

The happiest place in digital marketing

How consumer emotion and opportunity meet in the Transaction Moment™

ROKT

Table of contents



About the Report	Pg 1
Executive Summary	Pg 2 - 3
Methodology + Demographics	Pg 4 - 5
Fast Facts	Pg 6
Key Findings	Pg 7 -10
Happiest place in digital	
A firm hold on attention	
Confirmation is the golden moment	
The Scientific Connection	Pg 11
Harnessing the Transaction Moment™	Pg 12
Conclusion	Pg 13
About Rokt	Pg 14

About the report

The Happiest Place in Digital Marketing



In search of the moment when consumer engagement is at its highest, brands have chosen to focus on search and social media. But – as this study proves – the rush of retail therapy is no myth, with the process of shopping making consumers considerably happier and more receptive than other online activities.

This report explores the mindset individuals experience when shopping – the Transaction Moment™. As uncovered in this research, this mindset presents a much sought after and undiscovered opportunity in digital customer acquisition. It has been well documented that the thrill of making a purchase causes a rush¹ of dopamine, resulting in a powerful sense of achievement that leaves consumers open to buy again.

This conclusion is supported by ROKT analytics – which reveals consumers are up to 7x more likely to engage with related offers in the Transaction Moment. This report and findings are relevant to many in the marketing and e-commerce industry. Whether the objective is to acquire new customers, or to optimize the purchase journey, this report uncovers that mindset and emotion dictate much of the opportunity in digital marketing.



WHAT IS THE TRANSACTION MOMENT™?

A state of mind that consumers enter during the purchase journey when engagement, interest, and buying intention are at their highest. Typically this first emerges as purchase decisions are made and continues through to the point where the purchase is confirmed. When in this buying state of mind, consumers are more likely to respond positively to additional interactions with brands.



For example, Jenny has just bought tickets to see her favorite band. She is excited and her dopamine levels are soaring. At this moment, upon confirmation of her ticket purchase Jenny is completely engaged in what she is doing, is happy and open to receiving additional offers from brands, particularly in relation to her recent purchase.

Executive summary

This study set out to establish whether the Transaction Moment surpasses other key interactions as the happiest place in digital, and if so, what this means for marketers.

Marketers know a strong online presence is crucial to connecting with increasingly digital-first audiences. This is why digital absorbs 38.5%² — \$220.3 billion — of global advertising budgets. Right now, the lion’s share of spending is focused on search and social: with search accounting for 40%² of digital budgets and social spend set to rise by 23.5% in 2018. But do either of these channels represent the optimum use of marketing dollars, or is there another opportunity that is being missed?

