

A photograph of two young women wearing red Santa hats with white fur trim. They are both smiling and looking at their smartphones. The woman on the left is holding her phone with both hands, while the woman on the right is also holding her phone. They appear to be sitting on a couch or bed. The background is a light-colored, textured wall. The entire image has a semi-transparent teal overlay.

Research Study:

2023 Holiday Shopping Behaviors

Presented by  sharethrough

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Methodology	4
The Findings	5
Part 1: Where and How Shoppers Plan to Buy Gifts This Season	5
Part 2: Gift Buying and Receiving Preferences	9
Part 3: Influences on Gift Buying Decisions	12
About Sharethrough	15

Executive Summary

The Q4 holiday season is one of the busiest seasons for spending for both consumers and marketers alike.

According to this latest Sharethrough study, **52% of consumers will do half or more** of their holiday shopping during Black Friday and Cyber Monday. While marketers spend much of their yearly budget to attract these shoppers.

The problem? Both consumers and marketers want to make the most effective use of their spend. At Sharethrough, we conducted yet another consumer study to learn more about their shopping behaviors and habits during the holiday season to help marketers better achieve their goals, maximize ROI and attract potential new customers.

“ Conducting research to understand consumer behaviors is core to how we build advertising products and help advertisers better reach and engage their consumers. This latest research has some powerful insights on the latest consumer holiday shopping behaviors that lead to implications for advertisers that can significantly improve the effectiveness of their ads. ”

- **JF Cote**, CEO & President, Sharethrough

THE KEY FINDINGS

73%

of consumers in all age groups are likely to **spend more or the same** as last year this holiday season

58%

of consumers in all age groups will **buy their gifts online**

56%

of consumers in all age groups say that **online ads influence their shopping decisions** and behaviors

Keep reading this whitepaper to get a more detailed look at the findings from our consumer holiday shopping behaviors study, key differences in demographic behaviors and what marketers can do to improve their performance during this holiday season.

Methodology

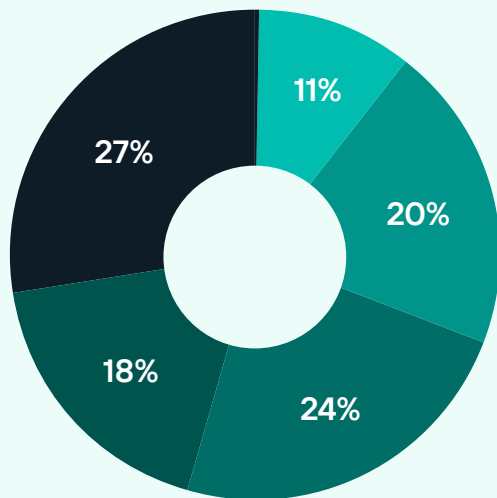
In September 2023, Sharethrough surveyed 1,000 consumers in the US and Canada about their holiday shopping behaviors and habits.

Date of the research: 2023, September 16-17

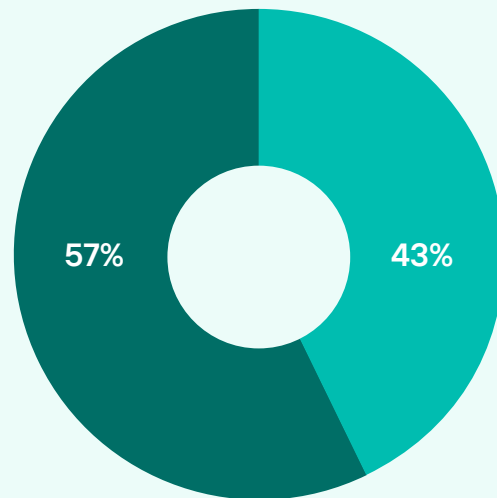
Number of people surveyed: 1,000 (US 67.50%, Canada 32.50%)

Survey Demographics

Gender



Age Groups



- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55+

- Male
- Female

The Findings: Part 1

Where and How Shoppers Plan to Buy Gifts This Season

Understanding preferences and demographic differences in how consumers plan and shop online can have key implications for how marketers advertise their products and promotions.

