



How Super shoppers Use Search to Tackle the Holiday Season

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During the holidays, supershoppers consistently go online. In addition to flipping through catalogs or eyeing store displays, they turn to search for gift ideas and information. Whether shoppers are looking for inspiration or affirmation, marketers must be there and be useful.

think with **Google**

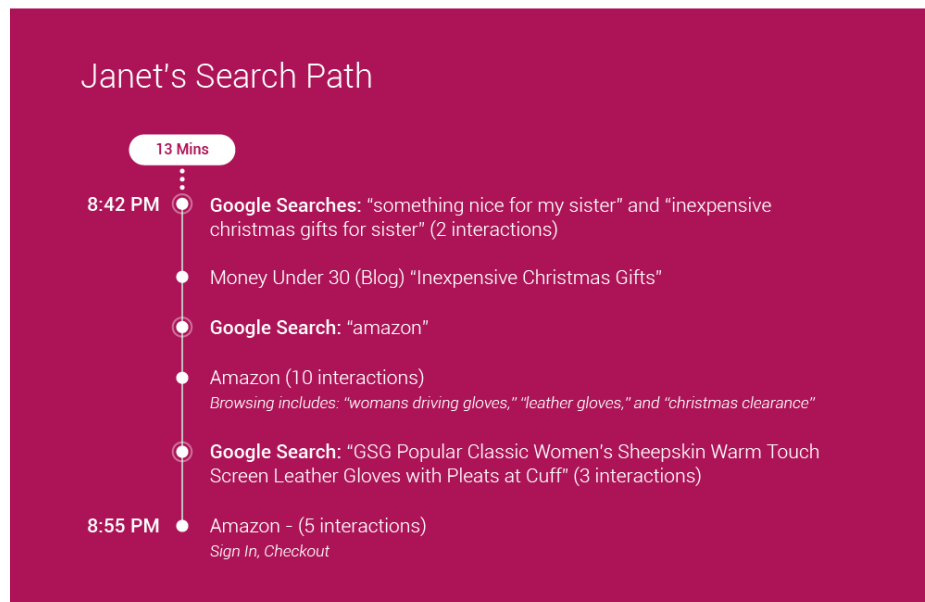
In new clickstream data from Luth Research's opt-in panel,¹ which shows the online pages visited by a web user, two key themes emerge around holiday shopping habits: (1) Searches evolve as people zero-in on what they really want, and (2) People turn to search to "gut check" what brand, product, or retailer best meets their needs.

The evolution of searches

As they hunt for that perfect gift, supershoppers keep their options open. Last year, more than 50% of holiday shoppers said they were open to purchasing from new retailers.²

Often, people begin with a broad search and then adjust their criteria as they home in on what they want—and that's reflected in their search behavior. In one example, Brian, a 44-year-old from New York, started out his search by looking for a laptop equipped with Windows 10. Then, his criteria evolved to include price and screen size.

Likewise, Janet, a 47-year-old from Wisconsin, wanted to find a Christmas gift for her sister, but had no idea where to start. Her first search ("something nice for my sister") led her to a blog where she landed on the idea of driving gloves. Additional research helped her find the exact pair she wanted, which she then purchased from Amazon.



