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average satisfaction with omnichannel features in small stores 37.9

satisfaction score for Brick & Mortar Consumers **36.9**

satisfaction score for Digital Consumers **38.0**

satisfaction score for Any-Channel Consumers



56%

of consumers visiting large stores are aware of mobile apps

33%

of consumers did not make any online purchases in the last three months 0.7%

of consumers made an online purchase and picked it up in-store







SUMMARY STATISTICS

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INTRODUCTION

pparel stores are struggling, and they're losing their overall share of dollars. Clothing made up 6.2 percent of U.S. household spending in 1977, but it's about half that now, according to Bloomberg.² As if that wasn't bad enough, apparel stores must also figure out how to compete in the brave new world of digital. Here, Amazon looms as a threat, estimated to control 30 percent of the apparel market last year, and consumers are increasingly prizing omnichannel readiness: the ability to seamlessly make a purchase in-store, on computer websites, through mobile websites and on mobile apps.

Several apparel retailers have worked to bolster their omnireadiness in recent months, unveiling mobile apps or simply making sure their brick-and-mortar stores allow customers to return items purchased online. Others, like Nordstrom, have taken the concept and run with it. The company announced plans last year to open a concept store without inventory. Salespeople will order goods online while customers sip juice, receive manicures and consult with a stylist.³

Meanwhile, other retailers have figured they'll have to join them if they can't beat them. Gap, Nike, Kohl's and Tory Burch are just a few of the brands teaming up with Amazon to expand their omnireadiness efforts.⁴

¹ Deagon, Brian. Amazon's booming apparel business in position to pass Macy's, TJX. Investor's Business Daily. 2017. https://www.investors.com/news/technology/amazons-booming-apparel-business-in-position-to-pass-macys-tjx/. Accessed February 2018.

² Bhasin, K; Rupp, L; Townsend, M and Whiteaker, C. The death of clothing. Bloomberg. 2018. https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2018-death-of-clothing/. Accessed February 2018.

³ Asch, Andrew. Nordstrom to open omnichannel concept on Melrose Place. California Apparel News. 2017. https://www.apparelnews.net/news/2017/sep/14/nordstrom-open-omnichannel-concept-melrose-place/. Accessed February 2018.

⁴ Webster, Karen. Does Amazon plus Kohl's equal retail's future? PYMNTS.com. 2017. https://www.pymnts.com/news/omnicommerce/2017/amazon-kohls-the-future-of-omnichannel-retail/. Accessed February 2018.

But how are most apparel brands doing on their quest for omnireadiness, and what do customers think of their efforts?

The PYMNTS OmniReadiness Index™, in collaboration with global payment processing solutions provider Vantiv (now Worldpay), measures the features retailers offer across the four retail channels: brick-and-mortar, computer website, mobile website and mobile app.

The PYMNTS Omni Usage series™, another PYMNTS and Vantiv partnership, measures consumers' satisfaction with the various features across channels. We have discussed Mass Merchants and Grocery in previous reports. This quarter, we turn our attention to Apparel.

Our report is based on data collected from nearly 3,000 customers surveyed about their recent trips to apparel and accessories stores. We asked them about their shopping experiences, their knowledge of the various omnichannel features offered by the retailers, whether they used these features and, if they did, how they felt about them.

Our sample shopped 368 stores which we divided into two types: large and small. "Large" applied to retailers with more than 100 store locations or more than \$1 billion in revenue. Think Abercrombie, Gap and Victoria's Secret. "Small" included all other stores like Burberry, Club Monaco, J.Jill and L.L. Bean. Our sample contained 84 large stores and 284 small stores.

To better understand our customers' behavior, we divided them into three personas.









Fifty-eight percent of Apparel customers are Any-Channel Consumers, and tended to be highly educated and span all age groups. One-third are Brick & Mortar Consumers who tended to have lower incomes and education, comprising 40 percent of the lowest income bracket. Finally, 9 percent of our sample were Digital Consumers who tended to be high income and highly educated. They made up 14 percent of the highest income bracket.

Despite their differences, customers were united in that they didn't seem to prefer either large or small shops. Brick & Mortar Consumers reported Walmart and Target were their favorite stores, while Digital Consumers sang the praises of Amazon. The percentage of Digital Consumers might be growing in the future, though, as 32 percent of the sample admitted shopping online more frequently this year compared to last.

Overall, we found large stores tended to boast slightly more features than smaller stores. Consumers had the same expectations for features at large and small stores, however, meaning small stores aren't off the hook when it comes to being omnireadi.

To better analyze our data on customers' preferences for features, we divided the features into five groups:



KNOW ME

Includes capturing profile information such as storing shipping addresses, history and payments



VALUE ME

Includes social sharing, targeted coupons, coupon use, marketing options and loyalty or reward programs



DO YOU HAVE WHAT I WANT

Includes product selection, inventory, product prices and price matching







MAKE ITEASY FOR ME

Includes product details, reviews, recommendations, free shipping, in-store pick-up and mobile app



SOLVE MY PROBLEMS

Includes refunds, purchase returns and live help





The most popular categories were Make It Easy For Me and Do You Have What I Want. By "popular," we mean consumers knew about these features, used them and liked them. Most consumers said they had not seen Do You Have What I Want features, but just 10 to 15 percent reported they would not use them if they were available.

The most desired features had to do with saving customers money: digital coupons, coupon use and rewards. The least important features were product recommendations, live help and live help via online chat.

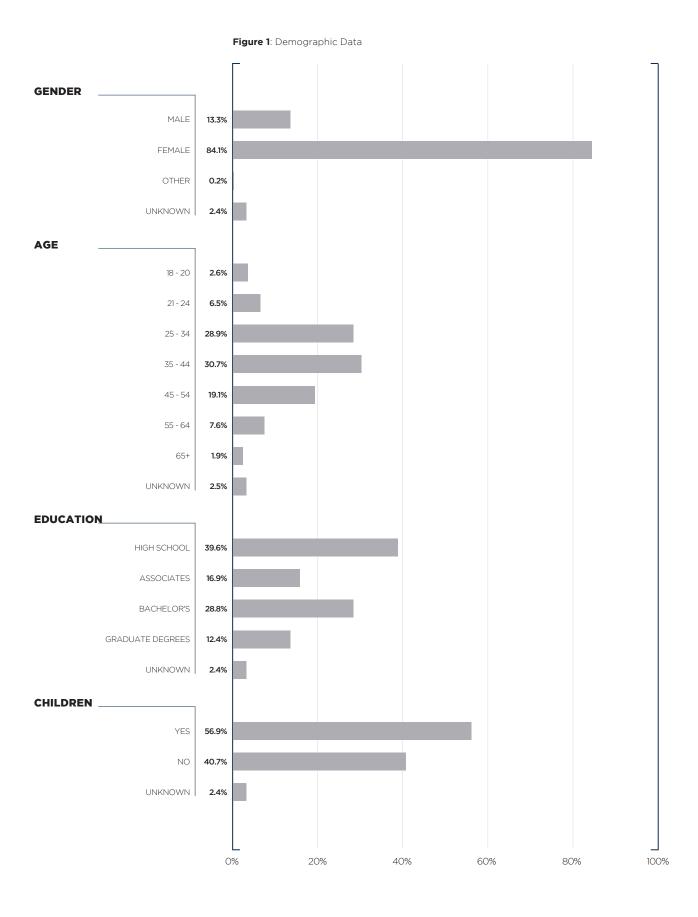
We also examined mobile apps to see if Apparel customers were interested in them. In a word? No. Only 9 percent of Apparel customers use mobile apps regularly. As with shopping in general, they wanted mobile apps to help them save money. Except for being able to buy products, the most popular features for mobile apps were receiving discounts and comparing prices.