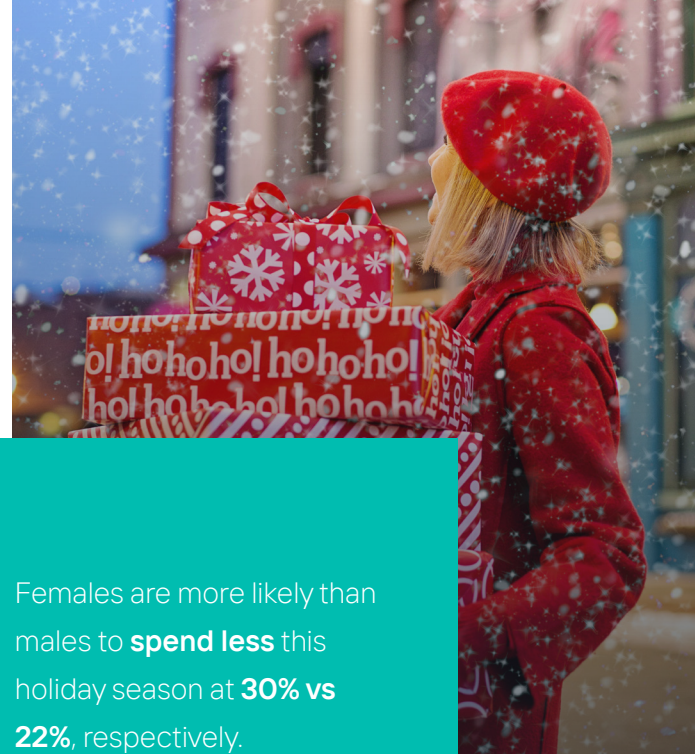
This section will reveal how much consumers are expecting to spend, who plans to spend more online vs in store, what devices they use to shop, how early they plan to start shopping and who is most likely to comparison shop before purchasing.

73% of Consumers Are Likely to Spend More or the Same as Last Year This Holiday Season

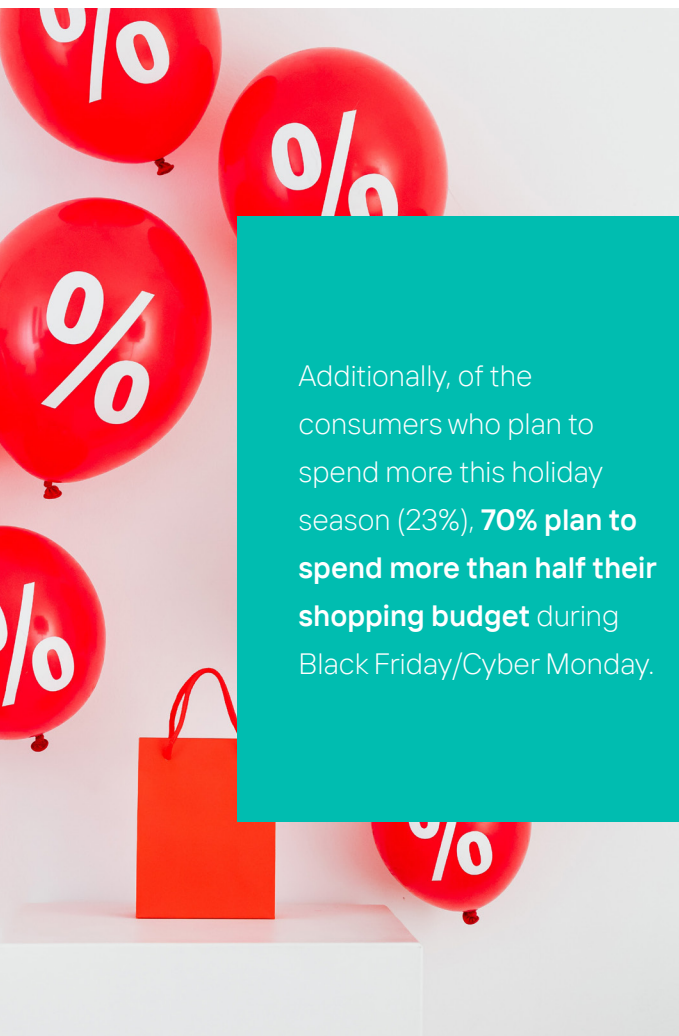
Do you intend to spend more or less (compared to last year) this holiday season?