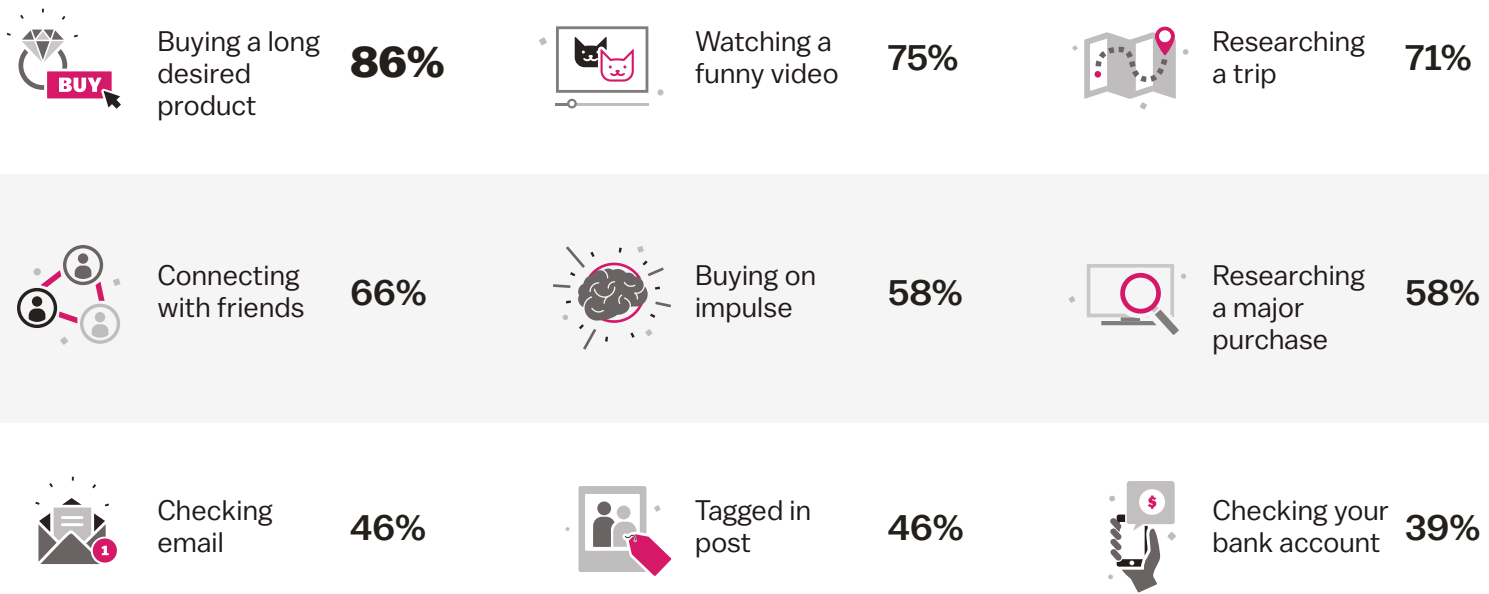
This report found that over three quarters of people (80%) are shopping online more than once a month, presenting a clear opportunity to explore, building

on the idea that “retail therapy” releases chemicals in the brain to fuel positive emotions. To prove its effectiveness, this report further explores the emotions and engagement consumers experience when buying online, along with other digital activities.

The key findings show that the majority of global consumers hit peak engagement when shopping on the internet, with an average of 74% agreeing that making a purchase is the happiest place online. Moreover, when compared to other digital activities, 86% of consumers agree they are happy when purchasing a long anticipated item: exceeding even watching funny videos (75%).

A lesser 66% are happy connecting with friends on social media, and less than half (46%) are happy being tagged in social media posts.

% agree they are happy when:





The study also found that when shopping online, external distractions are lower and consumer attention holds stronger than other activities. Findings show that nine in 10 (95%) online purchases take place in environments where consumers have minimal distractions such as at home or at work, and almost half of respondents (47%) are unlikely to be juggling other activities when buying an item.

Brands are spending significant budget and resources on optimizing the consumer experience and purchase journey - but how much are they putting in to the confirmation page, which this report finds is in fact the happiest part of the purchasing experience?

As indicated above, the confirmation page is perhaps where the greatest opportunity lies with half of respondents (50%) stating they are happiest when they can “see their purchase is complete and confirmed.” This moment also leads on to further opportunities, as many are open to staying on the confirmation page to view personalized offers from the same brand (29%), willing to sign up to a loyalty program (22%), and happy to be introduced to unknown brands with personalized offers (14%).

For marketers, these results present strong evidence that the Transaction Moment not only provides a prime opportunity to reach already highly-engaged consumers, but also individuals who have an open mind and are actively willing to consider new buying options. This is further supported by Rokt’s own data that shows across billions of transactions that 35% of consumers opt-in to receive one or more offers from other brands that are introduced on the confirmation page.

Recommendations

- If the objective is to acquire new customers, identify e-commerce marketing platforms that allow you to present your brand at the Transaction Moment.
- If the objective is to optimize the e-commerce offering, consider adding cross-sell and up-sell options throughout the purchase journey to leverage the buying mindset.
- Avoid interruption marketing by tailoring your offers and messages to be contextually relevant.
- Don’t lose customers to a browsing state of mind. In order to keep customers engaged once the purchase is complete, messaging and offers delivered on the confirmation page should be communicated in a way designed to continue the conversation.
- Understand the science behind purchasing behavior in order to keep customers engaged.
- Use data collected in the transaction to present personalized marketing offers to increase relevance and take-up.

