

What Makes a Bad Shopping Experience?

Customers bring different expectations to in-store and ecommerce interactions

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Customer service can **make or break a company's reputation**. It's also a leading reason why consumers choose to abandon a retailer and take their money elsewhere.

According to a recent survey of US shoppers by private software research company Qualtrics, customer service "deal breakers" vary when it comes to shopping in-store vs. online.

For example, nothing would steer in-store customers in a different direction more than rude employees (42%)—followed by a disorganized store (17%), high prices (15%) and long checkout lines (12%).

Meanwhile, 55% of US digital shoppers would be more bothered if their shipment never arrived. Fake reviews and items not reflecting the photo online were among the top concerns that would lead respondents to shop at another company, at 34%.

What Digital vs. In-Store Factors Would Cause US Shoppers to Shop at a Different Store?

% of respondents, Sep 2018

Digital	
Shipment never arrives	55%
Fake reviews	34%
Item received does not look like the photo online	34%
Website does not list size or dimension of item	20%
Shipping takes longer than advertised	17%
Required to pay for shipping	16%
Low-quality images of the product	16%
Shopping cart is emptied by a technical error	14%
Long checkout process	13%
Pages load slowly	13%
Item is listed as "out of stock"	11%
In-store	
Employees were rude to me	42%
Store was disorganized	17%
Prices were higher than expected	15%
Employees were not knowledgeable	13%
Sales people tried to sell me on the product	13%
Checkout lines were too long	12%
Employees didn't offer assistance at any point	12%
Items not in stock	12%
Limited selection of products	12%
Items I saw online were not in the store	11%
Store was crowded	10%
Items were mistakenly placed on a sale rack	9%
Cashier tried to get me to sign up for a credit card	8%
No employee greeted me when I entered the store	6%

Note: ages 18+

Source: Qualtrics, "Retail Pain Index," Dec 24, 2018

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Other studies have found respondents with similarly strong reactions to disappointing customer experience, both in-store and online.

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of internet users surveyed by customer experience management firm InMoment **said that a disappointing interaction with staff**—whether it's a poor attitude or lack of knowledge—is a leading reason why they would consider a brand experience as a negative one.

Retailers need to be aware of the brand promises they are extending to customers both in-store and online, and work to fulfill those. A May 2018 survey of 2,000 US internet users conducted by brand experience agency Jack Morton found that 45% of respondents said brands today rarely live up to the promises they've made—**essentially giving them a D grade for poor performance**. And nearly half said that when a brand

doesn't keep its promise, they no longer trust it and will stop buying its products.