The 73% that plan to spend more or the same is an increase from 62% in 2022. However, "More" decreased from 34% in 2022 which suggests a **decrease in confidence in the economy**.



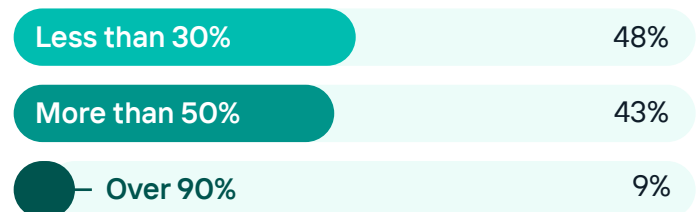
Females are more likely than males to **spend less** this holiday season at **30% vs 22%**, respectively.



Additionally, of the consumers who plan to spend more this holiday season (23%), **70% plan to spend more than half their shopping budget** during Black Friday/Cyber Monday.

52% Expect to Spend at Least Half of Their Holiday Shopping on Black Friday/Cyber Monday

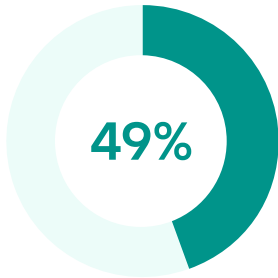
During the Black Friday/Cyber Monday week-end, your purchases will account for:



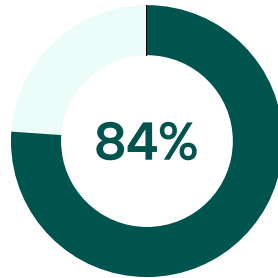
The 9% of consumers who will do most of their holiday shopping during Black Friday/Cyber Monday is a **64% increase vs. 2022**. An increase mostly driven by males and people aged between 18 and 24 who are **3.5 times more likely to do most of their holiday shopping during Black Friday / Cyber Monday**.

Consumers Start Shopping **Early**

When do you plan to start shopping for holiday gifts?



of consumers plan to start shopping in **October** (an increase from 46% in 2022)

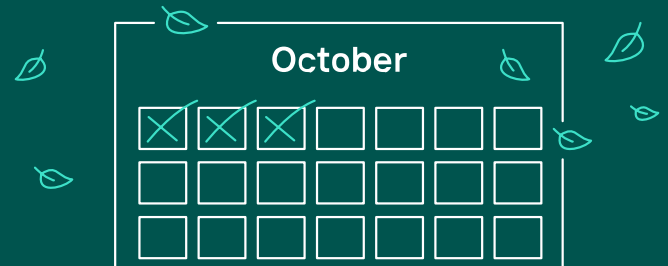


plan to start shopping during or before **Black Friday & Cyber Monday**



Implications for Advertisers:

Advertisers should consider starting their holiday campaigns and promotions in October to both stick out from the competition before the November rush and to reach the **49% of consumers who will have already started shopping.**



