THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

Webrooming vs Showrooming

Sarita
Research Scholar, New Delhi, India

Abstract:
The " webrooming" is the latest retail buzzword.Showrooming and webrooming are not new words. Since many years people try to find out information of products online. Showrooming and webrooming are reverse in meaning to each other but in both the processes the customer at the end buy thye product according to his preference.In showrooming customer browse the product in stores and buy it online whereas in webrooming customers browse the product online and then buy it from the stores. This paper seeks to discuss the terms webrooming and showrooming and contain the knowledge regarding both in context to their benefits and challenges.

Keywords: *Showrooming, Webrooming, challenges*

1. Introduction

In past few years the use of internet has increased drastically. People go online to gather information for anything and anywhere. In today's world each and everyone is using internet on the cell phones more as compared to laptop as it is convenient option and cheaper too. Showrooming is the process where people do research for products in a store and purchases the items online. Whereas, webrooming is the process where people research the online and after that they go to the stores to buy it. Webrooming is just like a pre purchase research which is done by most of the people.If we look at the previous years, it shows a rapid growth in the online shopping and online research about the products. For example, in a survey by global management consultant Accenture, 73% said they browsed at least once in-store and they bought online, whereas 88% said they browse online first before buying in-store. According to the Accenture, which coined the term "webrooming", only those retailers get loyalty and competitive advantage who satisfies the customer's expectations and gives good shopping experience, whatever mode was opted for the shopping by the customer, whether online, in-store or through a mobile device. A retailer's loyalty depends upon the satisfaction of the customer and only after satisfying their needs you can retain them.

In the process of showrooming the customer will come to the store to find out how many brands are available for desired products and collect all the information about product from the in-store associate or a sales person. For example, their features, operation, uses, price as well as services. After gathering all the information from the store, customer browse the information online as well. Then compare the features and price of the product. After comparison if they found lesser price for same product online, they choose the online option and purchase from there.

At present, there are many options for online shopping sites. E.g., flipkart, Ebay, snapdeal, myntra, olx, quikkr, etc. Where products are sold at discounted price. After purchasing something from online sites you will become their customers and they will log you in their database and regularly inform you about their special offers and discounts on products by sending mails and messages on your mobile phones.

2. The Advantages of Online Shopping Are

- After making first purchase customer will be informed by online retailers about new offers & discounts.
- Information about new products and their features as well as comparison with other products of same category.
- Number of brands available at same shopping destination.
- Free home delivery of the product.
- Defective product can be easily replaced and if customer is unsatisfied with the product can return the product within certain limit of time.
- Online shopping is available 24*7.
- Cheap deals are available online.
- Online shopping gives privacy to the customers.

On the other hand, "webrooming" is the latest retail buzzword. In the webrooming process, the customer first search the product online and after that make final purchase from the store. Before going to the store, the customer has gathered all the information from the web about the product, i.e., different brands for the similar product, price, features etc. After that comparison will be done amongst all available brands of that product in the store and the products available online. If the customer found the price lesser at the store then the product will be purchased from the store only. Thus in webrooming, even at the store the customer can

use his cell phone for research about the product. And also can check whether the in-store associate is providing the true and fair information or not.

3. The Advantages of Webrooming Are
- Delivery on the same day.
- Customer can touch and feel the product.
- Face to face interaction of customer and sales person is possible in-stores.
- Customer can check the product whether it is working properly or not.
- Perishable goods like fruits and vegetables can be bought from the stores only.
- Faster and easy return.

Webrooming has definitely had an impact on showrooming, especially among younger buyers. Younger people prefer to shop from the stores after checking all the information about the product. Customers use internet as their main source of information before purchasing the product. And they prefer physical stores for placing their orders as compared to placing the order online.

4. The Duties of the Retailer for Bringing the Customers In-Stores for Purchases Are
- Maintaining good customer relationship by providing good services at the time of purchase & post purchase.
- Once the customer made purchase from the store, keep him updated with the special offers and discounts.
- Introduction of membership cards and payback points on purchase, and discount against these points.
- Return and exchange policies should be easy and fast.
- Maintain a website for the store with all the information that customer needs and all the products mentioned in the website should be available in the store.

5. Statistical Data
Urban Land Institute survey says:
- In buying electronic products, 50% of people aged between 18 & 36 will collect all the information via online sources & then buy in-store whereas only 11% people go for show rooming.
- When buying shoes 25% of customers buy the shoes from the stores, whereas 10% prefer to search offline & purchase online.
- In case of sports equipment the difference 21% vs. 13%.
- Buying personal care & cosmetics, 20% collect information online & then buy the product offline but only 8% buy online.

overall the study shows that in purchasing- footwear, sports equipment & personal care, customers prefer to go to the brick & mortar store, so that they can learn about the product & to purchase it.

Another study from Merchant Warehouse, shows the percentage difference between the two on the basis of age. in the age group between 18-36, 69% have webroomed, while 50% of respondents have showroomed. Whereas in the age group of 37-48; webroomers percentage is 71 & showroomers percentage is 53%. This data show that both 75% of men & 63% of women prefer to look online & purchase offline. Whereas 53% of men & 40 % of women prefer to buy the products online. Consumers choose web rooming over show rooming due to many reasons & according to the Merchant Warehouse survey approximately 47% customers wanted to avoid shipping cost, 42% wanted to check the availability of the product in the store & 23% couldn't wait for the delivery. 46 % customers go to the store so that they can touch & feel the product & 37% would like to have easy return policy.

As we know mobile phones with internet usage is popular these days. Even the study shows 80% of local searches on cell phones turn into purchases. Where approximately 3/4th of those purchases happened the same day & most of them happened within few hours. 85% of millennial shoppers report researching their product before buying is a good option. All channels needs to be unified, which means Omni channel experience will be better for the retailers. In which all web, mobile & in-store channels will display the same information about the product, its price & functions etc.

6. Conclusion
These two terms showrooming and webrooming have different meanings but the similarity between these two is the shopping. Whether customer chooses showrooming or webrooming, the common thing will be the shopping as per his/her preference of better product at lesser price with good quality.

Now a days online shopping sites are increasing at a very fast rate which is an alarming situation for the retailers/brick and mortar stores.

People can buy products online at affordable and discounted rate and get it at their doorstep without any shipping charge.

This is a big challenge for the retailers to bring back their customers to stores for shopping. They have to find out some new and innovative ideas so that they can bring their customer to stores as well as their business.

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