Methodology

The Happiest Place in Digital Marketing study was conducted in May 2018 using an online survey. To ensure accurate national representation, the survey was completed by a sample of 4,198 UK, US, German and Australian adult consumers aged over 18, weighted by age, gender, and region. After collating and analyzing resulting data, global averages were taken to identify wider trends and enable comparison with regional findings.

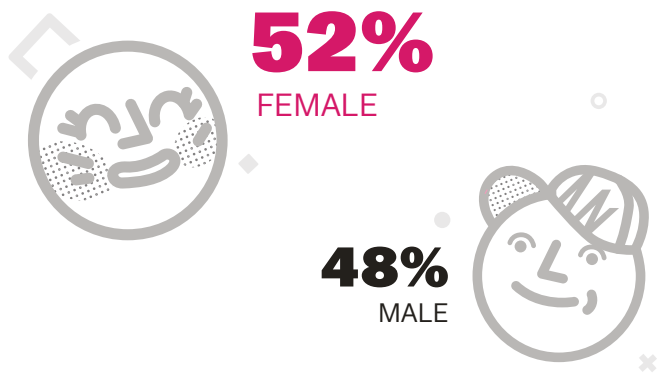
The overall aim was to investigate the emotions — both positive and negative — and engagement consumers experience when shopping online, along with other digital activities. Specifically, the study set out to establish whether the Transaction Moment surpasses other key interactions as the happiest place in digital, and if so, what this means for marketers.