Consumers Often Engage in **Price Comparison** Before Buying

55%

of consumers **sometimes or always** engage in online price comparison

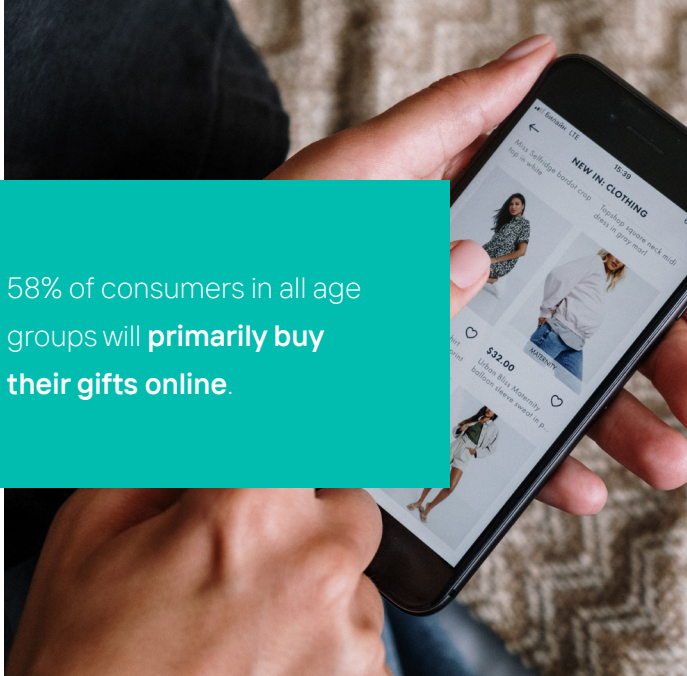
2x

less likely to engage in **online price comparison** for adults 55+ vs. other age groups

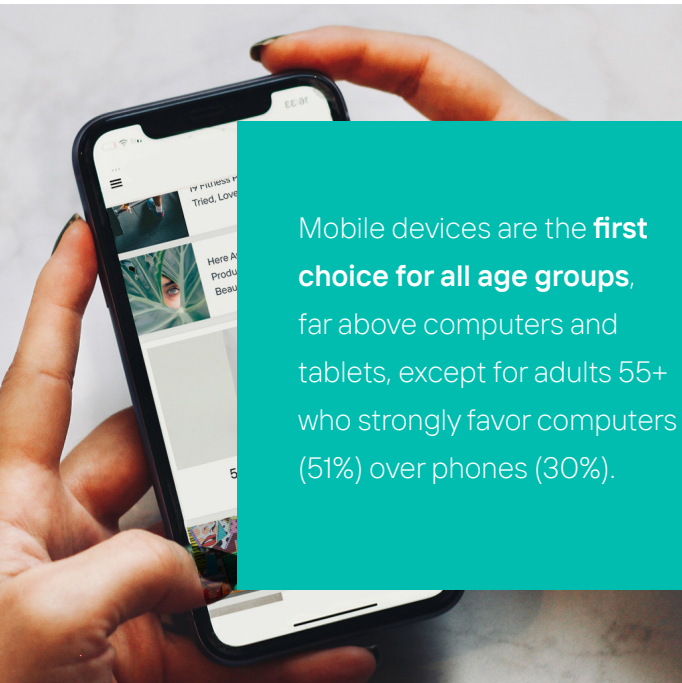
Where Consumers Do Their Shopping

eCommerce Beats Brick and Mortar for Holiday Shopping

Where will you do the majority of your holiday shopping?



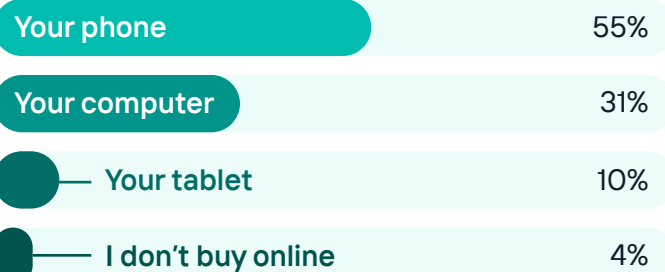
58% of consumers in all age groups will **primarily buy their gifts online.**



Mobile devices are the **first choice for all age groups**, far above computers and tablets, except for adults 55+ who strongly favor computers (51%) over phones (30%).

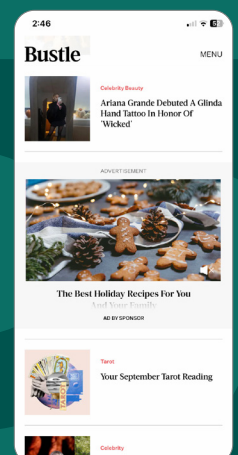
The Majority of Online Shopping Happens on Mobile Devices

When shopping online, do you mostly use..



Implications for Advertisers:

Not only should advertisers focus more media spend on mobile but they should consider what ad types draw the best attention and comprehension of those ads. For example, according to previous Sharethrough research, **75% of consumers keep their phones on mute** when a video plays. So advertisers should include captions in all videos from social media to the rest of the web, which is now possible thanks to [Sharethrough's Dynamic Captions](#) which automatically add captions to videos at no additional cost.



