

PRESS RELEASE

FASHION SAVVY CONSUMERS EMBRACE ONLINE SHOPPING

Stores remain vital part of retail sales mix with 90% of shoppers visiting stores before buying online

London, 13 October, 2011 - Clothing and footwear shopping is taking-off in Europe as the next most popular online retail sector, as consumers become more confident using the internet to make purchases. This follows on from the established success of online sales for books, music and computer games, according to a ground-breaking new study by CBRE.

At a time when there is an unprecedented level of consumer access to the internet across Europe, CBRE has commissioned the most comprehensive and far-reaching study of its kind to explore:

- the relationship between online and in-store shopping;
- take-up rates and popularity of shopping online across various retail sectors;
- similarity or diversity in attitudes to online shopping across 10 major European countries;
- the impact of mobile technology and social media on ecommerce.

The survey - which has canvassed the opinions of more than 10,000 shoppers – found that two in five people (40%) now shop online, with clothing and footwear among the internet's fastest growing retail categories. When online shopping first emerged, it was widely assumed that clothing would rely on the "touch and feel" of the in-store experience, but only 33% of people CBRE surveyed said this was important or extremely important before buying.

However, the physical store remains an essential part of the shopping experience, with 90% of people surveyed stating they visit shops to view the product before buying online. In the UK, among Europe's highest spenders online, only 10% said the presence of a physical store was not important to them when buying items such as clothing and footwear.

Key findings from the report relating to the clothing and footwear sector include:

- Shoppers in Germany, Sweden and the UK are leading the move into purchasing clothing and footwear online (16%, 14%, 12% of annual spend respectively);
- This proportion falls significantly in southern Europe, with Italy and Spain spending just 7% of annual spend on clothing and footwear online, while in eastern Europe very little is spent on buying clothing and footwear online with Poland, Hungary, and Russia (4%, 3%, 1% respectively) some way behind;
- Only 33% of people surveyed said it was important or extremely important to 'touch and feel' the product before buying;
- Two-thirds of respondents use the Internet to research product information and compare prices online before buying in-store;

- The younger generations spend the largest proportion of their annual spend online in the clothing and footwear and computer games/music/online sectors

Peter Gold, Head of Cross Border Retail EMEA, CBRE, commented:

“Clothing and footwear is now among the fastest growing retail categories online, with specialist retailers such as Marks & Spencer and Next increasingly taking more market share via their websites, while online-only fashion store ASOS is the UK’s fastest growing retailer. Although it’s clear that an online presence is now vital for any leading international brand, CBRE’s research shows that it is those retailers who understand how consumer channels such as online and in-store combine to create a truly multi-channel offering that will be the most successful. A store supplemented with an online presence is the best of both worlds in most cases.”

Further key findings from ‘Europe’s Online Consumer’ include:

- Men not women are driving the charge into internet shopping. While women shop nearly twice as often online as women (once every 2.5 weeks versus once a month);
- In western Europe the propensity to shop online correlates with wealth – 61% of higher earners shop online compared to 44% of lower earners;
- Young people are deterred by delivery charges and difficulties in returning items when buying online;
- Despite technological developments, fears over security remain the biggest barrier to online shopping.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Full findings from CBRE’s report – ‘Europe’s Online Shopper’ – including country-by-country shopper profiles, demographic trends and observations on future strategies for retailers is now available.

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1. The CBRE research fieldwork was undertaken among a representative sample of 10,000 consumers, between May and June 2011, in 10 European countries – Great Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Poland, Belgium, Hungary and Russia
2. The purchase categories considered in the definition of ‘online shopping’ include: shoes and clothes; books, music and entertainment; groceries; electrical items; cosmetics; pharmacy; and computer games

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