


Consumer choice should extend to purchasing decision making

 By [Thembi Mbkoena](#)

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When last did you buy something the way your parents used to? We're talking of course, 'the traditional way' of buying goods and services. In case you've forgotten, this usually entails having some idea of what goods and services you already want and then conducting an old fashioned cash or credit card transaction within a bricks and mortar retail store. If you didn't exactly know what goods you wanted, you used the traditional four-walled shopping environment to make that final decision after some time browsing.

Of course, all the usual hazards of shopping 1970s style would be present, including either over or less than enthusiastic shop assistants and severely limited ranges and styles.

Today, many people do still shop this way, but I'd hazard a guess that this type of shopping is mostly done for the pleasure of an outing into the 'real world'. For routine or semi-routine purchases, a third of people now use only their mobile to make a purchasing decision, according to recent research from location based marketing company xAd.



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The challenge for the mobile marketer is to enable consumers to easily go that extra step from purchasing decision to actual transactional behaviour using their mobile devices. As the door-to-door encyclopedia salesperson of former decades found out time and time again, it doesn't matter how many times, or how enthusiastically potential customers express their intention to purchase. What counts is that cold, hard and elusive customer order.

So why exactly has mobiles' role in purchasing decisions becoming more prominent? It's clear that today's consumer not only wants choice when it comes to product attributes like colour, size and so on, they want access to additional choices that simply weren't available to your parents, or even you, just a few years ago. We now want our available choices to extend beyond the actual product or service we are purchasing - we want to also choose when we purchase, where, how and on what device we purchase.

With more choice than ever in terms of price, location and personalisation, consumers are now best placed to buy at a time that suits them, not the marketer. While this may sound like everything is going in the consumer's favour, all of this is great news for mobile marketers who form strategic relationships with mobile marketing advisors. Shop window dressing used to be sought-after talent that became as much about art as it was about business. Let's not call the specialist mobile marketing consultancy the window dresser of the mobile age, but there's a grain of truth there.

With smartphones being the most important means of customer research on a product or service for almost 40% of mobile users, and with almost 60% of users buying something within an hour after conducting research on their mobile devices, there are tremendous opportunities for marketers who can provide the most relevant and the most attractive brand experience at the best time for the mobile consumer.

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