Apparel Merchants scored a 37.9 satisfaction rating on our Index. The average score for Mass Merchants was 39.9, and Grocery saw 30.2. Interestingly, while Grocery and Mass Merchant customers both tended to walk into a store knowing exactly what they wanted to buy, more than 50 percent of Apparel customers didn't know what they wanted before they arrived.

The biggest difference for Apparel was that Any-Channel Consumers were the happiest group, while Digital Consumers had the highest satisfaction scores for both Mass Merchant and Grocery. Digital Consumers tended to be highly educated, high-income, young men in the Mass Merchant and Grocery analyses. For Apparel, however, Digital Consumers tended to be highly educated, high-income, middle-aged women.

Despite these differences, customers for all three sectors said the most important omnichannel features they wanted to see had to do with price: coupons, rewards and product pricing.





The Customers: Who They Are And Where They Shop ho we are determines how we shop, which in turn determines what we buy. Overall, our sample was overwhelmingly female at 84 percent. Nearly 57 percent had children, and most of our shoppers were between the ages of 25 and 54. To gain a better understanding of customer shopping trends, we broke our sample size into three groups based on their behavior: ANY-CHANNEL DIGITAL BRICK & MORTAR **CONSUMERS CONSUMERS CONSUMERS** Consumers who fit neither at least \$50 in products online during the Brick & Mortar nor the Digital Consumer the last 30 days. They have also shopped profile. They tend to shop both much less or somewhat less at online and in-store. brick-and-mortar stores since last year. Brick & Mortar Consumers accounted for 33 percent of the sample. They tended to span all ages, but were less educated and had lower incomes than those in the other two groups. They comprised only 29 percent of the highest income bracket, but 40 percent of the lowest. Meanwhile, Digital Consumers made up 9 percent of the sample. They tended to be middle-aged, highly educated and higher earners. Most were between the ages of 35 and 54, and they account for a disproportionate amount of the highest income bracket at 14 percent. By comparison, they comprise only 5 percent of the lowest. In addition, Digital Consumers made up 11 percent of those in the highest education bracket but only 6 percent of those without a high school diploma. The majority of consumers - 58 percent - were Any-Channel Consumers. They make up a large amount of those with graduate degrees at 62 percent, and tended toward the higher income brackets.

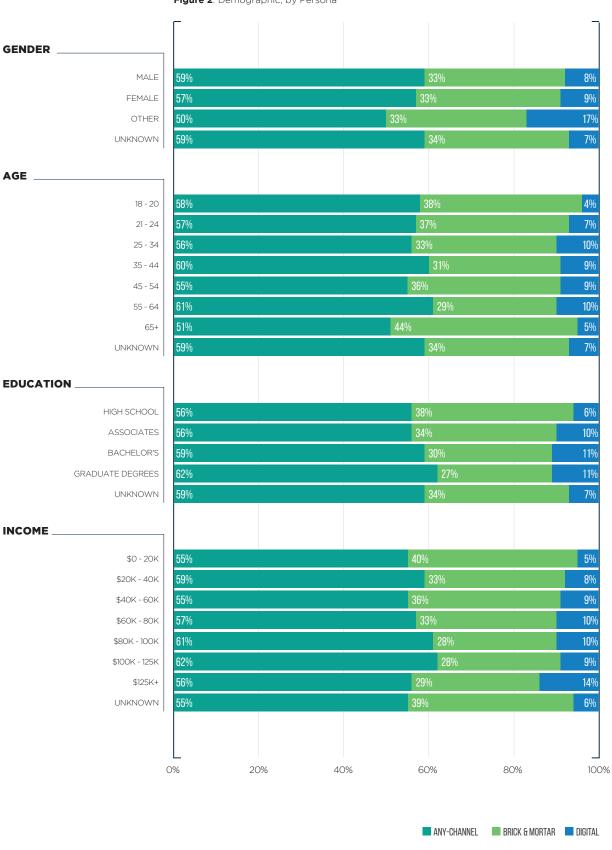
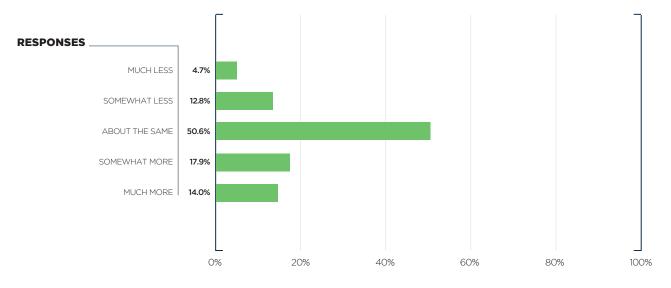


Figure 2: Demographic, by Persona

Though Brick-and-Mortar Consumers make up approximately one-third of our sample, 32 percent of survey respondents reported shopping more frequently online compared to the previous year. In addition, 50 percent of shoppers at small-and large-format stores said they were visiting brick-and-mortar stores as often as last year.





The apparel industry appears to be more fragmented than that of grocery⁵ or mass merchants,⁶ largely because consumers go to many stores, comparing products and trying them before they buy them, until they find what they want. To that end, Brick & Mortar Consumers said their top stores were Walmart and Target. Digital Consumers reported preferring — surprise, surprise — Amazon.

According to CPC Strategy, 52.1 percent of consumers said they purchased clothing from Amazon in the past six months. The possibility and ease of returning and

exchanging products were highlighted as very important features on the eCommerce giant's site.⁷

That's not particularly good news for Amazon's merchants, however. According to Business Insider, the company has increased its merchant fees from 15 to 17 percent for clothing and accessory sales. Writer Dennis Green noted that while sellers might be frustrated by Amazon's increased charges, they also might not be able to leave the platform — especially considering how much of the market it controls.8

⁵ Author unknown. New report: consumer attitudes about digital at the grocery store. PYMNTS.com. 2017. https://www.pymnts.com/news/omnicommerce/2017/grocery-omnichannel-usage/. Accessed February 2018.

⁶ Author unknown. New report: mirror mirror...merchant of all? PYMNTS.com. 2017. https://www.pymnts.com/news/omnicommerce/2017/vantiv-omni-usage-index-for-retail-channels/. Accessed February 2018.

⁷ Author unknown. The 2018 U.S. forecast on apparel shopping trends. CPC Strategy. 2018. http://www.cpcstrategy.com/2018-forecast-on-apparel-shopping-trends/. Accessed February 2018.

⁴ Green, Dennis. Amazon quietly made a big change ... its apparel business. Business Insider. 2018. http://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-raises-seller-fees-for-apparel-and-accessories-2018-1. Accessed February 2018.

