

FOR RETAILERS, A CHANCE TO MAKE SALES ASSOCIATES ESSENTIAL TO SHOPPERS

An Ipsos Point of View

Authors: Carlos Aragon and Kaili Hunsaker

GAME CHANGERS





KEY FINDINGS

- In 2022, consumers shopping in store for electronics, appliances, apparel and the like expect assistance from retail sales associates in the form of demoing products, explaining more about them, making recommendations, providing benefits and drawbacks and more.
- Recent Ipsos data finds when consumers engage with sales associates, the associates often have limited knowledge of the product or are unable to assist as desired by consumers.
- This results in frustrated consumers potentially making uninformed purchase decisions, resulting in missed opportunities to delight and satisfy customers by demonstrating expert knowledge and making recommendations.

The holiday shopping season is in full swing online and in person, despite the COVID-19 limbo and varied responses to it around the U.S. For retailers facing an uncertain landscape, there are still opportunities to increase revenue, bring in more customers and ensure current customers remain loyal.

One shopping factor more retailers should consider: retail sales associates, who are not just essential workers but a key part of each retailer's brand. The importance of sales associates cannot be overstated. Their roles include the ability to assist customers, provide customers with a basic knowledge of the products and ensure new and returning customers feel satisfied with their interactions and purchases. They can and should be more than simply order takers.

Ipsos research provides insight into retail sales associates and how customers perceive their usefulness as 2022 quickly approaches. For shoppers who want guidance, what they are looking for comes in several forms: demoing products, explaining more about them, providing benefits and drawbacks, suggesting usage scenarios and assisting with fulfillment options.

49% of consumers tell Ipsos they find retail sales associates' recommendations helpful, suggesting an opportunity for significant improvement in training, quality and so on. 35% of consumers say they find retail sales associates' recommendations biased; again, this suggests an opportunity to improve training.



Most retail sales associates are not meeting consumer expectations. Often, they diminish their own knowledge, resulting in a lack of confidence among consumers.

When thinking of the holiday shopping you do in stores, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Data collected: 22 – 23 November, 2021 (n=610)

There is a clear opening for brands to learn from these customer experiences of 2020 and 2021 and provide more help, especially to consumers who think they do not need assistance or that they must browse without assistance. In an era filled with challenges for employers, from labor shortages to the latest omicron worries, retailers should try to help customers understand they do not have to shop alone.



About the Authors

Carlos Aragon

Vice President, Channel Performance

carlos.aragon@ipsos.com

Kaili Hunsaker

Director, Channel Performance

kaili.hunsaker@ipsos.com

About Ipsos

At Ipsos we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands, and society. We deliver information and analysis that makes our complex world easier and faster to navigate and inspires our clients to make smarter decisions. With a strong presence in 90 countries, Ipsos employs more than 18,000 people and conducts research programs in more than 100 countries. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is controlled and managed by research professionals.