

# BUYERS BEHAVIOR IS NOW #DIGITAL

Charlotte Quartly, Digital Strategy Coordinator @VanillaIP says the digital revolution has made it easier to review any product or business, which changes the way products are purchased. If a consumer cannot find a good review on the product or company they are unlikely to get to the purchase stage of the customer-buying journey.

**D**id you know that Consumers are 71% more likely to make a purchase based on social media referrals? Social Networks influence nearly 50% of all IT decision makers and 15,100,000 consumers go to social media channels before making purchase decisions – and social is just one key part of the changing digital world!

The way people buy and look for products has significantly changed and improved over the past few decades. Word of mouth has always been an effective marketing tool for any business - a good recommendation from a happy customer is more than likely to produce another sale. However, in today's modern world, word of mouth doesn't seem to be enough, consumers like to read lots of recommendations, research the product to find the best price as well as getting information on the company itself and having a look at their social sites because you get a very honest view of a company as comments cannot be hidden.

The internet has opened up many new paths for a consumer to take when looking to purchase something.

Social Media is seen as a form of online channel in which consumer behaviour is reflected directly and is visible to everyone on a real time basis, making it a true game changer when looking at buyers' behaviour. A consumer can quickly get a reaction from a business by tweeting, which is visible to the world and others will be looking at how a business responds to their tweets.

A consumer goes through a digital journey when buying a product:

- ▶ Awareness
- ▶ Interest
- ▶ Consideration
- ▶ Purchase
- ▶ Retention
- ▶ Advocacy

These six steps within the journey are highly influenced by the digital age which allows consumers to become aware of their product via PR, Radio, TV and Print. Gain an interest in the product via online ads, email, PCC and social ads. Reviews, Blogs, Media and email will create a consideration for a product by the buyer, which is key when getting them to the purchase stage. After the buyer has purchased

your product via the website then it's the companies' prerogative to retain the customer for future purchases.

Based on this journey, Google has developed the 'ZMOT' (zero moment of truth) to help business rethink the way they advertise and sell online. ZMOT is that moment a consumer grabs a laptop, mobile phone or some wired device to start learning about a product or service they are thinking of buying. I know you are probably thinking, yes that's normal I do that every day but at least 70% of people look at product reviews online before making a purchase

Online reviews are key for any business, everyone checks online reviews before making a purchase, it has become second nature. When a consumer looks up your business through a search engine, they will more than often come across a review before they are even directed to your website. If your first review is negative, you could lose that customer there and with the power of the internet they can find an alternative right away. With your digital footprint being so exposed nowadays you need to make sure that your company is on top of reviews.

Overall the digital revolution has made it easier for consumers to review any product or business, which changes the way they will buy a product. If a consumer cannot find a good review on the product or company, they are unlikely to get to the purchase stage of the customer-buying journey. However, the digital age has meant that business can reach their audience easier and can also target them after a purchase to keep them involved and up to date with the business and product. It also means that a business can respond to bad press very quickly but also good press can go viral just as quick, improving business brand awareness.

