



Why Consumer Intent Is More Powerful than Demographics

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Marketers who rely only on demographics to reach consumers risk missing more than 70% of potential mobile shoppers. Why? Because demographics rarely tell the whole story.

Understanding consumer intent is much more powerful. Lisa Gevelber, Google's VP of marketing, shares how starting with intent can help you reach more of the right people than demographics alone.

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For years marketers have been using demographics as a proxy for people who might be interested in our products. But our research shows that marketers who try to reach their audience solely on demographics risk missing more than 70% of potential mobile shoppers.¹ Why? Because demographics don't help us understand what we really need to know—what consumers are looking for in an exact moment or where they are looking to find it.

Intent beats identity. Immediacy trumps loyalty. When someone has a want or need, they turn to their smartphone for help—whether it's a karate newbie watching an expert do a move on YouTube or a mom looking for the best deal on a pair of sneakers. When a need arises, people turn to search and YouTube to look for answers, discover new things, and make decisions. We call these intent-filled moments, [micro-moments](#). And they're the best opportunity marketers have to connect with people at the exact moment they are looking for something.

Understanding consumer intent and meeting their needs in the moment are the keys to winning more hearts, minds, and dollars.

Relying on demographics is limiting

While demographics will always have a place in the marketing playbook, the brands that understand and respond to intent are better positioned to be there and be useful for all of their potential customers, not just those that fit an age and gender profile.

Source: Mobile search & video behavior analysis, Millward Brown Digital, U.S., January-June 2015, base = mobile video game searchers

Only 31% of mobile searchers for video games are men ages 18 to 34.



Consider video games. You might think video game shoppers are mostly young men hunched over a bag of chips in their parents' basement. But the data shows only 31% of mobile searchers for video games are men ages 18 to 34.² Target demographically and you'd miss out on the other 69% of mobile users who are explicitly expressing interest in buying the next big game.

And if you're a video game marketer looking to reach those in your category with video ads aimed at men aged 18 to 34, you'd miss out on 71% of the potential shoppers who are engaging with relevant YouTube content.³ That's because on YouTube, which is fast becoming the new buyer's guide and owner's manual for games, mobile users are watching video to learn how to do things and explore their passions. But these people aren't all the same. They're arriving with various intentions. Some want advice, others seek inspiration, and others want product reviews

Source: * Mobile search & video behavior analysis, Millward Brown Digital, U.S., January-June 2015, base = mobile sporting goods searchers
† Mobile search & video behavior analysis, Millward Brown Digital, U.S., January-June 2015, base = mobile home improvement searchers
‡ Mobile Purchasers & Influencers Report. Google / Ipsos MediaCT, Ipsos Online Omnibus, August 2015, N=5025 Online smartphone users 18+, skin & body care influencers in past 6 months



Or here's something really different: baby products. According to our research, 40% of baby product purchasers live in households without children.⁴ This is also true for 52% of baby product influencers. These people could be grandparents and cousins, friends, and co-workers. And search is their #1 way of finding out about these products.⁵

As you can see, if you want to reach this valuable audience, demographics alone won't cut it. Marketers who consider intent from the onset are primed to win consumer hearts, minds, and dollars.

Source: Mobile Purchasers & Influencers Report. Google / Ipsos MediaCT, Ipsos Online Omnibus, August 2015, N=5025 Online smartphone users 18+, baby product purchasers in past 6 months



40% of all baby product purchasers live in households without children.

Home Depot is a real-life example of a brand that understands the power of intent. Years ago it figured out "do-it-yourselfers" were turning to their phones—especially YouTube—to learn everything from "how to tile a bathroom floor" to "how to build an outdoor fire pit." So to be more useful in these I-want-to-do moments, Home Depot built a [content marketing strategy](#) centered around "how-to" videos on YouTube. Today the collection has hundreds of videos, with the top 10 videos each reaching a million views or more. The full Home Depot "how-to" collection has received more than 48 million views.

"Mobile has significantly changed how we connect with customers at The Home Depot," said Trish Mueller, senior vice president and chief marketing officer at The Home Depot. "We're now laser-focused on how we can use digital to deliver against our customers' needs every moment of the day and every step of their home improvement experience."

Getting started with moments of intent

Knowing your consumer's intent means you can meet them in the moments that matter and deliver helpful content. Here's how you can start to put intent at the center of your strategy:

Be there

When your potential customers turn to Google and YouTube in their moments of need, make sure [you are there](#).

Use [Google Trends](#) to explore search trends and queries in your category to understand what consumers are looking for. Make sure you are there and useful in these moments of intent.

Be useful

Once you've ensured you're there to meet your customer, you then [need to be useful](#) in that moment. Otherwise they will simply move on to another brand. Our research shows 51% of smartphone users have purchased from a company/brand other than the one they intended to because the information provided was useful.⁶

Think about unique, tangible ways your brand can help solve a problem or make life easier in real-time during a micro-moment. Here are some examples to get you thinking:

- Provide local inventory information so they can see what's in stock nearby.
- Develop how-to videos.
- Offer the ability for consumers to seamlessly check out with an "instant buy" button.

To see more tips on being there and being useful, learn what other brands are doing in our [Micro-Moments Playbook](#).

Sources

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- 2 Mobile search & video behavior analysis, Millward Brown Digital, U.S., January-June 2015, base = mobile video game searchers
- 3 Mobile search & video behavior analysis, Millward Brown Digital, U.S., January-June 2015, base = video game shoppers who engaged with relevant YouTube content on mobile
- 4 Mobile Purchasers & Influencers Report. Google / Ipsos MediaCT, Ipsos Online Omnibus, August 2015, N=5025 Online smartphone users 18+, baby product purchasers in past 6 months
- 5 Mobile Purchasers & Influencers Report. Google / Ipsos MediaCT, Ipsos Online Omnibus, August 2015, N=5025 Online smartphone users 18+, baby product purchasers in past 6 months
- 6 Consumers in the Micro-Moment, Wave 3, Google/Ipsos, U.S., August 2015, n=1291 online smartphone users 18+