

Elevated sensorial experiences drive shoppers back to stores

According to a new global report by in-store media company Mood Media, sensory experiences drive 9 out of 10 shoppers back to stores. Specifically, the research found that 78% of shoppers globally say an enjoyable in-store atmosphere is a key factor in their decision to choose in-store over e-commerce.



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For the purposes of this report, an enjoyable store atmosphere is seen as the right combination of music, visuals and scent.

A follow-up to Mood Media's 2017 *State of Brick and Mortar* report, the new study was undertaken by Walnut Unlimited, the global market research agency specialising in neuroscience and behavioral psychology and economics, and surveyed more than 10,000 consumers across 10 countries worldwide including Australia, Benelux (Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg), China, France, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In addition to examining recent shifts in consumers' impressions and expectations of in-store retail, the 2019 study explores the impact of a store's atmosphere – including sensory elements – on the overall shopping experience, as well as what drives certain customer behaviors, such as revisiting a store or making a purchase.



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Ailsa Wingfield 14 Jan 2019



The study also explored customer insights across six different sectors: banks, beauty, fashion, grocery, pharmacy and quick service restaurants (QSR).

Additional highlights of the study's key global findings include:

- **Combatting the e-commerce effect:** 78% of shoppers cite an enjoyable in-store atmosphere plays a key factor in opting to make purchases in-store over online (Spain is most influenced, with 89% of shoppers more likely to purchase in-store).
- **The influence of sound:** Music is the number one factor to improve a shopper's mood in-store, and has an overall positive impact on 85% of global shoppers. However, the quality of the music played really matters. More than half (57%) of shoppers will disengage if brands make poor music choices.
- **Encouraging behavior change:** Combining music, visual and scent sensorial elements increases consumer dwell time, with 75% of consumers citing they've stayed longer in a store when such components were in place.
- **Building customer loyalty:** nine out of 10 consumers have decided to return to a store because they enjoyed its music, visuals and scent combination.
- **Scent psychology:** 1 in 2 global consumers say that a nicely scented business "lifts my mood".
- **The power of visual content:** Over half (58%) of consumers globally say that engaging video content has a positive impact on their shopping.
- **The importance of interaction and personalisation:** The ability to touch, feel and try different products or services is cited as the biggest driver in making consumers more likely to want to buy something while shopping in-store (at 56%). More than a third of global consumers (38%) say "feeling like the experience is personalised to me" makes them more likely to purchase something, which was the second biggest driving factor ranked.

Physical store remains important

The report also uncovers differences in the ways shoppers around the world respond to the in-store atmosphere, finding that consumers in China and Spain most positively react to an enjoyable in-store environment. While 90% of consumers across the globe are likely to revisit a store if it has an enjoyable atmosphere, those numbers are even higher in China and Spain (93% and 95% respectively).

And while scent was found to have a strong impact on shoppers in all of the countries surveyed (65% globally), it was most memorable in Spain, with 85% of Spanish shoppers recalling they had noticed a store having a pleasant scent. Shoppers in China and the US had the strongest reactions to in-store music, with 65% of people in both countries saying they have recently enjoyed listening to music in-store.

"Consistent with our 2017 *State of Brick and Mortar* study, we found that the physical store remains important to the majority of people around the world, with the experiential element playing a large role in consumers' decision to choose brick and mortar over e-commerce," said Scott Moore, global senior vice president of marketing and creative content for Mood Media.

"It also further highlights that brick and mortar businesses have to give consumers a reason to get off the sofa and into the store, and part of that reason lies in providing them an elevated sensorial experience."

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