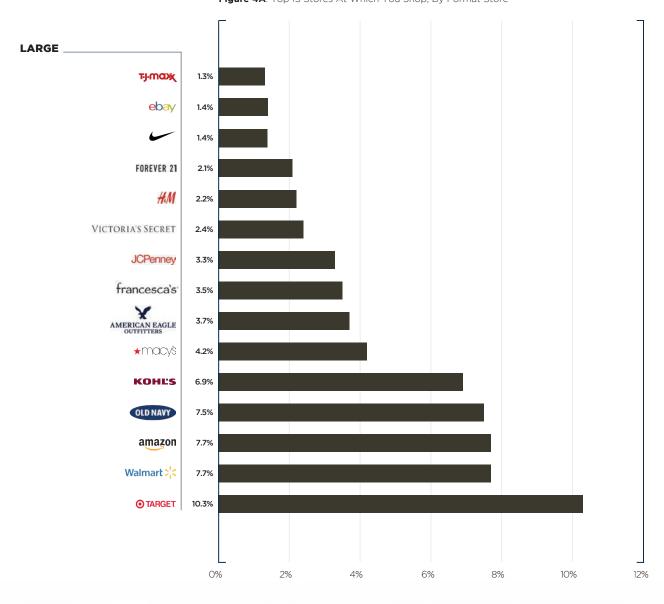


Figure 4A: Top 15 Stores At Which You Shop, By Format Store



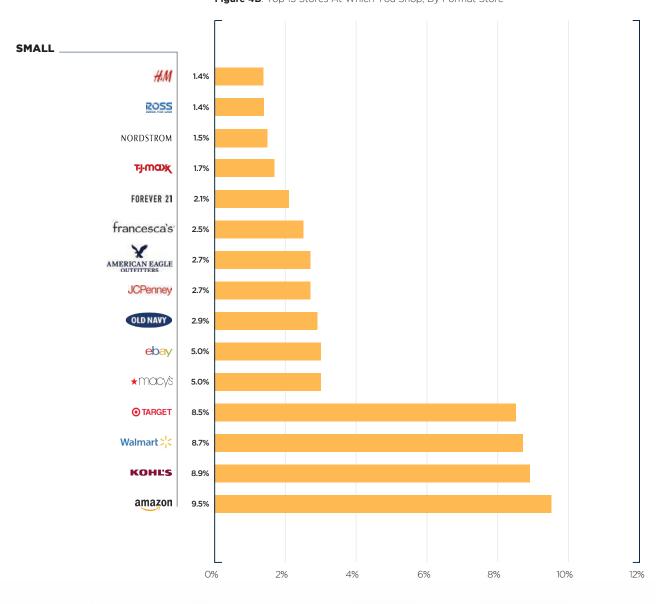


Figure 4B: Top 15 Stores At Which You Shop, By Format Store



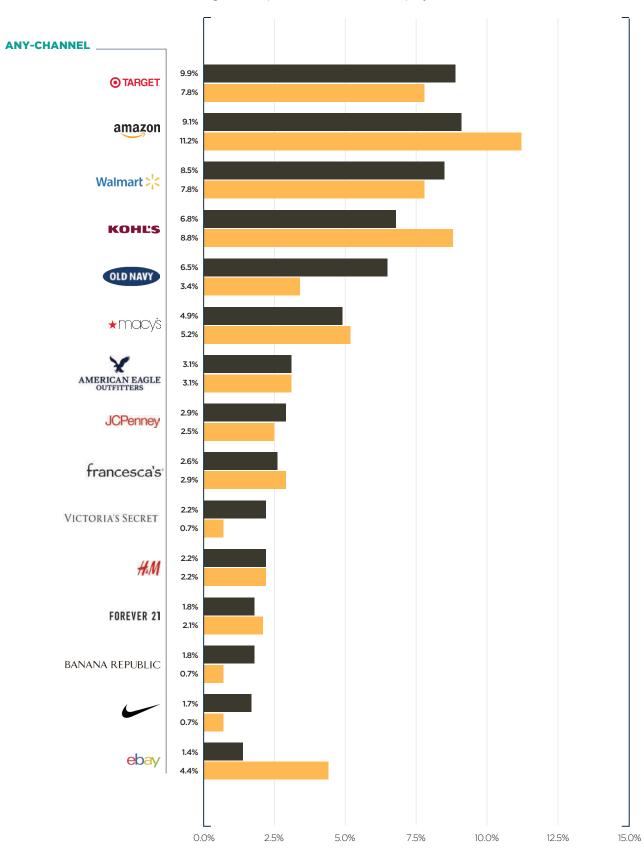


Figure 5A: Top 15 Stores At Which You Shop, By Store Format and Persona

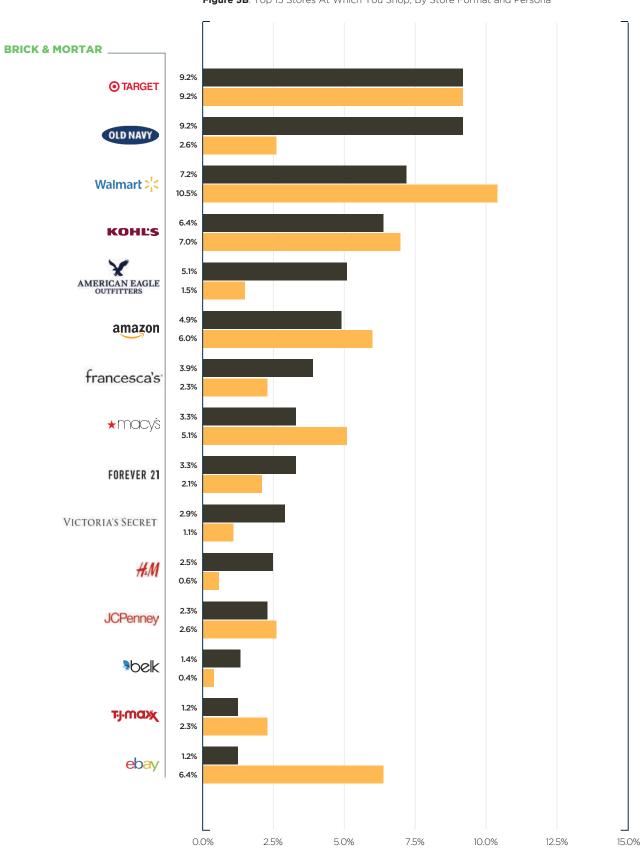


Figure 5B: Top 15 Stores At Which You Shop, By Store Format and Persona

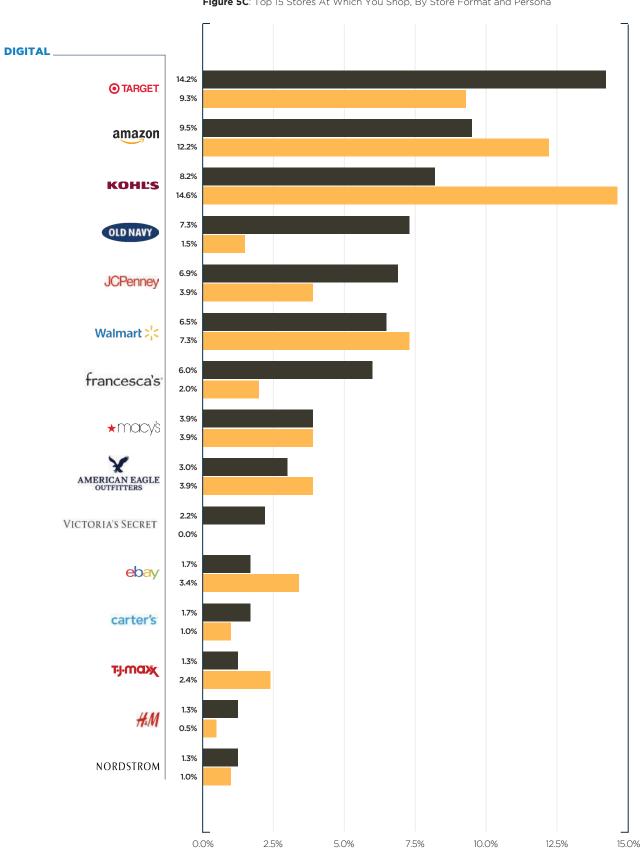


Figure 5C: Top 15 Stores At Which You Shop, By Store Format and Persona



e know who is shopping, but how do shoppers feel about the omnireadi features being offered? As we covered a range of them — including shipping policies and product details, among many others — we grouped features into five categories:



KNOW ME

Includes capturing profile information such as storing shipping addresses, history and payments



VALUE ME

Includes social sharing, targeted coupons, coupon use, marketing options and loyalty or reward programs



DO YOU HAVE WHAT I WANT

Includes product selection, inventory, product prices and price matching







MAKEIT EASY FOR ME

Includes product details, reviews, recommendations, free shipping, in-store pick-up and mobile app



SOLVE MY PROBLEMS

Includes refunds, purchase returns and live help



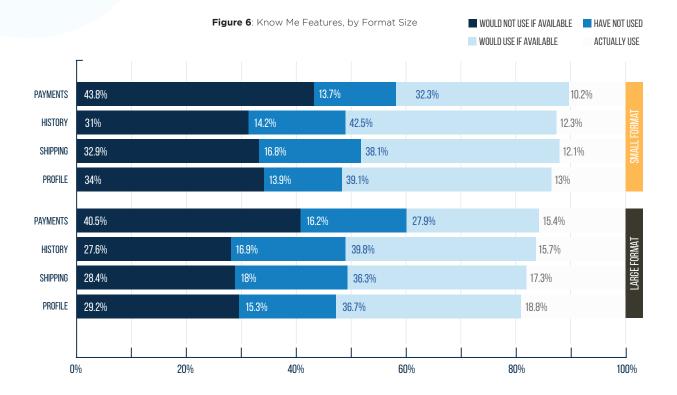
The most popular categories were Make It Easy For Me and Do You Have What I Want. By "popular," we mean consumers knew about the features, used them and liked them. Merchants, take note: Most consumers said they had not run into Do You Have What I Want features yet, but also reported that they really wanted to use them.