Demographics

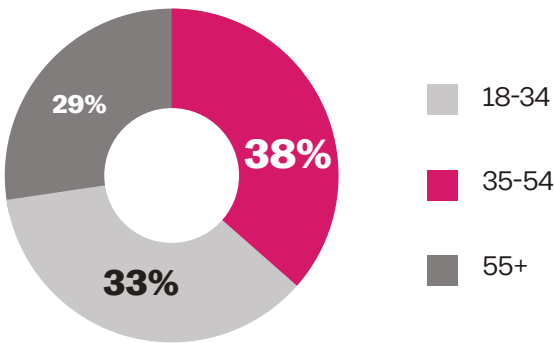
Region



Gender



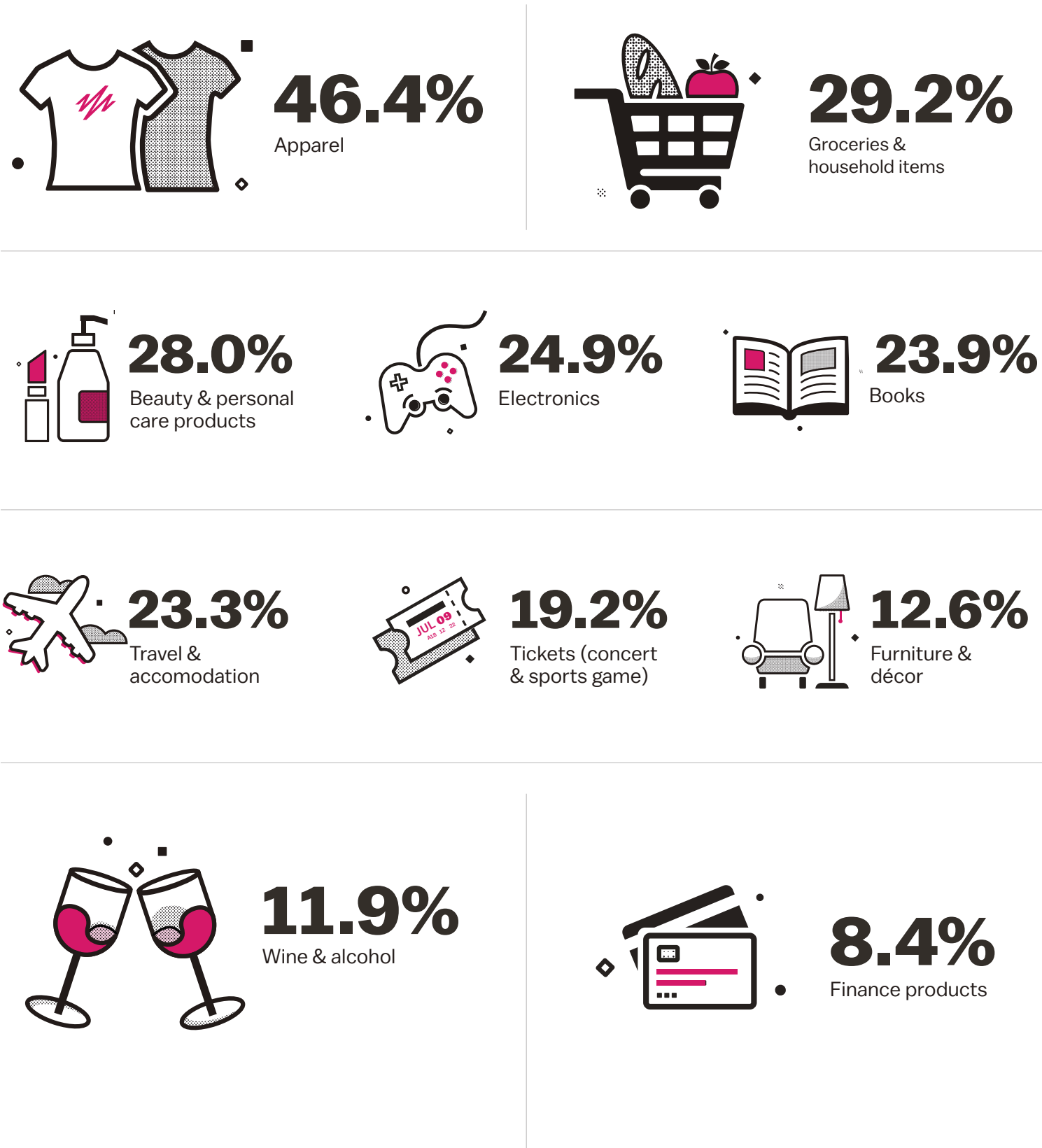
Age Group



How Often Do You Shop Online?



What Purchases Have You Made in the Past Two Weeks?



Fast Facts

#1

Happiest

The #1 happiest place in digital is shopping online.

4x as many people feel frustrated when using social media than shopping. More people cite anxiety as a common feeling when on social platforms than completing a purchase.



86%

are happy

86% are happy when moving from deliberation to purchasing – more than any other digital moment.

2x

as productive

People feel **2x as productive** when shopping online vs. using social media.

Happy

Excited

Relaxed

Are the most frequent emotions related to shopping online.

9 OUT OF 10

consumers **make purchases in low-distraction environments** such as at home or at work.

When making a purchase online, what stage of the process makes you feel happiest?



Key findings: The happiest place online

Today's consumers may seek affirmation from social media likes and interaction, but such activity doesn't compare to the joy of making a purchase. In fact, results show social media creates high levels of mixed emotions, while online shopping generally makes consumers increasingly happier as they advance through the purchase journey.

Turning research and deliberation into purchasing is the most positive moment for consumers: on average, 86% are happy at this point in time. This stands in stark comparison with other online activities, most notably connecting with friends and being tagged in photos or posts on social media, which made only 66% and 46% of respondents feel happy respectively.

While it's unsurprising that consumer happiness drops when paying bills, low social media enjoyment is noteworthy. The results from the Happiest Place in Digital study are closely aligned with a recent US Deloitte study³ that identified negative associations



58%
researching a
purchase



55%
watching a
funny video



39%
reading
news



29%
paying
bills

The joy of anticipated purchases also supersedes the overall happiness participants experience when researching these items (58%), an area which represents significant marketing investment, as well as watching funny videos (75%), checking emails (55%), reading the news (39%), and paying bills (29%).

between certain social sites and well-being, where: "liking other's content [...] predicted a subsequent reduction in self-reported physical health, mental health, and life satisfaction."

