Intelligence: What is the ecosystem strategy behind the Google Shopping platform?

Martha Welsh: We're not trying to be the retailer or the marketplace. We have built a platform for retailers to create more value for customers and merchants. There are a billion shopping sessions on Google every day, and we want to help those consumers find more of what they're looking for right away.

There's a lot of choice in the outside world for a consumer—that choice hasn't always existed in the digital world, and there's an opportunity for even more choice and information to be presented in the digital world.

II: What are the main trends in consumer behavior this holiday season?

MW: Shopping is so much fun, and there's this really delightful part of shopping that is inspiring.

People start their shopping journey online, but often check in-store availability. We've also seen that in-store consumers are searching for things and trying to understand the reviews.

Another trend this holiday season is researching products. Consumers are trying to understand not just products, but the brand and value proposition of the merchant. There's a lot of shopping for value in different ways—sustainability, Black-owned businesses, and more.

II: How have consumers' relationship to brands evolved in recent years?

MW: Shopping is inherently personal. You see this when people shop and gravitate toward certain brands. It goes well beyond choosing this or that sweater—it's about where it was sourced, if it's eco-friendly, how much does shipping cost, and more. Inspiration strikes anywhere, and when a consumer is in that mode of discovery, you see that a brand's values can be just as important or sometimes more important than the product.

Thus, this past year we've launched new labels for Black-owned businesses, sustainable brands, and more. The most important thing is letting the brands have their voice on our platform, so that they can bring their own value propositions to consumers, whether that's on

a search results page, YouTube, or Maps. Wherever the user comes to Google, we're going to bring the full information on the product and brand so that they can make that informed choice and get inspired.

II: How is Google Shopping hoping to improve the ecommerce experience?

MW: One of the things that we've invested meaningfully in over the past few years has been some of our omnichannel offerings. Users, like the idea of omnichannel, has evolved, and there's a new omnichannel that's blending in-store and online shopping.

II: How is Google bringing forward video content in a shopper's journey?

MW: Whether you're looking at a buying guide or information on how to research it—you want to understand the product. We see that in video and other formats. We know that videos are important for a lot of merchants as it is the way they can put their own value propositions to the forefront. Our goal is to meet the users where they are, which can be on the search results page, YouTube, and more.

We've brought many third parties into our ecosystem, and it's much easier for retailers now to list their inventory with our partners like Shopify, WooCommerce, GoDaddy, and others. All these platforms and videos bring choice and transparency to the consumer across the shopping experience.