

Social commerce usage in 2021

Article

Social commerce is one of the biggest trends in social media in 2021. The major platforms are all pushing commerce to the forefront of their business strategies, introducing new features aimed at convincing consumers to go from inspiration to purchase with a click of a button or a tap on a mobile screen.

Many businesses are gravitating toward social commerce. According to February 2021 research among 250 US marketers by Sprout Social, **85%** of large companies, **84%** of medium-sized companies, and **57%** of small companies already sell on social commerce platforms.

Social commerce usage is approaching mass adoption among consumers. About half (48%) of US social media users bought something via a social media platform in the 12 months prior to taking our “US Digital Trust Survey,” fielded online during May 20–June 8, 2021. Two important points add context to this finding:

- **Our definition of a social media purchase is broad.** It includes social media users ages 18 to 75 who bought directly on a social platform, as well as those who clicked on a link to go to an external purchase destination and make an immediate purchase.
- **More than half of social-media-driven purchases take place outside of a social platform.** In research conducted in October 2021 by Bizrate Insights on behalf of Insider Intelligence, 56% of US social buyers who had made a purchase via social media in the past month did so by clicking a link to a retailer’s product page, while 44% bought directly on a social platform.

Facebook was the most popular platform for social commerce in our study, with about one-third of adult social media users making a purchase there. Instagram and YouTube came next.

- **Facebook and Instagram** likely topped the list due to their overall popularity among social media users; they were used by 88% and 60% of respondents, respectively. These platforms have also significantly built out their shopping capabilities through features like Facebook Marketplace and Instagram Shopping.
- **YouTube** has a long history of allowing videos to include purchasing links, either embedded in the video itself or in the description. That familiarity among its users, combined with the fact that 82% of social network users said they watch YouTube, likely contributed to its third-place showing.
- Platforms such as **Pinterest, Snapchat, and TikTok** are also building social commerce tools but don’t yet have the breadth and depth of offerings compared with Facebook or Instagram. They also have significantly lower penetration among social network users—40% said they used Pinterest, and 33% were on Snapchat or TikTok, respectively.
- **Twitter, LinkedIn, and Reddit** have yet to make many moves in social commerce, hence the low percentages of social users who said they made a purchase on those platforms.

Read the full report.

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Digital Trust in Social Commerce 2021