The Findings: Part 2

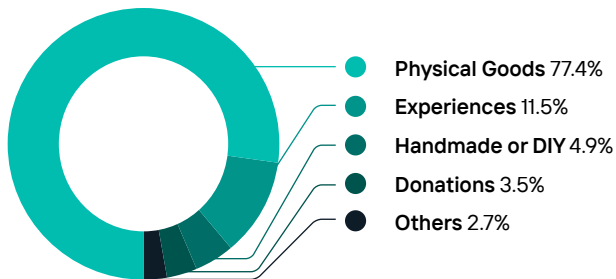
Gift Buying and Receiving Preferences

Unexpected differences exist between what consumers prefer to receive as gifts and what types of gifts they like to purchase.

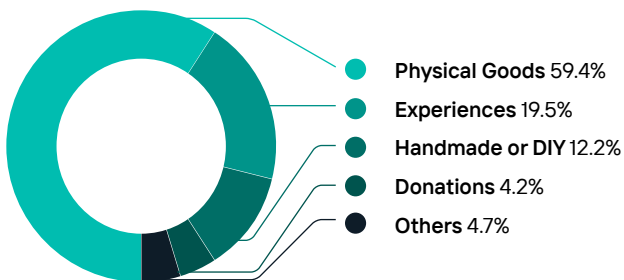
Understanding these differences can be key for advertisers to decide which products, services and experiences to promote throughout the holiday season.

Physical Goods Are Top Choices for Gifts With a Large Disparity Between Giving and Receiving

When looking for holiday gifts, you normally shop for...



What types of holiday gifts do you prefer to receive?



There is a misalignment between what people are more likely to offer vs. what they prefer to receive as gifts: **77.6% are more likely to offer physical gifts while only 59.4% prefer to receive a physical good for themselves.**

DONATE

Differences Between Genders in What They Prefer as Gifts

Males are...

19%

more likely to prefer to receive physical goods

Females are...

94%

more likely to prefer DIY/handmade gifts than males

Gen Z Are More Likely to Give and Want Charitable Donations

If you're buying or receiving gifts from 18-24 year olds, it is helpful to know that they are...

3x

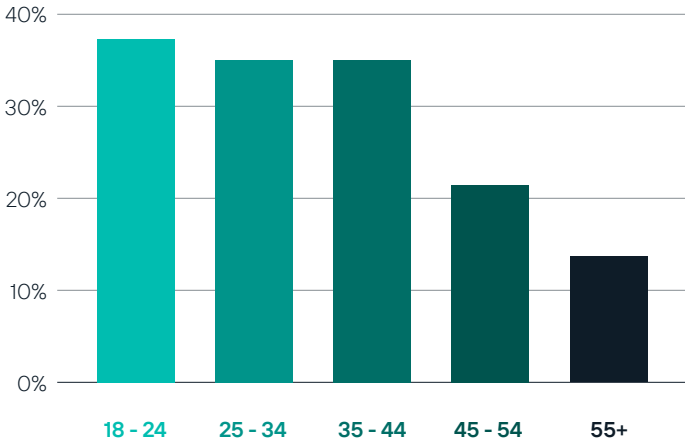
more likely to gift donations to charity in the recipient's name vs. other age groups

2x

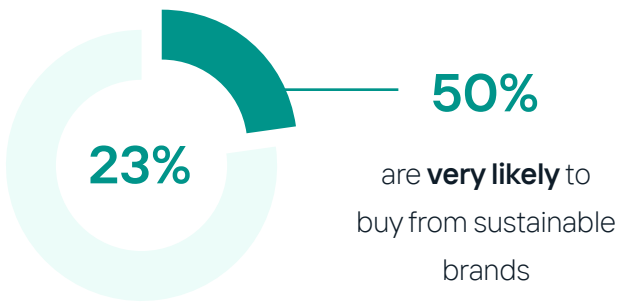
more open to receiving donations as a gift

