2026-11-19

STUDY: From AI to In-Store, New Research Reveals How Consumers Research and Shop Across Channels

New DV research explores how consumers use online, social, AI and in-store channels for shopping research, with implications for marketers this holiday season and beyond

NEW YORK, Nov. 19, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- DoubleVerify ("DV") (NYSE: DV), the leading software platform to verify media quality, optimize ad performance and prove campaign outcomes, today released new findings from its *2026 Global Insights Report, Proof Points: Decoding the Path to Purchase*. The findings highlight how consumers navigate digital and physical channels throughout the path to purchase, underscoring the importance of understanding how different marketing touchpoints contribute to business outcomes.

The report draws on proprietary DV Rockerbox™ data and surveys of 22,000 consumers and 2,020 marketers across 25 countries.

"As consumers navigate a growing mix of digital and physical touchpoints, understanding what actually drives a purchase has become increasingly complex," **said Mark Zagorski, CEO, DV**. "Consumers may discover a product online, explore reviews or seek recommendations from AI assistants, ask friends for advice and, ultimately, make the purchase in a physical store. Marketers need measurement that connects these different touchpoints and provides a clear picture of what is actually driving outcomes."

Consumers Shop Beyond the Traditional Retail Calendar

The research highlights the prevalence of year-round shopping, while revealing how consumers rely on a mix of digital and physical channels to research and purchase products:

- **74% of consumers shop throughout the year.** Only about a quarter say they make most of their purchases around events, holidays or seasons.
- **Consumers rely on a range of sources for product research.** Online reviews (40%) and search engines (39%) are the most common, followed by physical stores (30%), social media (26%) and recommendations from friends and family (26%).
- **AI is an emerging source of product research.** Nearly one in five consumers (17%) use AI chat to research products before buying, with usage particularly notable among older Gen Z and younger Millennials.
- **Social is another source of product discovery and research.** More than a quarter of consumers (26%) use social media, while 11% turn to influencers when researching products.
- **Physical stores remain a significant purchase channel.** More than half (52%) of consumers made a purchase in a physical store in the past 12 months, compared with 47% through online marketplaces and 25% via social media.

Together, these findings underscore the importance of understanding how different touchpoints contribute to consumer purchasing decisions, whether those interactions occur online or in physical

stores.

Seasonal Advertising Patterns Highlight the Importance of Measuring Impact

While consumers shop throughout the year, advertisers continue to align media investment with seasonal demand, capitalizing on periods of heightened purchase intent and key retail events. DV Rockerbox data shows that Home Furnishings advertising follows major retail sales periods, while Apparel spending increases around the winter holidays before declining in the new year. Health and Wellness advertising, meanwhile, rises in January alongside consumer interest in New Year's resolutions.

The challenge for marketers is not simply knowing when to invest, but understanding how effectively those investments contribute to business outcomes. DV's research shows that marketers use a range of measurement approaches to evaluate performance, including platform-native reporting (55%), marketing mix modeling (48%), view-through attribution (40%), multi-touch attribution (38%) and last-click attribution (35%). Each provides a different perspective on campaign performance and marketing effectiveness, highlighting the value of connecting insights across measurement approaches.

“Advertisers have long understood the importance of aligning investment with seasonal demand,” **added Zagorski**. “The greater challenge is determining whether advertising is generating additional purchases or simply capturing demand that already exists. By connecting insights across channels and measurement approaches, marketers can better understand which investments are driving incremental growth, optimize their media spend and ultimately deliver stronger business outcomes.”

DV Rockerbox helps advertisers navigate the complexities of cross-channel measurement by bringing together multi-touch attribution, marketing mix modeling and incrementality testing in a unified offering. Combined with DV's broader media quality and performance optimization capabilities, advertisers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of what drives results, optimize media investments and demonstrate business outcomes.

The full *2026 Global Insights Report, Proof Points: Decoding the Path to Purchase* is available to download here.

About DV

DoubleVerify (“DV”) (NYSE: DV) is the industry’s leading media effectiveness platform that leverages AI to drive superior outcomes for global brands. By creating more effective, transparent ad transactions, DV strengthens the digital advertising ecosystem, ensuring a fair value exchange between buyers and sellers of digital media. For more information about DV, visit http://www.doubleverify.com.

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Source: DoubleVerify Inc.