

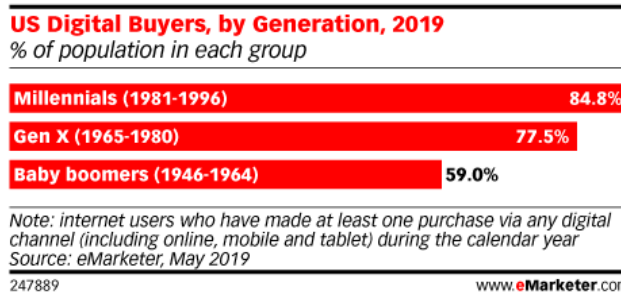
What Retailers Need to Know About Boomers

ARTICLE |

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Baby boomers already know how to go to a brick-and-mortar store and buy things. So unless there's an obvious benefit of convenience or better prices, they're not rushing to master newer, more tech-heavy shopping methods.

We estimate that 59.0% of baby boomers will be digital buyers this year—making at least one purchase digitally via any device during the calendar year. That's a significant figure. However, when compared with their younger cohorts, this group is not as digitally enthusiastic.



“Boomers are a little behind when making purchases online, and this is especially true when smartphones come into play,” said Cindy Liu, senior forecasting analyst at eMarketer. “Not only do boomers have a lower incidence of smartphone ownership, their range of commerce

activities on smartphones is narrower. Boomers are using their devices for product information gathering, rather than purchasing.”

In an April 2019 Bizrate Insights survey, 36% of US smartphone and tablet owners ages 55 and older said they used a mobile retail app to buy a product or service. A higher percentage (61%) of 18 to- 34-year-olds did the same. This was the case for mobile wallet app usage, too. Just 12% of respondents ages 55 and older said they used Apple Pay or Starbucks’ payment app, vs. 42% in the 18 to 34 age group.

Which Activities Have US Smartphone/Tablet Owners Done Using Apps on Their Smartphone/Tablet in the Past Month?

% of respondents, by demographic, April 2019

	Gender		Age			Total
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	
Used a mobile retail app to look for more information about a product or a service	52%	56%	63%	61%	39%	54%
Used a mobile retail app to buy a product or service	47%	53%	61%	54%	36%	50%
Used a mobile wallet app to pay in-store (e.g., Apple Pay, Android Pay, Starbucks App, etc.)	28%	32%	42%	35%	12%	30%
Used a shared economy service app (e.g., Uber, Lyft, Airbnb, etc.)	27%	25%	39%	27%	13%	26%
Used a grocery app (e.g., AmazonFresh, FreshDirect, Walmart Grocery, etc.)	18%	26%	25%	26%	16%	22%
Used a meal kit subscription service app (e.g., Blue Apron, HelloFresh, etc.)	2%	4%	7%	3%	0%	3%
None of the above	29%	20%	11%	20%	41%	24%

Source: "The eMarketer Ecommerce Survey" conducted in April 2019 by Bizrate Insights, April 9, 2019

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The Bizrate survey also revealed that boomers aren’t interested in retail shopping technology, like visual search or augmented and virtual reality.

“Boomers aren’t at a life stage where learning new things is a big priority. Just the reverse, really—it’s something my fellow boomers and I will often do our best to avoid,” said eMarketer principal analyst Mark Dolliver. “And especially for boomers who are retirees, the time-saving features of digital shopping are somewhat irrelevant.”

“That’s a big difference between boomers and young people who are mid-career and busy raising families,” Dolliver said. “For that matter, going to the store may hold appeal for older boomers as an occasion for getting out of the house and socializing a bit.”

