

Shopping Core Social Activity for Teen Girls

By Marketing Charts
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Shopping is a core social activity for teen girls, who also carefully evaluate price and brand before making a purchase. These are some of the key findings from "The Teenage Girl as Consumer and Communicator," a new white paper from Euro RSCG Worldwide PR.

Teen Girls Spend Carefully, in Groups

According to the paper, based on a survey in November 2009 by MicroDialogue, total teen spending is more than \$200 billion annually. Despite social stereotypes, teen girls spend their portion of this total carefully. Results indicate that more than 60% of them generally wait for items to go on sale before making a purchase and 77% are more likely to buy a sale-priced item than one at full price.

In addition, teen girls will spend more money in the company of other teen girls. Shopping with her best friend or sister, a teen girl will spend 23% more money than when shopping with two or more friends. Shopping with a boy, she will spend only 43% of what she spends with her close friend or sister.

Celebrities Top Friends for Style Pointers

While teen girls are notorious for copying each other's style, 59% say maintaining a unique personal style is important, compared to about 30% who say they like to follow the same styles and trends as their friends. In terms of outside style influencers, 43% of teen girls are

influenced by celebrities, compared to 26% influenced by other "cool" girls.

Teen Girls Use Social Media, but Not to Shop

Not surprisingly, teen girls are avid users of social media. Seventy-eight percent of teenage girls use social media to keep in touch with friends, while 75% report being in "constant contact" with friends through texting, Facebook, iChat, AIM or other social media services.

However, teen girls prefer other means of communication than social media sites when it comes to shopping. Sixty-five percent say when their favorite brand or store has a sale, they want to share the information with their best friend or sister, and 57% say when they discover a new brand or trend, they tell a best friend or sister. Significantly, about 80% prefer one-to-one communication (texting or phone calls) over "broadcast" platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

Email is also how teen girls, who show a clear preference for approaching a brand to find out about sales and promotions rather than having the brand approach them, like to receive information on sales and promotions. Almost 40% sign up for e-mails from their favorite brands to hear about sales and promotions, while just 28% browse and subscribe to newsletters for similar information.

Millennials Spread the Word

The Millennial generation, which covers the ages 15-32 and includes most teen girls, is prone to using social media to spread news about interesting retail offers and events, according to The Nielsen Company. Nielsen advises marketers that these visually-oriented shoppers will tweet and text about special deals real-time from store aisles about what looks good today, where to meet up, and anything cool that catches their eye on site. If a retailer is lucky, they will hit a quirky Millennial sweet spot, and they'll YouTube or Hulu a video of a helpful employee or unusual in-store promotion.

MicroDialogue surveyed 100 girls ages 13-18 on their spending and communication habits in November 2009.