Overall, we found large stores tended to offer slightly more features than smaller stores. Most consumers said features use tended to occur at larger stores. They had the same expectations for both large- and small-format stores, however, meaning small stores have some catching up to do.

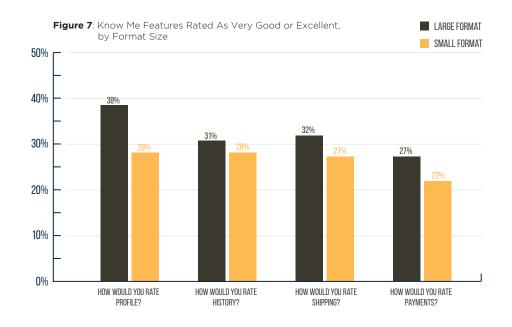


Know Me features tended to fly under the radar, with a very small percent of consumers reporting they'd used them. By comparison, approximately 27 to 40 percent said they had not seen the features and would not use them if they were available. The profile feature appears to be an exception, as 18.8 percent of shoppers had used it at large stores. Even so, 30 to 34 percent of shoppers said they wouldn't use it even if it was available.



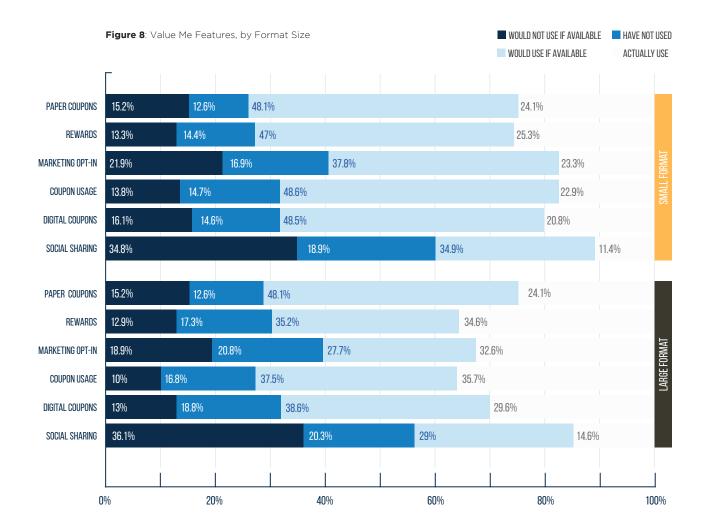


Profile was the most popular feature in this category, with 38 percent of large store and 28 percent of small store consumers rating it as very good or excellent.

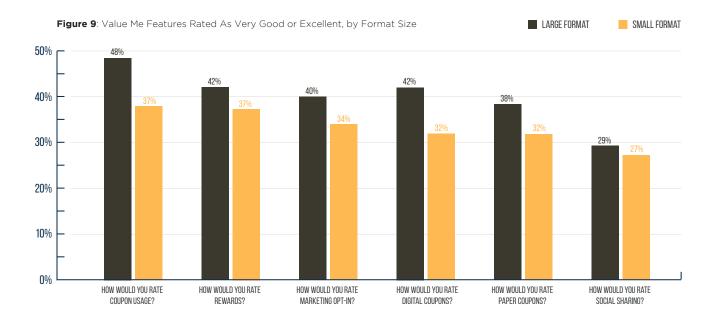




Value Me features fared slightly better. Most consumers hadn't used them, but they were at least interested in the prospect. Social sharing was the only feature which saw more than 20 percent of respondents saying they had absolutely no interest. Customers were most excited by rewards and paper coupons, and 35 to 48 percent said they would use them if available.



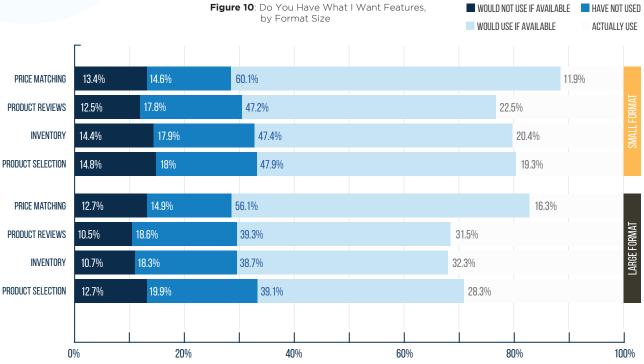
Value Me features were more appreciated than Know Me features at both small and large store locations. Coupon usage was the most popular feature, with 48 percent of large store shoppers ranking it as very good or excellent.



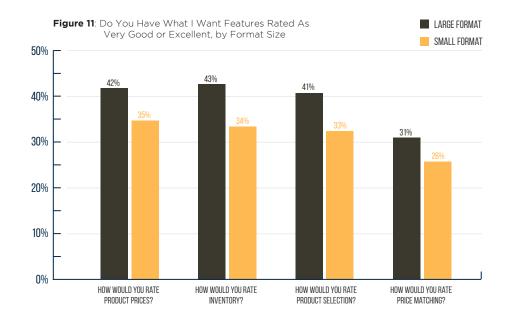




Shoppers felt similarly about **Do You Have What I Want** features. Interestingly, far fewer had used them than Value Me features, but only 10 to 15 percent said they would not use them if they were available. Price matching was the most desired feature, as more than half of consumers for both large and small shops said they would use it if available.

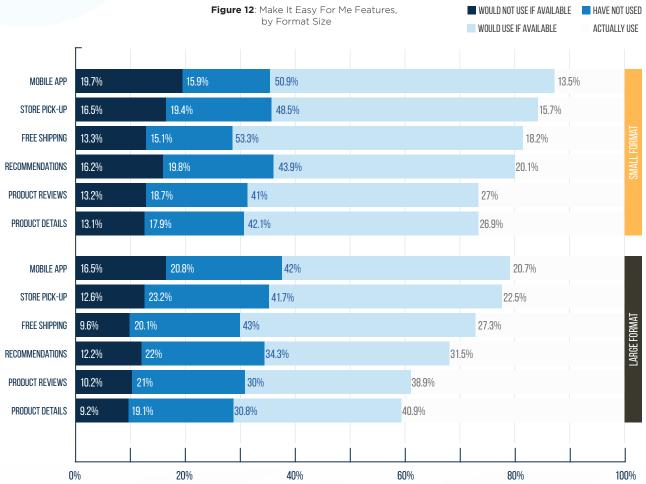


This category was popular, and 26 to 43 percent of respondents in our sample rated them as very good or excellent features to have. Price matching was the least popular, with only 26 to 31 percent rating it that way compared to the other three features at 33 to 43 percent.