Consumers Are More Likely to Buy Sustainable Products

Very Likely to Buy Sustainable Brands



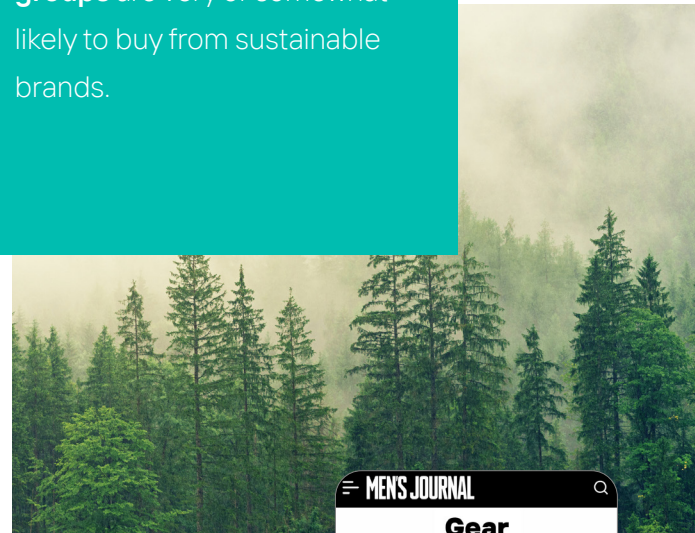
Big Spenders Across All Age Groups are Most Likely to Buy from Sustainable Brands



of consumers across all age groups plan on spending more this season

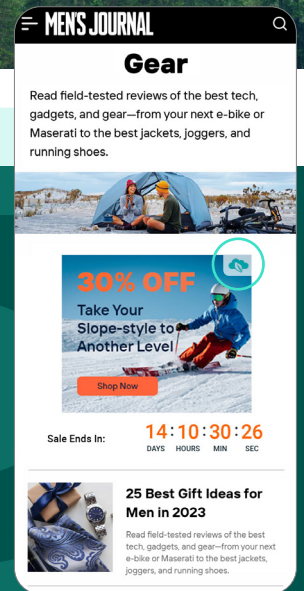


81% of consumers across all age groups are very or somewhat likely to buy from sustainable brands.



Implications for Advertisers:

Consider mentioning if your product or service has sustainability benefits in addition to the core value of the product. You can also run the ads on [Sharethrough's GreenPMPs™](#), which measure, reduce and compensate for emissions of the campaign and include a **green icon**, similar to the Ad Choices icon, which clicks to a site to educate consumers on sustainability in advertising.



The Findings: Part 3

Influences on Gift Buying Decisions

From digital to TV, many factors influence how consumers decide on which gifts to purchase.

This section covers which online platforms have the most organic influence on sourcing gift ideas, what ad types influence shopping behaviors and which types of advertising messaging generate the highest influence on purchase decisions.

Online Platforms Where Consumers Find Gift Ideas

Rank these sites/apps from most influential (1) to least influential (7) in helping you find gift ideas

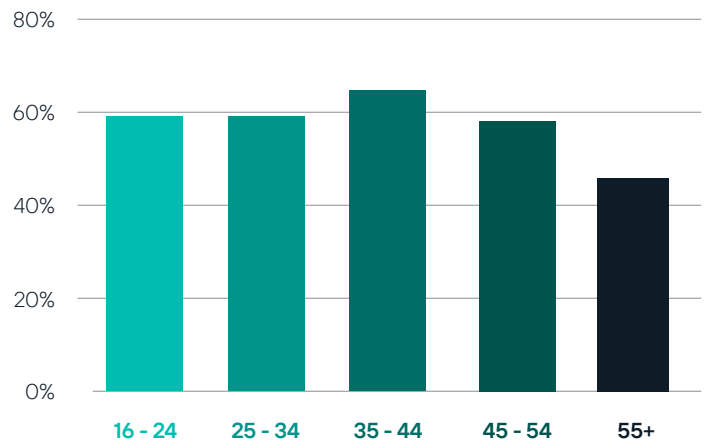


Blogs/Websites still ranks **1st** for 55+ and **#2** for 16-24

Over 25% of people rank **Twitter last**, a 13% increase vs 2022

Ad Type Influences on Shopping Behavior

Age Groups **More Likely to Be Influenced by Online Ads** During the Holiday Season



