

How should advertisers approach social search?

Article

Social search is used for more than just shopping.

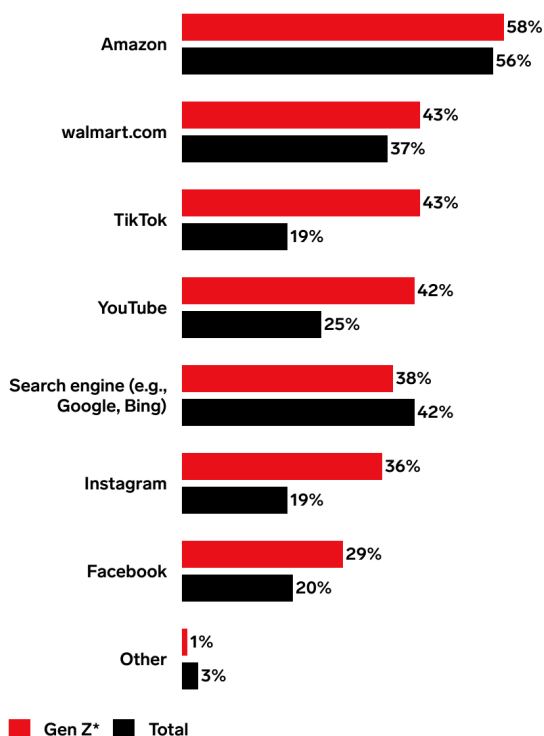
Searching on Google or Amazon is far from being intermediated by social search. US adults are still more likely to start on Amazon or a search engine to find products, per Jungle Scout. But many are turning to social media for other types of searches, such as:

- Things to do. Over half (55%) of US consumers search for restaurants, per a 2022 survey by Frontier Communications. Searchers also look for travel destinations and recipes.

- Things to learn. Searching for tutorial videos is extremely common; 66% of social search users in Canada (a comparable market to the US) said they look for such content, according to February 2023 research from GetApp, while 47% search for educational videos.
- People to follow or get to know. Among social search users worldwide, 58% look for people, per a January 2023 HubSpot survey.

Where US Adults Start Their Online Product Searches, Gen Z* vs. Total, Feb 2023

% of respondents



Note: *ages 18-26

Source: Jungle Scout, "Consumer Trends Report: Q1 2023," March 21, 2023

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Think of social search as a discovery engine.

Social platforms are already great vehicles for introducing consumers to products and brands they may want to purchase. Advertisers should lean into that strength and:

- Make it easier for Gen Zers to find things they want to buy. Among US adults ages 18 to 24, 58.0% will be social buyers in 2023—making at least one purchase via a social channel, per our forecast. Gen Zers frequently use influencer and user-generated content to discover products, but search ads will be another opportunity to reach them.

- Introduce a brand via authentic, helpful content. Ads featuring how-tos or tutorials can help consumers learn about new brands. On Pinterest, for example, most searches are unbranded. When users want to learn how to decorate a living room, apply a current makeup technique, or find a hotel in a travel destination, social search ads can help them learn something new—and learn about a brand.
- Make organic social content searchable. To catch social searchers, incorporate relevant keywords and hashtags into video descriptions, image tags, and text, and consider creating content that relates to popular searches on social platforms.

Report by Debra Aho Williamson Jun 14, 2023

Social Search Is Taking Off