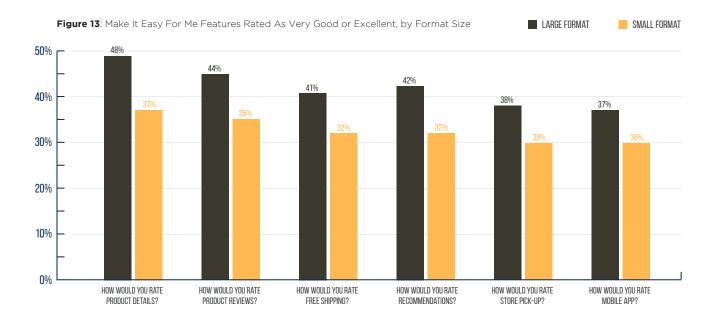




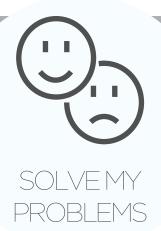
Make It Easy For Me features had the largest division in terms of store size. Large stores tended to offer several of the features — including product details and product reviews — while smaller stores saw these at a lower rate. Even so, customers at smaller stores said they would like to use these features. Mobile apps generated the least amount of interest, but only 16 to 20 percent of customers said they would not use a mobile app if it was available.



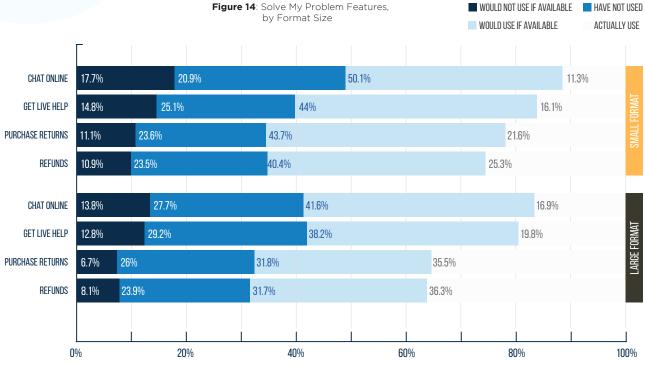
Customers loved Make It Easy For Me features, and 48 percent of large store shoppers rated product reviews as a very good or excellent feature. Even mobile apps, which generated the least amount of interest, earned approval ratings ranging from 30 to 37 percent.



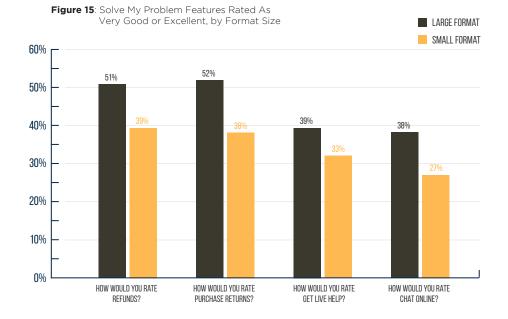




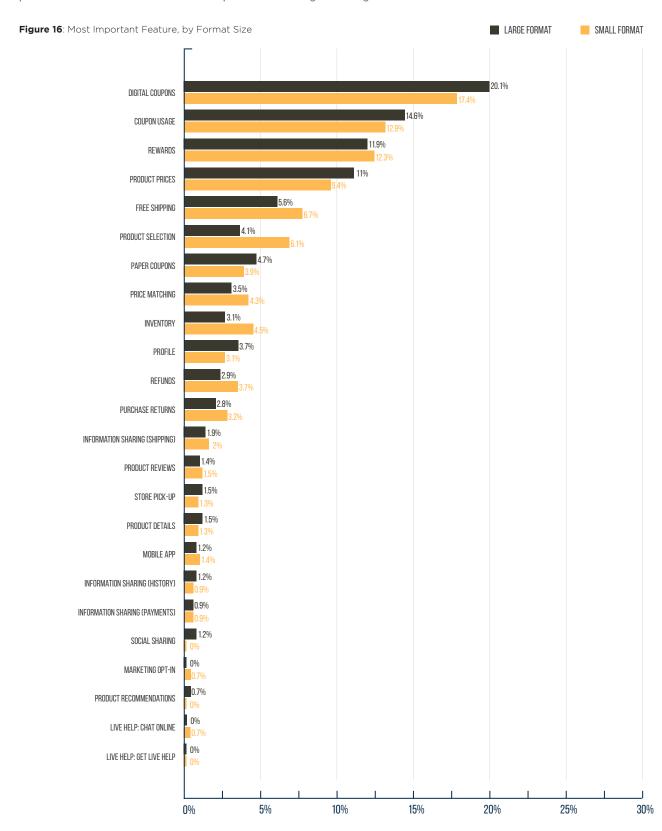
Few customers had seen **Solve My Problem** features, but their possibility generated a lot of interest. Customers were most intrigued by using live help: chat online, but, interestingly, the feature also had the highest number of respondents say they would not use it if it were available. Two shopping personas appear to be at play here, including those who like to chat online and those who prefer the brick-and-mortar shopping world.



Purchase returns are the most valued feature, with 52 percent of large store shoppers and 38 percent of small store shoppers rating them as very good or excellent.



Customers showed a distinct preference for features that could save them money. For both small and large store customers, digital coupons, coupon use and rewards were the three most important features. The least important were product recommendations and live help online or through chatting.





Overall, we saw a correlation between satisfaction with and importance of each feature for each group.

