

Shoppers spent \$1.14tn online globally over 2021 holiday season - Salesforce

Consumers spent \$1.14tn online globally during the 2021 holiday shopping season, compared to \$1.1tn in 2020, according to newly-released Salesforce data. Notably, while Cyber Week saw muted digital growth in 2021, early November and late December surges helped retailers break new sales records.



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This is according to the Salesforce 2021 Holiday Shopping Report, which analyses shopping data from over one billion shoppers on the Salesforce Customer 360 platform and activity across commerce, marketing and service.

Top holiday shopping insights

Salesforce data highlights trends that shaped the holiday season.

Shoppers splurged early and late this holiday season: Shoppers were eager to secure their gifts ahead of the retail rush to avoid issues with shipping delays and out-of-stock products, with 30% of global holiday sales completed by 22 November. Cyber Week accounted for 23% of global sales (down from 24% in 2020).

As consumers missed online shipping cut-off dates and concerns grew around new Covid-19 variants, 23% of global digital sales were placed between 18 December and 31 December. Stores that offered curbside or in-store pickup options over

the same time period captured 62% of these final global sales.

Digital-first consumers embraced flexible payment methods: With high holiday prices and discounts in the US down 10% year-over-year (YoY), overall use of 'buy now, pay later' (BNPL) services in the US during the holiday season increased 40% compared to 2020. Consumers turned to these offerings throughout the holiday season to offset the higher price tags. Alternative payment forms, including PayPal, Apple Pay, and Google Pay, also increased by 15% YoY in the US.

Luxury handbags, home furniture the fastest-growing categories online: As consumers shifted their spending from needs to wants this holiday season, luxury handbags had the highest YoY global growth with an increase of 45% in online sales. Home furniture and general footwear trailed closely behind at +34% and +32% growth respectively.

Social commerce continues to influence consumer buying behaviour: A survey of 1,600 global shoppers from Salesforce's 4th edition of the Connected Shoppers Report found that by 2023, 25% of shopping is projected to happen beyond a retailer or brand's website, app or physical store.

Over the 2021 holiday season, 4% of global digital sales on a mobile device were made through a social media app and 10% of mobile traffic originated from consumers browsing through social networks. As retailers begin to build in the metaverse, it's clear that shoppers are ready to purchase across new channels.

Stores played a critical role this holiday: While consumers continued to embrace digital this holiday, physical stores proved to be key throughout the shopping season. In fact, 60% of global digital sales were influenced by brick-and-mortar – from generating to fulfilling demand. The evolving role of the store – and associates – helped to break down friction across digital and physical touchpoints.



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"Despite the lingering pandemic and countless obstacles such as supply chain logistics, low inventory and fewer discounts, consumers flocked online to close out this holiday shopping season with a bang," said Rob Garf, VP and GM of retail, Salesforce.

"As we move into a new year, retailers must push their brands to platforms such as social, gaming, messaging, and the metaverse to engage shoppers where they are discovering and buying products. They must also double down on efforts to reimagine physical stores to support continually changing digital experiences."

Further insights can be found on the [Salesforce Holiday Insights Hub](#).

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