Further, The Happiest Place in Digital study shows four times as many people feel frustrated when using social media (12%) than shopping (3%), and 50% more people cite anxiety as a common feeling when on social platforms (15%) than completing a purchase (10%).

Overall, purchasing items fuels a significant spike in positive emotions; 31% are relaxed, 36% feel productive, and 42% experience excitement, while negative emotion is minimal.

42%

feel excited



36%

feel productive



31%

feel relaxed



After searching and finally making my mind up, **it makes me happy after all that is done and I anticipate my product being delivered.**

18-34 year old (mother of 1)
South of England



Aside from actually receiving the item, it means **I have successfully reached my goal (researched, compared and purchased) my item."**

55 year old (female)
Midwest, US



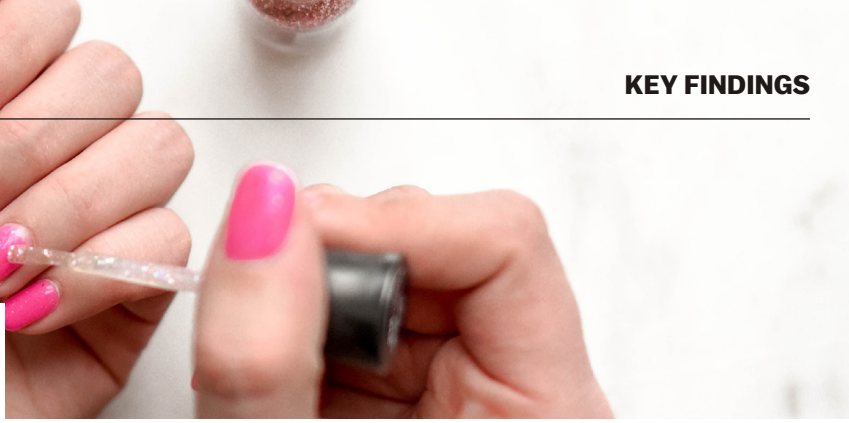
Once I have paid for it and got shipping info I know that in a few days I will have my item, **kinda like Christmas only I purchased it."**

35-54 year old (mother of 2)
Michigan, US

Recommendation:

If the objective is to acquire new customers, identify e-commerce marketing platforms that allow you to present your brand at the Transaction Moment.

If the objective is to optimize the e-commerce offering, consider adding cross-sell and up-sell options throughout the purchase journey to leverage the buying mindset.



Key findings:

A firm hold on attention

Online shopping is winning the battle for consumer attention. While the increasing competition of multiple channels and devices is reducing devotion to social, online shopping retains a firm grip on engagement. Especially in the Transaction Moment.

Multi-tasking is now an integral element of everyday life, and it's not just mobile distractions that consumers have to deal with. The number of IoT (internet of things) connected devices is set to overtake the number of mobile phones worldwide in 2018⁴, meaning consumers will have even more temptation to split their attention.

What's clear is that focus sharpens when it comes to completing transactions, with nine in 10 (95%) online purchases taking place when a consumer is in an undisturbed environment (such as at home or at work) meaning external distractions are likely to be low,

and almost half of respondents (47%) are unlikely to be juggling other activities when buying an item.

This is almost a quarter more people than those likely to be focusing on only the task at hand when using social media. In fact, more than half of both social media users (58%) and those researching purchases (51%) are likely to be conducting other tasks at the same time, highlighting the distraction associated with these tasks.

Recommendation: Avoid interruption marketing by tailoring your offers and messages to be contextually relevant



Undivided attention

For example, Jenny is a mid-20s millennial who spends up to 27 hours a week online, including 6+ on social media. Her attention is mostly divided when she is online - at the same time she's browsing social, she's commuting to work, cooking dinner or spending time with friends.

Jenny's favorite band's tickets go on sale at 12pm and she knows seats will go fast. At this moment - The Transaction Moment - Jenny's attention is undivided, she is completely focused - making it the best opportunity to connect with her.

