

# How and where CPG customers start their shopping journey

Article



From Amazon and social platforms to in-store media, there's no shortage of ways for consumers to find and learn more about consumer packaged goods (CPG) products. But not every touchpoint is used the same, and some resonate better with consumers.

We break down the two beginning phases of the customer journey, revealing how consumers discover and research CPG products—specifically across beauty, food and beverage, and

over-the-counter (OTC) health categories—and how marketers use this data to target their desired audiences.

**Discovery channels:** Social media and TV were the top places consumers go for product discovery across all three categories, according to Tinuiti research.

Beauty consumers, in particular, rely heavily on social media for product discovery, so there's an opportunity for marketers to more effectively reach their audience on that channel, said Andy Taylor, vice president of research at Tinuiti, during a [recent Tech-Talk Webinar](#).

Across all three categories, Facebook was the No. 1 platform for product discovery. For Gen Z beauty shoppers, however, TikTok was overwhelmingly the top platform; Gen Zers were nearly seven times more likely to discover beauty products on TikTok than on Facebook.

And that makes sense, said Elizabeth Marsten, vice president of commerce strategic services at Tinuiti. "When we're talking about beauty, you want to see it in action. If you can't touch it or feel it, you want to see what it looks like when someone else touches it or feels it," she said.

**The influencer effect:** At least 59% of consumers across beauty, food and beverage, and OTC health said they had purchased a product based on the recommendation of an online influencer in the past year, per Tinuiti.

"That speaks to how important the influencer game is becoming to brands," said Taylor. "Brands really do need to be looking for those voices who are going to help [put a product in front of relevant audiences] because consumers are turning to influencers as trusted sources of recommendations for these products."

**Let's get physical:** Across all three categories, in-store displays or signs were the third most likely media type to introduce shoppers to a new product they would later purchase, according to Tinuiti.

Many retailers are ramping up their in-store media offerings to create an interactive, digital experience within the store, said Marsten, citing The Kroger Co.'s partnership with Cooler Screens and Walmart's wall of TVs.

"Digital is physically changing what the store looks like inside," she said. "Changing what you're going to be able to interact with, touch, feel."

**Online search wars:** Respondents across all three categories were more likely to start their shopping searches directly on retailer ecommerce sites like Walmart or Amazon than they were to turn to a traditional search engine, said Taylor.

“Amazon is far and away the most popular start for beauty product searches,” he said. “But when it comes to food and beverage, Walmart has steadily become a grocery giant and is much more popular than Amazon in that category.”

For OTC health products, the two retailers are tied for the No. 1 spot.

**Customer service:** Once consumers are in-store, traditional search engines play a larger role in the shopping experience, according to Tinuiti.

At least a third of consumers in each product category said they’ve searched for a product via a search engine while in-store to learn more about a product.

But retailer apps could take the place of search engines if they continue building out their capabilities, said Marsten.

**The power of the written word:** Consumers across all three categories agreed that written reviews were the most helpful product detail page element, Tinuiti data showed.

“Folks want to hear from past purchasers of those products, how they tasted, how they smelled, how the product held up over time,” said Taylor.

Other important product page elements included review stars, photos, and comparisons to similar products, with the combination of written reviews and photos being particularly powerful, said Marsten.

[Watch the full webinar.](#)

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