

# How digital tech, ambience and sustainability drive in-store shopper behaviour

Experiential media company Mood Media has released its new global study, '[Charting In-Store Trends](#)', which highlights how creating the right atmosphere, incorporating the right digital technology, and committing to sustainability are key to tapping into a continued appetite for consumers to shop in-store.



Source: [Pexels](#)

The Mood Media report surveyed more than 12,000 shoppers across the US, UK, France, Spain, Germany, The Netherlands and China, and found that 38% of consumers globally are shopping in-store more often now than two years ago, and 33% are shopping in-store at the same level.

When asked to identify a reason for shopping in-store, 45% of consumers say their desire is rooted in getting their hands on purchases instantly, and 38% enjoy the element of discovery when shopping brick and mortar. Shopping as a leisure activity with friends and family was the third most cited reason.

“There is no longer a debate over whether people will return to physical retail after the pandemic,” says Scott Moore, global CMO at Mood Media. “They’ve returned. Now we must focus on how best to tap into continued demand for digitally enabled and ambience-rich, in-person experiences.”

## The value of the right atmosphere

Key to the report findings, more than three-quarters, 77%, of global shoppers will prioritise brick-and-mortar shopping over e-commerce given a pleasant in-store atmosphere. And once in store, 79% of shoppers reveal that a pleasant atmosphere would make them stay longer and 84% visit again. Greater than one-third, 39%, of global consumers say music in-store lifts their mood when shopping, while 35% feel that a pleasant scent does the same.

“The results indicate that consumers expect the retail and hospitality venues they frequent to create emotional connections and elevated experiences. They are also looking for human interaction and sensory stimulation, where stores offer indisputable advantages,” says Miya Knights, a retail-focused author and publisher who consulted on the research project.



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### Evolving role of digital in-store

Within the survey findings, engaging digital signage content plays a key role in consumers' purchasing decisions, making 26% of the consumers polled more likely to buy something in-store, 23% returning to the store and 22% staying longer thanks to this content.

Interactive digital screens rank particularly high in the automotive sector among consumers, with 26% indicating they are the most important feature in creating a pleasant in-store experience, just after friendly and knowledgeable staff, 49%, and things to see, touch and smell, 30%.

Just over half of shoppers, 57%, now expect stores to invest in digital payment and self-service technology, while 55% expect to see interactive screens that let them explore options and customize services or products. Equally important, almost half, 48%, expect stores to showcase engaging large video displays.

"As consumers return to brick-and-mortar stores in full force, what we see is that they're coming back with evolved shopping habits and expectations. They now increasingly see both online and offline as part of the same purchase journey (not one versus the other), and due to their growing comfort levels in the online space they now expect similar levels of digital technology solutions as an integral part of the physical space," says Moore.

### Sustainability driving shopper behaviour

Retailer sustainability is a driving factor for shoppers globally, with two in three shoppers, 66%, indicating that these practices impact their willingness to stay longer, return to the store, tell friends and buy more.

More than half of shoppers, 57%, want to be educated on information about environmental qualities and characteristics of goods being sold. Almost two-thirds, 61%, expect retailers to provide recycling options in-store, and most shoppers want to see retailers reduce their energy usage by closing doors to air-conditioned spaces, 57%, enclosing refrigerated spaces and turning off display lights when closed, 54%.

Consumers are ready to walk the talk and reward retailers for acting on sustainable practices with 58% of shoppers globally saying sustainability-minded retailers would make them more likely to want to buy something.



## How shoppers around the world differ when it comes to in-store experience

Stand-out findings for the US and international markets include:

- US consumers lead the return to in-store shopping with 48% of shoppers going in-store more than two years ago, vs 38% global average
- Shoppers in China lead on tech ambitions and a desire for sustainable practices – 85% want to see self-service digital technology, AR and VR, vs. a 57% global average
- 84% of US consumers say stores with a pleasant atmosphere are most likely to drive repeat visits, and 90% declare it makes them stay longer
- German shoppers are most likely to turn their sustainable convictions into purchases – 67% say they are more likely to buy from sustainable-minded retailers vs. a 59% global average
- Engaging digital content and personalized experiences have the highest impact on US consumers' purchasing decisions, making 31% and 40%, respectively, want to buy something in a store
- 58% of US shoppers say that branded music playlists and scents would make them stay longer in a physical sales space

"Mood Media's latest study shows how vital it is to balance digital with physical in stores today. Shoppers still expect a pleasant atmosphere, with good lighting, music and things to touch and see. Knowledgeable staff and the ability to buy instantly or collect online orders cannot be understated, too.

"But the rising importance of digital technology for self-service, engagement and interaction, and the adoption of sustainable practices and products have a fast-growing role to play in shoppers' choice of store, buying intent and frequency," says Knights.

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