Figure 17: Most Important Feature, by Format Size

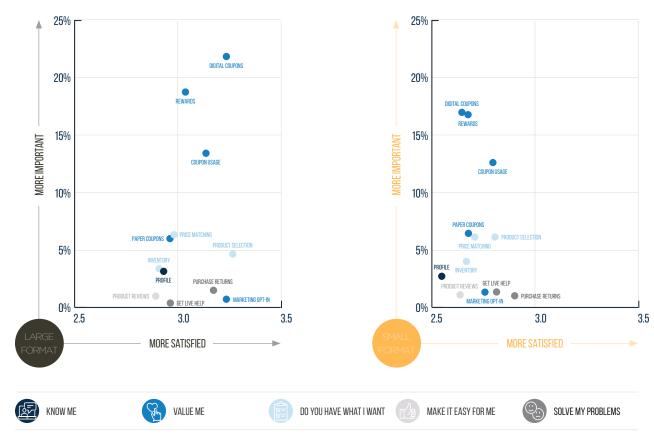


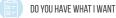


Figure 18A: Satisfaction/Importance of Each Feature, by Persona and Format Size



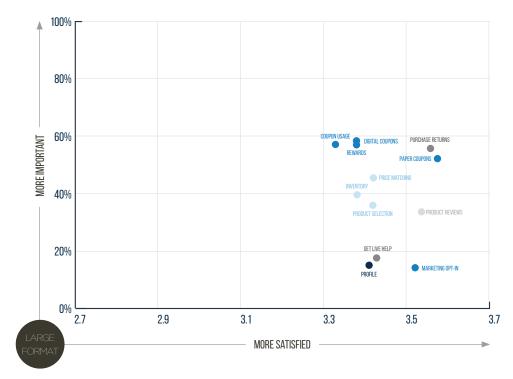














KNOW ME



VALUE ME





SOLVE MY PROBLEMS

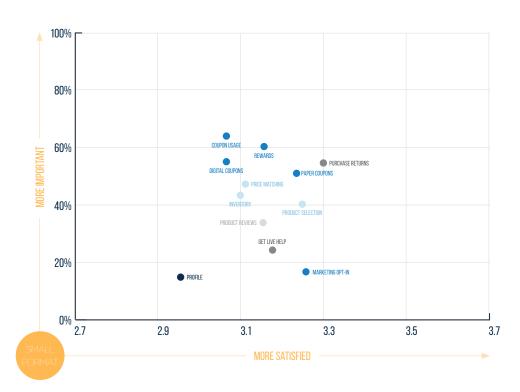




Figure 18B: Satisfaction/Importance of Each Feature, by Persona and Format Size

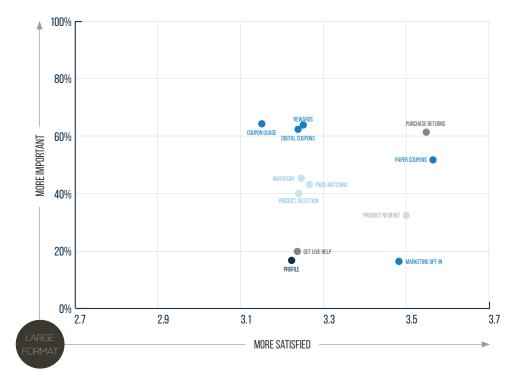


















MAKE IT EASY FOR ME

SOLVE MY PROBLEMS





Figure 18C: Satisfaction/Importance of Each Feature, by Persona and Format Size

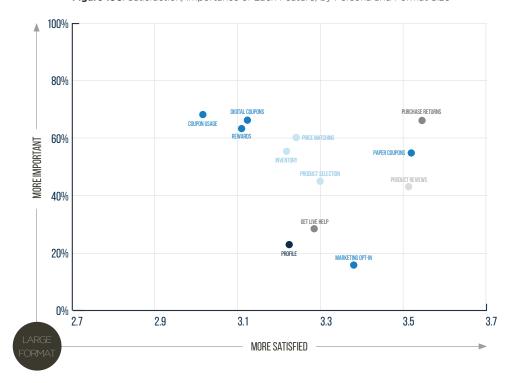


















MAKE IT EASY FOR ME

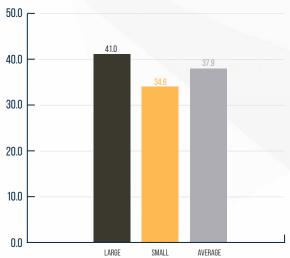
SOLVE MY PROBLEMS



To make our data more digestible, we scored Apparel on a scale of zero to 100 in terms of overall customer satisfaction with omnichannel features. The lowest possible score was zero, the highest 100.

The Apparel industry earned a score of 37.9 points, according to this system: 41 for large stores and 34.6 for small.

Figure 19: Index Score, by Format





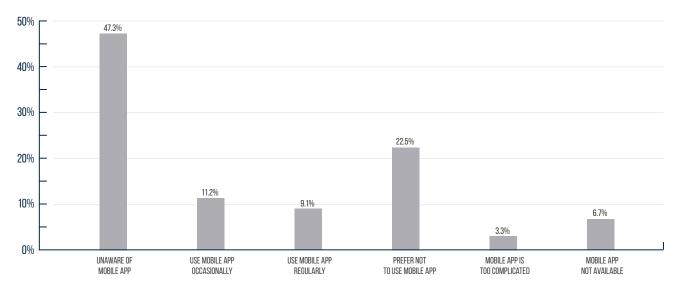


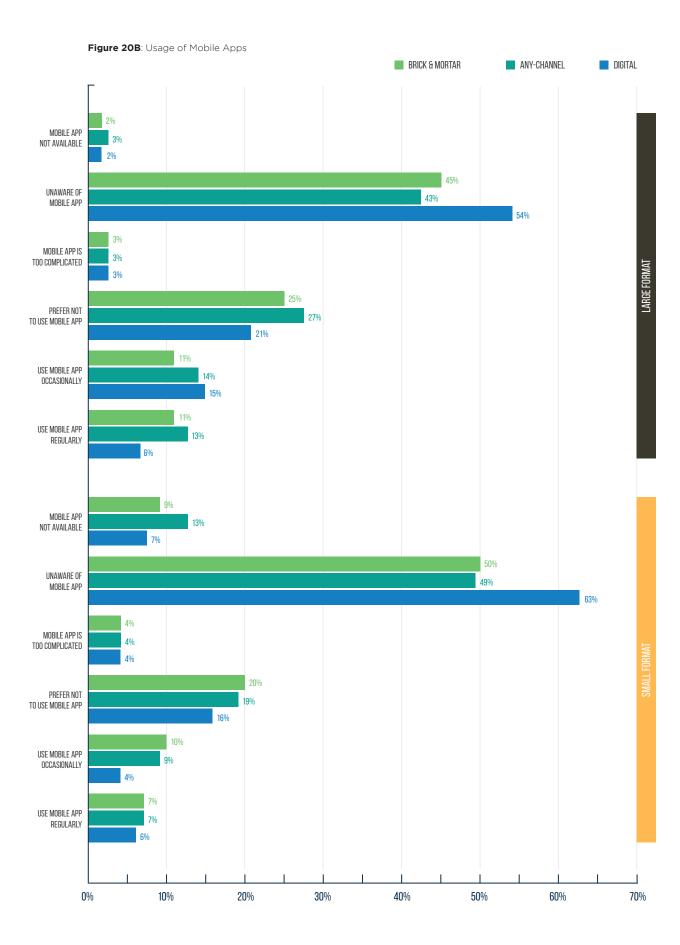
obile apps are the newest of the four omnichannel options and also the most infrequently used. As such, we took a closer look at how Apparel customers are reacting to them.

As it turned out, though, there isn't much of a reaction. Not many customers are using them at only 11 percent of large store customers and 7 percent of small store customers. One complaint mentioned by several respondents was that mobile phone screens are small, which makes it difficult to view inventory through an app. Unsurprisingly, Brick & Mortar Consumers used mobile apps less frequently than Digital or Any-Channel Consumers.

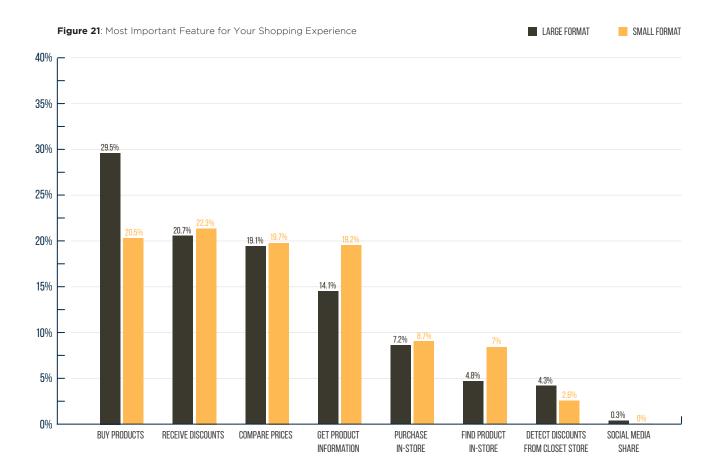


Figure 20A: Usage of Mobile Apps





Consumers did have strong opinions on which features they found most useful for mobile apps. As with shopping in general, everything came down to saving money. With the exception of being able to buy products, the most popular features for mobile apps were receiving discounts and comparing prices.





DEEP DIVE:



n our last two reports, we discussed how Mass Merchants and Grocery were faring in the emerging omnichannel world. In this section, we'll see how Apparel compares to these two sectors.

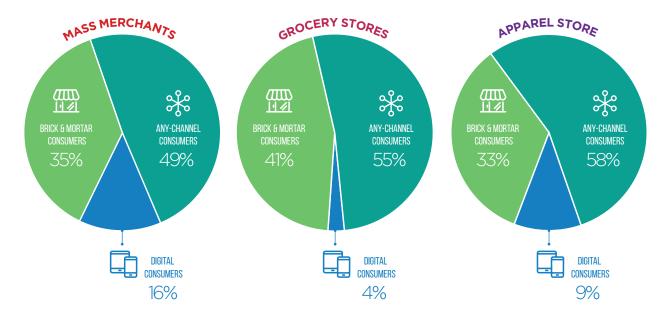
Grocery and Mass Merchant are two completely different shopping experiences. Grocery customers tended to prefer buying food in person so they could see it, while a much higher percentage of Mass Merchant customers were comfortable shopping online. That makes sense, as 15.6 percent of Mass Merchant customers were Digital Consumers.

