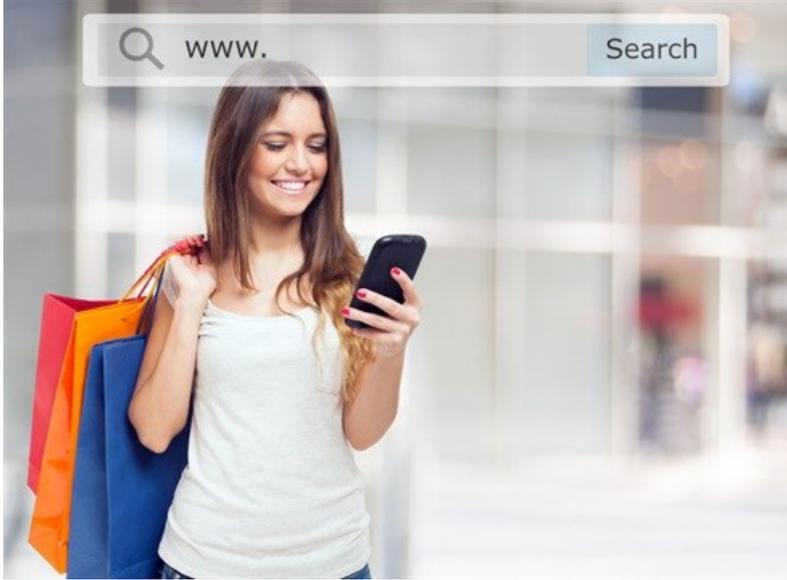


# Creating real buyer trust in a virtual world

In a time when malls are taking a pounding from criminals, load shedding and tightened shopper budgets, e-commerce is offered an opportunity to finally step up; not so much as to replace the brick and mortar retailer but to enhance it.



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Both online and traditional stores are hard at work trying to establish the missing ingredient - trust, albeit from various sides of the spectrum. Retailers are looking to rekindle the feeling of safety and e-commerce stores are looking for checkout peace of mind, amid growing fears around fraud.

In a recent study, published in the Journal of Neuroscience, researchers from Dartmouth and New York University showed that our brains take just three hundredths of a second to decide trustworthiness, far less than one blink of your eyes. With that said, how can online retailers build trust among shoppers with 'schizophrenic' attention spans?

## Building trust

This is where technology and retail marketing converge. According to Mustapha Zaouini, CEO of electronic payment provider PayU, it is about integrating trusted tech and relevant communication through the transaction process. "The power of the brand and how you communicate during the customer journey is key to building trust, along with highly visible and recognised security provider authentication."

Superbalist co-founder Claude Hanan, puts the trust issue in practical terms. "It's more risky reading out your credit card details to a waiter when ordering a pizza over the phone (the waiter usually re-reads aloud all the card information you give them) than it is buying online through a secure channel.

"Instances of fraud are rare, relative to the number of orders made online, and the introduction of 3D Secure will further reduce this. If a fraudulent order is placed, our internal fraud detection system prevents 99% of these fraudulent transactions from being processed, meaning we do not dispatch goods to the fraudster."

Even the big boys struggle. Four-month old Apple Pay, the poster child of seamless mobile payment is now facing a fraud headache. Six per cent of all Apple Pay transactions are reported to be fraudulent. The cause: banking institutions not cross checking stolen credit card data.

There is a maxim in the e-commerce world that once a customer has bought online three or more times, the propensity for a repeat purchase increases, as the convenience of the channel is understood and the trust is gained.

## **Trust generators**

Two key tech and communication trust generators will help that buyer through their first online purchase:

### **1. Build trust through a well-communicated payment process**

Transparency through the checkout process builds trust. The best way to achieve this is to hold the hand of shoppers, as they head through the business end of the process.

Start optimising your website from the checkout first and then work your way back to the landing page or pay-per-click ad. Through A/B testing of your checkout funnel, you can pick up patterns and behaviour that can be fed back into the communication loop to provide reassurance on the privacy and security of details entered.

According to Business Insider, \$4 trillion will be lost this year due to abandoned shopping carts. The number one reason for customers to leave a shopping cart is hidden costs. This is a biggie - hidden anything is a bad idea. Make sure that total price is given on entry to checkout, with no hidden charges.

Also, indicate methods of payment, vouchers and promotion codes, shipping options and required registration prior to, and throughout, checkout, and ensure that 3D Secure Authentication best practice is followed.

It is always a good idea to inform the customer at the start of checkout that payment authentication will be required. In addition, offer guidance to customers on the need for the completion of authentication.

Finally, choose a trusted payment partner. Zaouini says, "Our clients, such as Pick n Pay, SAA, Nu Metro, will have gone through thorough due diligence based on perceived ease of use, trial-ability, risk and credibility."

### **2. Online marketing builds trust and influences sales**

Studies by Forrester Research, Yahoo and comScore, show that almost 92% of purchases take place offline, following online consumer activity.

Add to that, more than \$500 billion in sales and nearly 20% of all in-store retail sales now being influenced by mobile content. In 2016, that number is expected to jump to more than 50%, according to a study by Deloitte.

While online retailers are sharpening their skills thanks to slicker e-commerce templates, more intelligent data collection and more precise customer relationship management is playing a hidden hand.

If you do not have the basics of email marketing, list building, retargeting and social nurturing in place to build trust, you might just be missing the train. These factors are not only driving better shopper experiences and loyalty they are delivering conversions.

What is clear is that today's customer needs help trusting transactions and is looking at multiple channels to find it. With a sound payment process in place and both online and offline measures in support, there is no reason why this is not achievable.

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