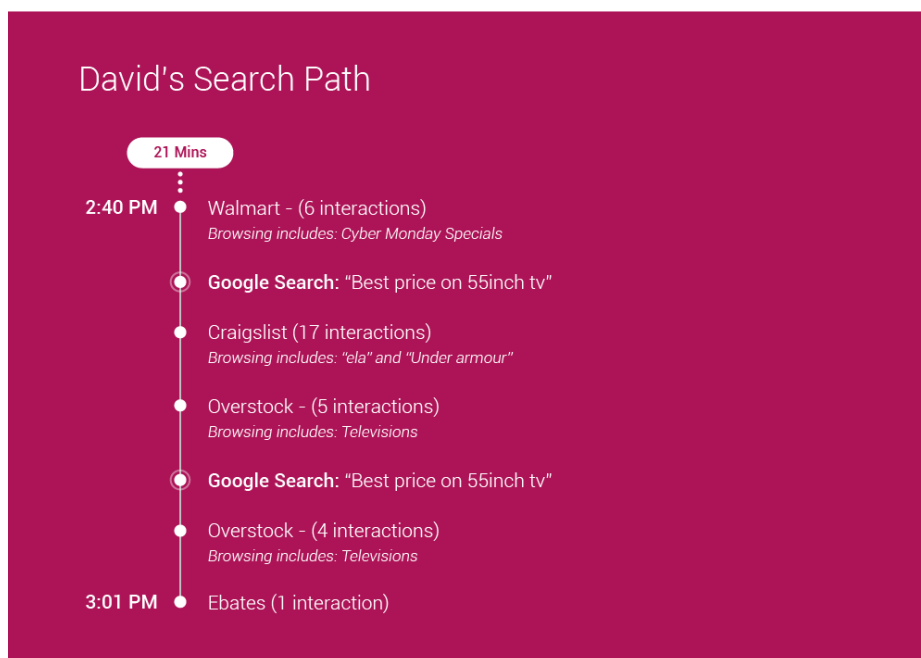
In this I-need-ideas moment, the brand that benefits most from a consumer's indecision is the brand that shows up. Consumers aren't necessarily searching for a particular brand, they're searching for the product or item that they have in mind. Does your brand show up when people search for generic terms like "gloves" or "laptop?" By being there in moments when your brand is most relevant to that supershopper, a new customer can be won.

Time to gut check

There is an abundance of information at consumers' fingertips, and supershoppers use it to make sure they're finding not only the right brand or product, but also the best. During the past holiday season, mobile searches related to "best gift" grew 70% year over year while searches related to cheap or inexpensive gifts grew about 35%.³

That said, someone on a retailer's website should not be thought of as a captive audience. To feel better informed, shoppers repeatedly leave retailers' sites to learn more about products and pricing before continuing on their journeys. For example, Isaac, a 19-year-old from Arizona, first looked to Target's online ads for gift ideas before settling on a kid's bike. He then turned to search to find out what size would best suit a 10-year-old boy.

Similarly, 45-year-old David from South Carolina left the purchase funnel to check the "best price" on a TV. The day before Cyber Monday, David began his purchase journey at Walmart.com, but then moved on to Google to learn more about prices. He then visited Craigslist.com, Overstock.com, and Bestbuy.com as he sought out the best deals.



The learning is clear. In their is-it-right-for-me moments, consumers may spend time on a retailer's site, but that doesn't mean a transaction is imminent. With search, consumers perform a gut check before committing to a purchase.

To re-engage supershoppers in these critical gut-check moments, make sure that you're using features like remarketing that can take previous shopping behaviors into account. That way, supershoppers can easily find you again—anytime and anywhere, across devices.

Conclusion

With instant access to inspiration and information, people around the world have transformed into supershoppers seemingly overnight. Utilizing search—increasingly on their mobile devices—they are turning to the web throughout the day and on the go for ideas and affirmation.

Marketers who establish their brands as trusted resources and guides

for supershoppers will be well-positioned during the holiday season and beyond.

To learn more about these critical consumers' key traits, read "[A Marketer's Guide to Holiday Supershoppers.](#)"

Sources

- 1 Google/Luth Research, U.S. Google partnered with Luth to analyze the digital activity of its opt-in panel participants. The data was analyzed between April and Aug. 2016. This article details the cross-device clickstream data of four participants: Brian, Janet, Isaac, and David.
- 2 Google/Ipsos, "Post-Holiday Shopping Intentions Study—Total Shoppers Report," base: U.S. holiday shoppers, n=1,500, Jan. 2016.
- 3 Google Search Data, U.S., apparel, home & garden, beauty & personal care, computers & electronics, gifts, toys & games, photo & video, Nov.–Dec. 2014 vs. Nov.–Dec. 2015.