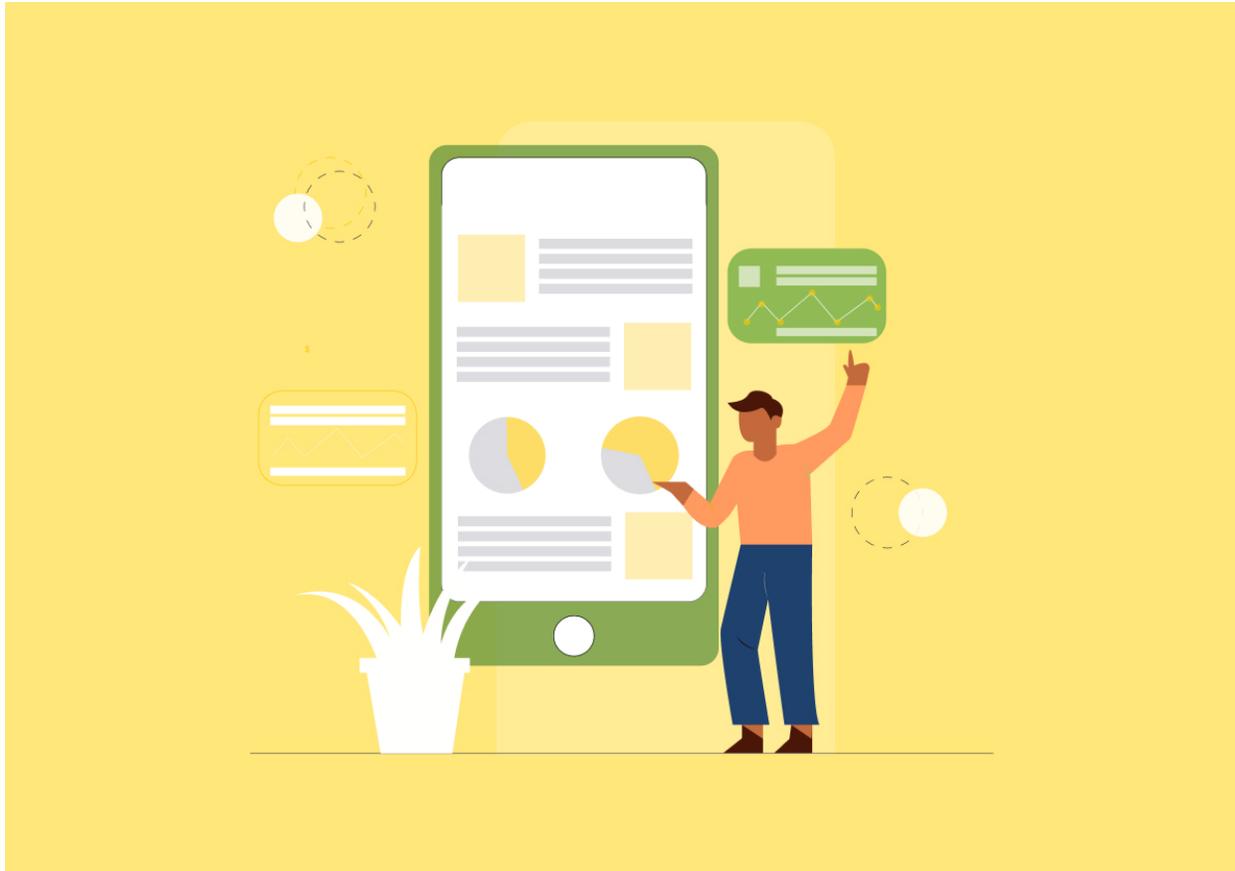




Published by Synchrony on March 22, 2022, 9:00 AM EST

## 5 Things to Know About the Buyer Journey on Mobile



People use their phones to do almost everything, including making purchases large and small. While more shoppers are completing a major purchase of \$500 or more without ever entering a store (25% in 2021 vs. 16% in 2019), 1 product and company research is increasingly conducted online — and is quickly moving to mobile devices, including phones and tablets.

### 1. The Major Purchase Buyer Journey is Online — and More Mobile Than Ever

A buyer journey is simply the path a consumer takes to purchase a product or service. The journey typically begins with a pain point to solve (eg. “I need a new couch”), involves research on possible solutions including pricing and alternatives, and ends with the decision to make a purchase.