Key findings: Confirmation is the golden moment



Happiness levels reach the optimal high as a consumer navigates their online purchase journey. Willingness to continue interacting with both known and new brands, and interest in tailored offers also peaks, putting consumers in a receptive state of mind.

By far the standout point of the e-commerce experience is the Transaction Moment. Specifically, half of respondents (**50%**) cite the happiest aspect of this experience as “seeing their purchase is complete and confirmed”. However, there is a risk at this moment for the consumer to move from the buying mindset to browsing mindset. Therefore, it is key that any additional messages or offers on the order confirmation page are communicated in a way to continue the conversation.

from a consumer’s trust to introduce new brands and begin building lasting customer relationships.

The Transaction Moment also builds a level of trust in an era of growing data privacy awareness. **42%** of online shoppers are happy to share their details such as email address and postal address with brands they already know, and **28%** are happy to share similar details with unknown brands, allowing for trusted introductions to take place.

29% will consider staying on the confirmation page to view personalized offers from the same brand.

are open to signing up to a loyalty program. **22%**

Building on the positive emotion a recent purchase inspires, many are receptive to extending their experience after making a purchase. Critically, **14%** are also prepared to wait for bespoke offers from other relevant brands, highlighting how companies can benefit

Recommendation:

Don’t lose customers to a browsing state of mind. In order to keep customers engaged once the purchase is complete, messaging and offers delivered on the confirmation page should be communicated in a way designed to continue the conversation.





The scientific connection

There is a reason the Transaction Moment is linked to happiness — and it's to do with how the human brain works. During shopping, the brain releases chemicals that fuel positive emotion and the urge to seek similar experiences. In short, consumers enter a mindset that is lifted by buying and is primed for further spending.

Evidence of this can be seen in research⁵ led by Stanford University neuroscientist Brian Knutson. Knutson and his team scanned the brains of 26 volunteers in real-time as they decided whether to buy items presented to them. Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) machines were used to highlight sections of the brain activated by different activities; in this case, contemplating possible purchases and making decisions about which action to take.

Results revealed that immediately as products came into view, there was an increase of activity in the brain's nucleus accumbens: an area connected with the reward circuit and release of dopamine — a chemical linked with satisfaction. This indicated positive sensations begin as soon as buying is considered, not just when wallets are opened.

The study also revealed activity in the insula, a section of the brain associated with negative response, increased when consumers didn't buy. Plainly, the

anticipation of receiving a reward, such as a new purchase, is inherently pleasurable and so is seeing a purchase through. Findings supported by the qualitative part of our Happiest Place in Digital research, where respondents enjoyed shopping because “it's so fun to choose” and making a purchase due to the feelings of “achievement and success” it produced.

If we follow the pleasure-reward principle, it is logical that those who have just felt a buzz from shopping will be more likely to consider offers that could lead to other positive experiences. The Transaction Moment is therefore a winning blend of science and emotion that can create a lasting cycle of benefit for brands and shoppers alike.

Recommendation:

Follow this [link](#) to read more of Dr. Knutson's research and understand the science behind purchasing behavior.

Harnessing the Transaction Moment™

The popularity of online shopping is well known. In addition to wider research that shows 1.66 billion⁶ people made purchases on the web globally in 2017, it was reported last year that a third of US adults now shop online every week⁷. But the scale of opportunity hasn't necessarily translated into marketing potential, with most brands still focusing efforts predominantly on search or social.

Our research has not only proven the Transaction Moment mindset is the happiest place online, but also that it provides the best window to reach potential customers. The highly engaged and focused state consumers experience while making purchases is a prime chance for marketers to serve offers for relevant products and initiate relationships. In fact, this study has found that doing so may be even more effective than targeting consumers via social and search, where attention is limited, and negative sentiment tends to run high.

The satisfaction respondents feel from “finding what [they] want, seeing it's in stock, and buying it” triggers a dopamine release that drives happiness and sets a pattern of reward consumers want to repeat. And this makes seizing the moment crucial. As the results illustrate, exuberance fueled by purchases can positively affect interest in additional offers and willingness to enable further communication by sharing details.

