

Online shoppers abandon a purchase if delivery options not available

The 2023 Global Online Shopper Survey offers insights into where and why consumers shop cross-border, what they buy and spend, their attitudes to delivery and returns, and why sustainability matters to online shoppers worldwide. The survey covers all major global markets, including Europe, the Americas, the Middle East and Africa, Asia Pacific, and China.



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“We’re delighted that the survey has been extended to sub-Saharan Africa, offering incisive insights into online shopping across the region. The results highlight the importance of delivery flexibility, transparency, and sustainability, although customers are less inclined to pay for the latter. The comprehensive report offers valuable insights for online retailers seeking to enhance customer satisfaction and achieve successful customer journeys,” says Clement Blanc, CEO of DHL Global Forwarding sub-Saharan Africa and South Africa.

Flexibility tops the priority list

Flexible delivery options are vital for online shoppers. According to the survey, 95% of shoppers around the globe have abandoned a purchase in the past because a preferred delivery option, such as home delivery or the ability to ship to parcel lockers or parcel shops, wasn’t available.

The same goes for consumers in South Africa, with 93% facing the same situation. In Europe, 90% of shoppers say they didn’t complete an online order because the goods couldn’t be delivered to a location or a time that suited them.



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Around two-thirds (77%) of South African online shoppers want to know what delivery company handles their parcels before placing an order. Almost all (93%) would even abandon their cart if they didn't like the delivery provider offered.

In summary, a range of delivery options and the possibility to choose from different delivery providers plays a decisive role for online shoppers in South Africa.

Customers demand transparency

E-commerce retailers across the globe offer a variety of payment options. More than half (56%) of South African shoppers prefer a credit/debit card payment method. The least popular method of payment is by invoice (1%).

One reason to consider why shoppers abandon purchases is hidden costs – 51% of South Africans prefer the delivery charges to be rolled into the cost of the goods. Being up-front about delivery charges – or rolling them into the product's pricing – can reduce cart ditching.

Social media shopping and subscription services are on the rise

Social media channels are becoming increasingly important as sales channels for retailers. Five out of ten shoppers in South Africa use social media for shopping inspiration. Respondents in South Africa say they regularly shop on social media platforms, with Facebook and Instagram being the lead channels.



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However, TikTok is noticeably gaining ground here, and the popularity of streaming videos makes YouTube an important player in the social media sales market, too.

Also on the rise are subscription services. Most South Africans (58%) say they have at least one subscription with an online beauty products retailer, followed by clothing retailers (54%).

Shoppers want to go green without paying extra

Sustainability continues to be an important aspect for online shoppers. Around 84% of South Africans say that shopping online sustainably is important to them. Still, only 28% are willing to pay extra for a greener delivery – expecting retailers to pay for the additional costs. However, 40% of South African customers are prepared to accept longer delivery times if it means the delivery is more sustainable.



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The survey, commissioned by DHL eCommerce, underscores the idea that providing an excellent product at a low cost is no longer sufficient to secure customer loyalty. Retailers should recognize that aspects such as a trusted delivery partner and diverse delivery options can convert a browser into a buyer.

The DHL Online Shopper Survey 2023 is available for free [download](#).

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