56%

say that **online ads influence** their holiday purchase behaviors

64%

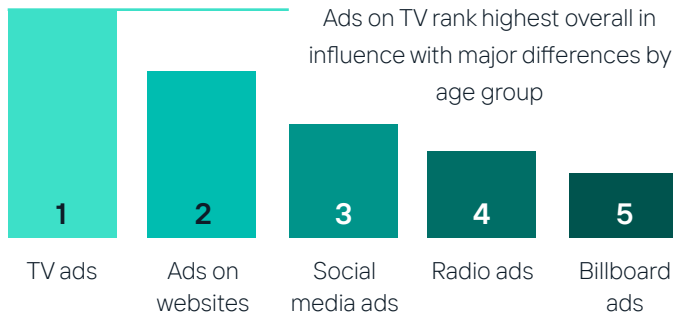
of 35-44 are **likely to be influenced by online ads** during the holiday season, the highest of all age groups

Of the 59% of adults <35 who are more likely to be influenced by ads, **80% are likely to spend more or the same** this season and do more than half their shopping during Black Friday/Cyber Monday.

Consumers in all age groups who will spend more or the same this season are **75% more likely to be influenced by online ads.**

Ads on TV Rank Highest Overall in Influence With Major Differences by Age Group

Rank the advertising channels that you find the most persuasive? (1 most vs. 5 less persuasive)



Ads on websites seem to be the one type of ads being the most inclined to have an impact on all age groups, with **78% placing them in their top 3.**

But There Are Differences By Demographic...

#1

most influential for 18-34 is social media, followed by ads on websites, then TV

55%

of people aged 55+ ranked TV ads as most influential, the highest of all age groups

The Majority of Online Shopping Happens on Mobile Devices

Consumers in all age groups who will spend more or the same this season are 75% more likely to be influenced by online ads, and rank TV ads as the most convincing, followed by ads on websites in second, and ads on social media in third.

Implications for Advertisers:

Digital ad spend should focus on the top influences for both gift sourcing and ad types. For most age groups, this is a mix of TV, websites (particularly Youtube and blogs/websites) and social media.

On TV, **76% of consumers don't pay attention during commercial breaks**¹ but adding value to consumers through enhancements can improve that attention. For holiday promotions, Sharethrough's [CTV Countdown Overlay](#) (also available for [Display ads](#)) has been proven to increase consumers'

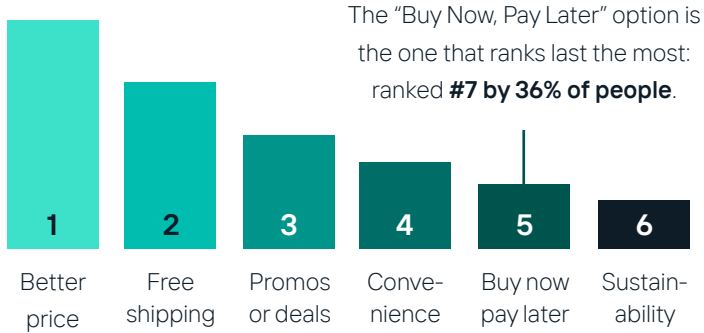


likelihood of remembering the start of the sale date by 43% and increase attention to the ad by 52%. Discover more CTV enhancements [here](#).

¹Understanding Consumer Behaviors During TV Commercial Breaks, Sharethrough, 2022

Pricing and Promotion Have the Greatest Influence on Purchase Decisions Online

Rank the factors influencing your decision to make an online purchase, from most influential (1) to least influential (7):



"Better price" comes in the **top 3 for 61% of consumers**

"Free shipping" comes in the **top 3 for 58% of consumers**

"Promotions or deals" comes in the **top 3 for 54% of consumers**

About Sharethrough

Sharethrough is one of the top global independent omnichannel ad exchanges.

Driven by our conviction that advertising should be underpinned by respect & care, we believe taking a human-centric approach to advertising and monetization is the key to a sustainable path forward for the independent and accessible internet to thrive. Advertisers & publishers leverage Sharethrough's unique technology to enhance every impression by rendering a higher-performing banner, video, CTV or native ad that dynamically fits into any placement on any site. Our publisher partners benefit from directly-sourced demand, scale, and quality, prioritizing their monetization efforts while elevating performance. With its headquarters in Montreal, Sharethrough has several offices across North America including San Francisco on the west coast & New York City in the east.