Respondents are happy to consider offers from the brand they are already buying from, and other related brands, with trusted introductions. Willingness to share personal details is also based on trust; consumer

confidence in the brands they buy from – and companies promoted on these sites – is high because of previous positive experiences.

In order to best leverage this opportunity, marketers should action insights to deliver relevant offers at the opportune moment. For example, using consumer data and transaction details — such as primary email, purchase history, billing postcode, etc. — to fuel an algorithmic approach, can deliver highly targeted and relevant offers. In addition, opt-in and consent is key to keeping the conversation going with consumers - particularly with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) in play.

Proof of how successful this approach can be lies in the results it drives: Rokt's platform data shows that on average, 14% of offers are opted-in to by consumers. Average engagement and click-through rates (CTR) on social sites such as Facebook and the broader web, are typically less than 2% and does not include the crucial consent piece.

Q. Why does making a long-desired purchase make you happy?

A. Because it means that I have completed a task from my to do list and **I don't have to spend a long time searching for it in store or online.**

35-54 year old (mother of 2)
Midlands, UK

Recommendation:

Use data collected in the transaction to present personalized marketing offers to increase relevance and take-up.

Conclusion

As many behavioral psychologists now believe, emotion is a key driver of decision-making even if we are unaware of the process.⁸ This means sensations of happiness and reward created by researching and buying desirable products will lead consumers to keep coming back for more.

This study has not only shown that positive emotion linked with e-commerce reaches its peak during purchasing — the happiest place in digital — but engagement at this point is also higher than any other activity, social media interaction included.

When consumers are happy and engaged, **the magic of the Transaction Moment™ happens.** ✨

They are in the right frame of mind to consider additional offers and open the door to communications with known as well as undiscovered brands.

5 key takeaways

- 01 Shopping is the happiest place online and presents an untapped opportunity.
- 02 Consumers are at their happiest on the confirmation page when online purchases are confirmed and they are most open to brand interaction.
- 03 The tendency to conduct other activities while shopping is low, which makes the Transaction Moment ideal to reach audiences prone to multi-screening, such as millennials.
- 04 Consumers are less anxious, happier, and more productive when they shop online versus when they use social media & take part in other online activities. The opportunity to trade on the excitement and trust from a recent purchase is powerful.
- 05 Personalization is critical to ensure messages build on positive experiences and increase the likelihood consumers will engage with offers.

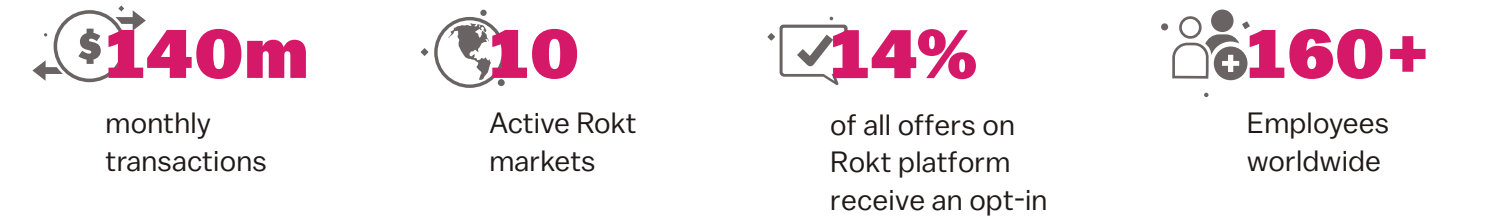


About Rokt

Rokt sits at the intersection of digital marketing and e-commerce, and connects brands with the right consumers when they are in a buying state of mind. Using data-driven insights to reach potential customers at the crucial Transaction Moment™, Rokt's pioneering technology and groundbreaking algorithms empower action-led marketing. This allows brands to start lifelong relationships with engaged, receptive consumers and delivers smarter monetization opportunities for e-commerce sites.

Rokt's premium marketplace of e-commerce partners includes major global brands such as eBay and Ticketmaster, offering brands access to 140 million transactions per month.

By the numbers



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