Mobile device use is up significantly for consumers researching or completing their purchase: 76% of major purchase shoppers surveyed by Synchrony used their phones as part of the process in 2021, up from 48% in 2019.<sup>1</sup>

People are shopping online more as a habit gained during the pandemic, but roughly 3 in 10 Synchrony cardholders Footnote<sup>1</sup> surveyed said in 2021 the pandemic would change the way they will shop for major purchases in the future, and 48% said the pandemic forced them to reprioritize their major purchase needs.<sup>1</sup>

Major purchase research had to be conducted online in 2020, but many shoppers found they appreciated the efficiency of learning about products, services, financing options, promotional offers, and company reputations this way. Now that brick-and-mortar locations are open again, mobile allows shoppers to explore a retailer's website and social media, check purchase options against Amazon.com, and more while in-store or on the go.

A 2021 study of 500 shoppers by Dynamic Yield confirms that 76% of them like to shop on mobile devices because “it saves them time” but “only 12% of respondents find shopping on the mobile web convenient.”<sup>2</sup>

Businesses can bridge the convenience gap and make it even easier to research and purchase on mobile devices.

Small business owners should do a review through their website for how mobile-friendly it is, and ensure they use analytics to see what pages customers are abandoning on mobile. Shoppers are using their phones for all stages of the purchase process, so all website pages should be clear, actionable, and concise.

Owners can evaluate which website pages are problematic for visitors if they leave the website or abandon their cart when on mobile, but not on desktop. Consider making the font size larger or reducing the number of clicks to move through the shopping process as a way of testing out solutions that work better for mobile shoppers.

## **2. Mobile Research is Increasing**

With this shift online, there is also a shift to mobile devices being part of the initial phases of the research, including comparing competitive products:

About 80% of shoppers start their research online<sup>1</sup> moving the path to purchase further away from stores alone in the last two years. And more research is happening via mobile:

39% of major purchase shoppers conducted online research via mobile while not in-store (+8pp from 2019)<sup>1</sup>

25% of shoppers conducted online research via mobile, visiting other retailer sites while in-store (+6pp from 2019)<sup>1</sup>

Younger shoppers also tend to be more mobile than people 50 years or older. They also are more likely to engage with Amazon and social media in their research, gathering peer reviews and investigating where else they can purchase the product.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to a website optimized for mobile, Synchrony experts recommend keeping up with online reviews, responding and mitigating concerns where possible, and routinely visiting competitor websites to ensure the digital experience is on target.

### **3. The Role of the Store is Changing**

More shoppers are completing their major purchase without ever entering a store (25% vs. 16% in 2019),<sup>1</sup> and the number who felt comfortable making a large purchase without touching or seeing the item in person increased as well — from 45% to 39% in 2019.<sup>1</sup>

However, the vast majority of large purchases are still made in store — 65%.<sup>1</sup> The sales associate continues to have a significant impact on the purchase decision, and, although the number is dropping, many shoppers still visit local retailers in their shopping journey.<sup>1</sup>

Shoppers might always want to make their final decision in-store, but growing numbers will want the ease of online conversion, so Synchrony experts recommend business owners make payment options, user reviews, and product details and images prominent and scaled for mobile on their website.

### **4. Having Financing Options is Important**

Mobile credit applications are on the rise (11% of major purchases in 2021 vs 1% in 2015).<sup>1</sup> 49% of shoppers said the pandemic made them more likely to use financing options to make their major purchase.<sup>1</sup>

36% said they were more likely to seek alternative financing options like buy now, pay later (BNPL) or other short-term financing programs.<sup>1</sup>

50% of Synchrony cardholders said a BNPL option is important when making a major purchase.<sup>1</sup>

20% of major purchase shoppers in 2021 weren't aware any kind of financing was available until they entered the store,<sup>1</sup> so Synchrony experts recommend ensuring information about promotional financing and the ability to apply is also easy to access and understand via mobile. Consider adding a BNPL option or another way for consumers to pay overtime without opening a credit card.

## **5. Younger Shoppers can be Effectively Targeted on Mobile**

Age drives mobile usage: Younger generations are more active via mobile than older cohorts. Shoppers under 40 said they were somewhat more likely to seek out alternative financing options (47% vs only 27% for 60+ year olds).<sup>1</sup>

59% of 21- to 39-year-old major purchase shoppers said a mobile-enabled website for easy research was a top three requirement of a retailer.<sup>1</sup>

Considering 48% of that same younger age cohort also sees a virtual shopping or virtual user experience as a top three requirement of their decision, a mobile-friendly website is even more important than a secure purchase or the customer service a business provides.<sup>1</sup>

Knowing that customers access a business' website from any device means bringing the in-store experience to them on mobile, from exceptional customer service available via chat or SMS to a website's imagery, copy amount, and layout designed for all screen sizes.

### **Sources**

1. "8th Major Purchase Journey Study," Synchrony Bank, August 2021
2. [The State of Personalization in Mobile Commerce](#), Dynamic Yield Research, 2021