



Online Retailers Socialize Shopping

MAY 4, 2010

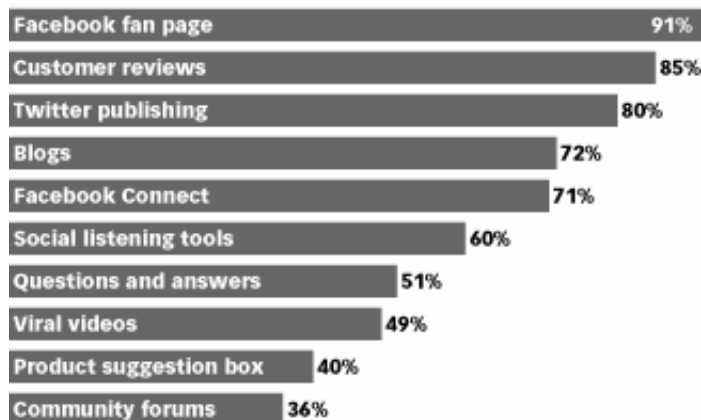
More plan Facebook presence than customer reviews

A March 2010 study from [the e-tailing group](#) and [PowerReviews](#) found that one-half of Internet users research online before making any type of purchase—on the Web, in a store or through any other method. They typically said doing their own research online saved them time and made them more confident about their purchases.

Retailers' sites played an important role in the research process, and respondents said the most critical capability for a retailer to have was customer reviews. A lack of user-generated reviews would cause nearly one-half (49%) of respondents to leave a retailer's site.

Though the "2010 Social Shopping Study" found that customer reviews had a strong influence on the purchases of 71% of respondents—while only 25% said the same about Facebook fan pages—an earlier e-tailing group study of Web merchants found Facebook had caught on so strongly that more planned a presence on the social networking site in the next year than would have customer reviews.

Community and Social Media Tools US Online Retailers Employ or Plan to Employ*, Q1 2010 (% of respondents)



Note: *in the next 12 months
Source: the e-tailing group, "9th Annual Merchant Survey," provided to eMarketer, March 15, 2010

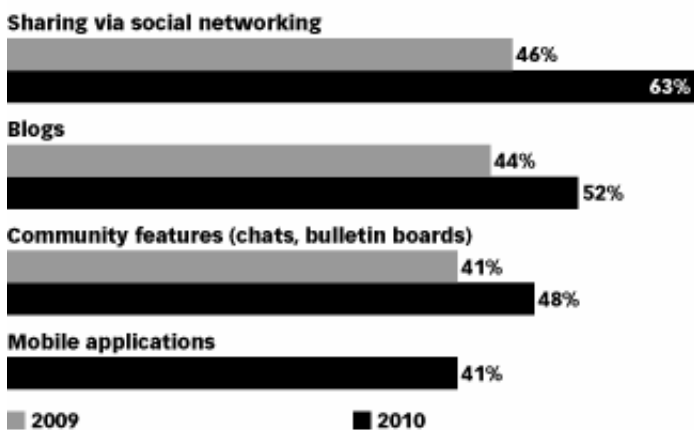
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Nearly as many retailers planned to publish on Twitter, but only 17% of respondents to the “2010 Social Shopping Study” said Twitter had a significant effect on their buying decisions. Overall, that survey found social media sites were the place shoppers were least likely to do research (6%).

Similarly, sharing tools were the capability rated important by the fewest shoppers (20%), but they were merchants’ top choice in social strategies.

Social Media Strategies Considered Valuable* Among US Online Retailers, 2009 & 2010 (% of respondents)



Note: *rated as "very" to "somewhat" valuable
Source: the e-tailing group, "9th Annual Merchant Survey," provided to eMarketer, March 15, 2010

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“Customer reviews have become a critical piece of the marketing puzzle, based not only on consumer demand but also on the sales they deliver,” said Pehr Luedtke, CEO of PowerReviews, in a statement.

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