

## Tech-savvy consumers force retailers to change

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By Janine Milne

Profound uptake in use of technology for shopping, finds IBM

Retailers need to up their game with more personalised offers to match the needs of the growing hoards of tech-savvy consumers using the Internet and mobile devices to seek out deals and shop.

An IBM report of 32,000 consumers in six countries found a profound uptake in the use of technology for shopping. Some 79% of respondents said they wanted to use websites to access and print coupons, 75% wanted to use mobile phones to locate their nearest store, while 66% wanted to check goods were in stock before visiting the shop.

Top technology choice was the Internet, followed by mobile phones, in-store kiosks and interactive television.

This online consumer activity gives retailers a golden opportunity to interact with consumers. Some 78% of the survey respondents said they were willing to offer feedback on areas such as product design and store layout. Monitoring social networking sites and providing social networking tools would help retailers gain and monitor comments about their products. By far the biggest opportunity for retailers, however, was to deliver customised promotions to consumers and ensure products were available. Solve those issues, then 61% of them would spend more with that retailer.

Surprisingly, the emergence of tech-savvy consumers was more prevalent in high-growth markets such as India, China and Brazil rather than the likes of the UK, US or Canada.

IBM aims to help retailers gain the expertise they need in business analytics, customer insights and merchandising in its newly created Centre of Competency (CoC) for Retail.

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