Apparel falls in the middle of these two spaces. Photos present a decent representation of clothes and accessories — unlike food, which can spoil or come in varying sizes. Clothes and accessories do not tend to be as uniform as Mass Merchant products, however, meaning consumers like trying them on for fit and style. This is where Apparel separates itself, though: While most Grocery and Mass Merchant customers know what they want before they enter the store, only 50 percent of Apparel customers know what they want before they arrive. Apparel customers are browsers.

It stands to reason that 58 percent of Apparel customers are Any-Channel Consumers, while Digital sees just 9 percent: True browsing requires seeing clothes in person. Interestingly, Digital Consumers for both Mass Merchant and Grocery tended to be young men, while digital Apparel customers tend to be middle-aged women.



Figure 22: Persona Distribution



Apparel's overall Index score also fell between Mass Merchants and Grocery. The average for Mass Merchants was 39.9 while it was 30.2 for Grocery. Apparel came in between at 37.9 points.

The biggest difference for Apparel was that Any-Channel Consumers were the happiest, while Digital Consumers had the highest satisfaction scores for both Mass Merchant and Grocery Stores. This is possibly because Apparel is well-suited to Any-Channel shoppers. Shoppers can try on items and see them in brick-and-mortar settings, and then, if the shop doesn't have the item, order it online. Digital Apparel customers had the lowest satisfaction score.

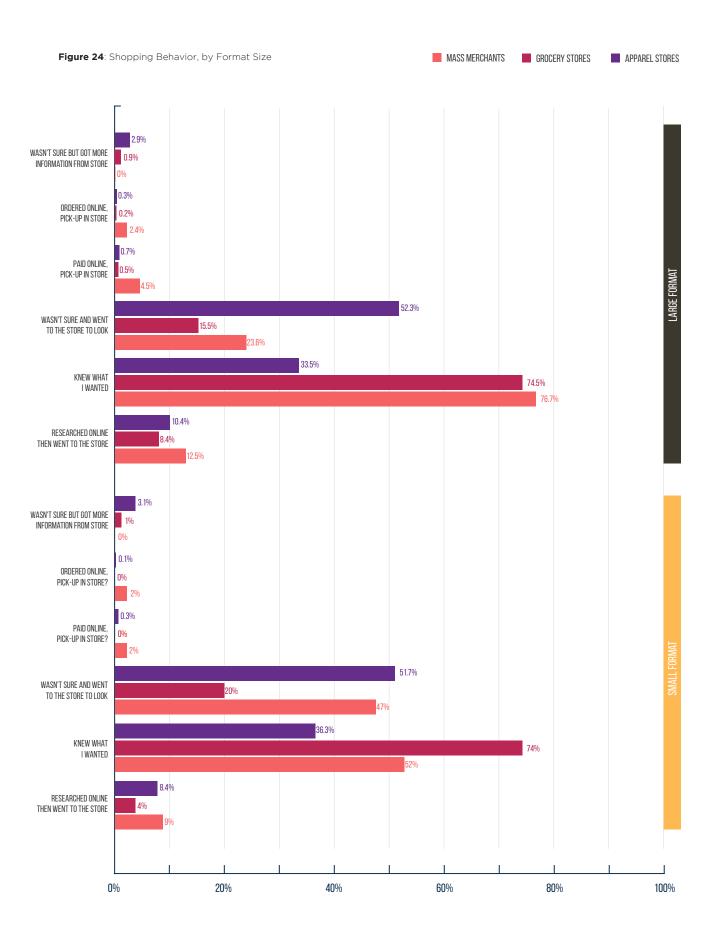


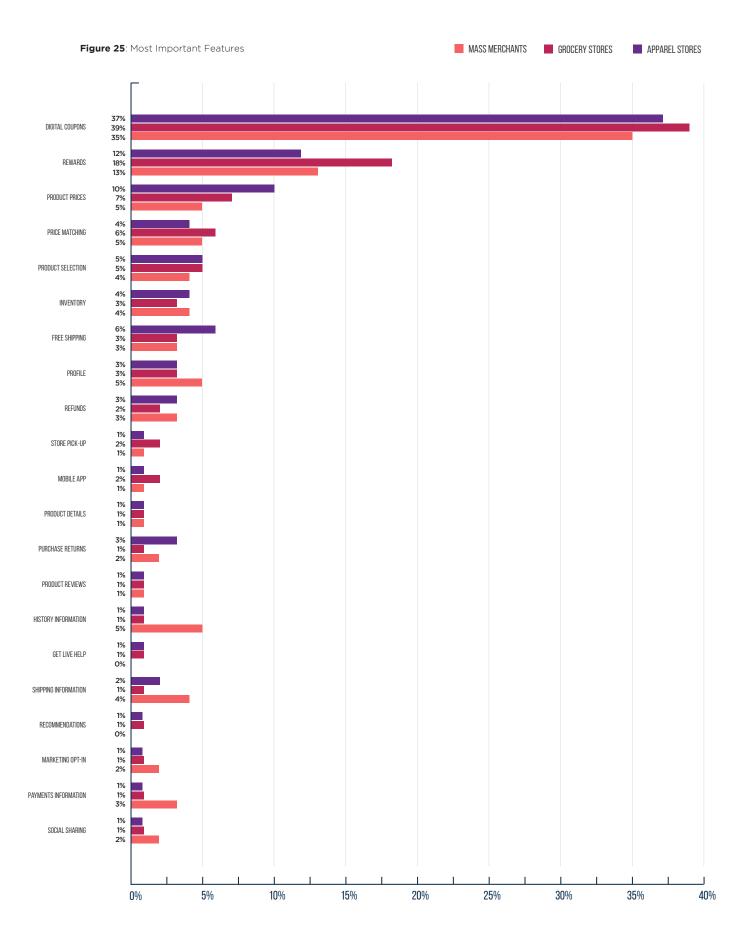
Figure 23: Satisfaction Index for Each Store, by Format Size

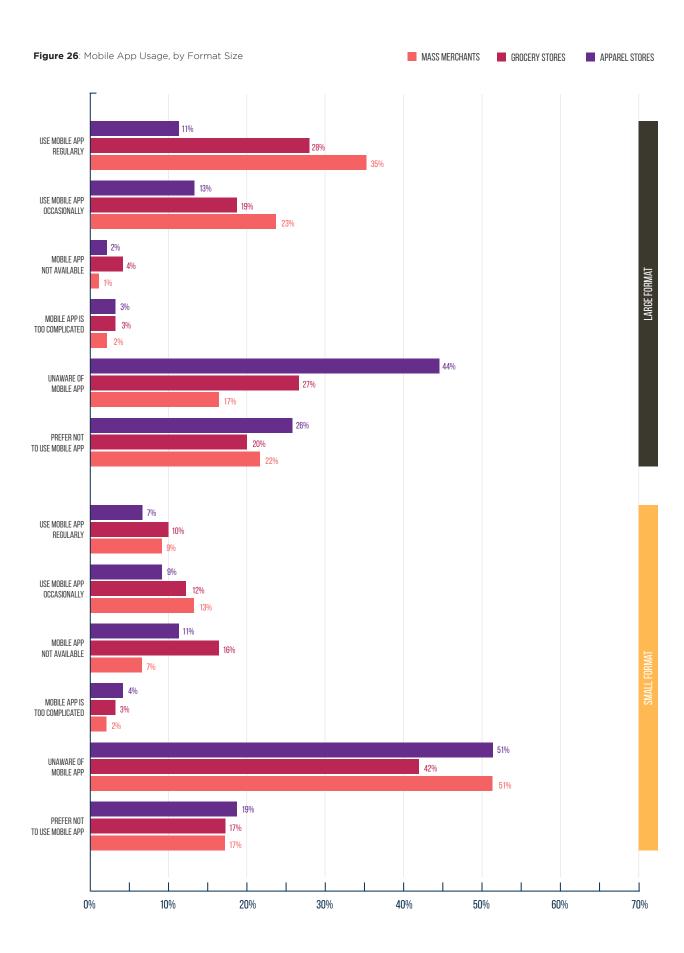
The differences between Apparel, Grocery and Mass Merchant are reflected in customers' shopping behavior. Most Mass Merchant and Grocery customers know what they want before they go to the store. More than half of our Apparel customers weren't sure about what they wanted before they arrived.

Customers for all three sectors are very united in what they considered to be the most important omnichannel features. Coupons are king, with customers of all three retail categories showing similar rates of interest for them. Next up were rewards and product pricing. Apparel customers showed slightly more interest in product pricing than those for the other two sectors.

Apparel merchants don't fare well on the mobile app front. While 27 percent of Grocery and 17 percent of Mass Merchant customers were unaware of mobile app offerings, that number came in at 44 percent for Apparel customers.









elling products through one channel can be hard enough. Selling them through multiple channels can quickly turn into a real headache, one with which jewelry and accessory retailer Alex and Ani is familiar.

The company has grown rapidly since its founding in 2004, beginning as a small Rhode Island-based startup and becoming one of the most popular jewelers in the U.S. market. In fact, it brought in more than \$500 million in 2016 alone, and did so on the backs of sales across that wide range of channels.

Alex and Ani sells its bracelets, necklaces, other jewelry and accessories through 109 brick-and-mortar stores, its website and a host of third-party sellers — including online warehouses like Amazon, department stores like Nordstrom and jewelry stores in malls across the U.S. It is also working to provide customers with consistent offerings and messaging across various shopping options.

In a recent interview with PYMNTS, Katherine Bahamonde Monasebian, head of marketing and eCommerce at Alex and Ani, noted that making different options work together doesn't mean expecting or wanting all its sales channels to function in the same way.

"We want consistency but, from our perspective, that doesn't mean uniformity," Monasebian said. "It doesn't mean that what works on one channel will work on all channels, or that something that works in brick-and-mortar will work for digital. It's not about being the same — it's about creating that seamless experience for customers."

Different methods for success

Jewelry is an inherently difficult business to bring to online shoppers. Shopping for such items is often best done in person, or at least many consumers believe as much.

It doesn't mean that what works on one channel will work on all channels.

Monasebian said Alex and Ani is aware of this tendency and, as a result, works to optimize the products it provides via various channels. For instance, the company doesn't offer the same products, promotional offers or messaging to in-store, online and mobile shoppers. Instead, it tailors its offerings to what each channel does best

"We've noticed that products that are more about building a set or putting together a collection of different pieces [do well] in store [but] don't do as well on the web," she said. "We also noticed that products with a lot of detail, whether it's the facets of a crystal or the texture of a piece, tend to appear flatter on the web."

Because different products perform better on certain channels than others, Alex and Ani offers a range of limited edition or exclusive products to help encourage consumers to buy from certain channels, according to Monasebian.





Expanding with speed and scale

Today, the company has a well-tested strategy for fusing digital and brick-and-mortar channels to guide its operations. Back when Alex and Ani first hit the scene, however, eCommerce was only just beginning to become the force it is now.

"As much as everyone is talking and reading about these seismic shifts in retail, I really don't think it can be overstated how the internet has [impacted] — and still is impacting — the retail space," Monasebian said.

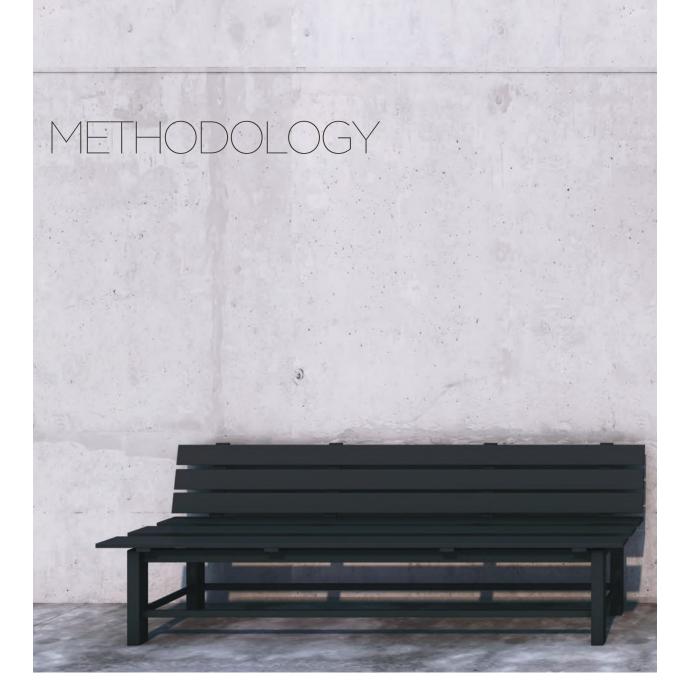
While the company is barely more than a decade old, Alex and Ani competes with players that have been around for decades. That includes industry giants like the Zale Corporation, which was founded in 1924 and currently operates nearly 1,000 jewelry stores in the U.S., and Tiffany and Co., the New York-based jeweler founded in 1837 — nearly 200 years ago.

Nonetheless, Alex and Ani believes it has come of age in step with the rise in digital shopping, Monasebian said, adding that she and her team have seen the shift toward digital commerce firsthand. As a result, the firm has worked to ensure its omnichannel strategy would allow it to grow quickly and without being dragged down by existing infrastructure.

"We grew very fast, and that can be a challenge, because it means you have to be able to grow more quickly with legacy systems, with organization, with technology [and] with our sales team," she said. "So, we've been really focused on trying to set the foundation and work on the fundamentals of omnichannel, and being able to continue to do so, increasingly, at scale."

Monasebian expects online and mobile sales channels' influence to grow, and that omnichannel strategies and initiatives will become more important in the coming months and years. To keep pace, Alex and Ani is planning to expand digital initiatives like its "Blueprint" jewelry personalization program. The company is also working to bridge the gap between in-store and online purchases with video and 3-D images of its products.

Ultimately, the goal is to offer an experience that banks on each channel's strengths to deliver a consistent offering. Though offerings may be consistent, they certainly won't be uniform, Monasebian said. That's because just as each diamond is unique, no two sales channels are exactly alike, either.



e surveyed 2,994 consumers about their most recent trip to an apparel and accessories store, including the size of store they shopped. Nearly 51 percent visited large stores and approximately 49 percent shopped at small stores. In terms of demographics, the sample was unevenly distributed: 84.1 percent were female, nearly 57 percent had children and most were between the ages of 25 and 54.

To create our 100-point index, we looked at each category of features (Know Me, Value Me, Do You Have What I Want, Make It Easy For Me and Solve My Problems) and measured:

- 1) If customers had used it, which was assigned a positive weight
- 2) If customers said they would not use it if it was available, which was assigned a negative weight

We employed those numbers to determine the overall Index score and broke them out according to store size, profile and various combinations useful to our analysis. The lowest satisfaction was recalled with a score of zero and the highest with a rating of 100.

AROUT

The PYMNTS.com Omni Usage Index™, powered by Vantiv, now Worldpay, is designed to measure consumer satisfaction with both in-store and online omnichannel features. The Index gauges the experiences of more than 3,000 consumers shopping at 400 stores, including 22 large merchant chains and small retail stores as well as online retail outlets. The Index analysis combines online purchasing data with our survey data to build out the scale of consumer satisfaction.

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