

Omnichannel Retailing - Canada - 2023

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This report looks at the following areas:

- Proportion of purchases made in-store and online
- Comparison of benefits of in-store versus online shopping
- Category analysis of where certain products are typically purchased
- Which retailers Canadians shop at in-person and online
- How consumers use digital tools to prepare for in-store visits
- How delivery and pickup methods can impact consumer behaviours.

Ecommerce is not the future of retail – it will only be one part of it. As much as digital technology has enabled online shopping, consumers still want to go into stores; even today's youngest, most tech-savvy consumers are shopping in-store. Omnichannel shopping – where digital and in-person shopping experiences seamlessly interact with each other – offers the best of both worlds and is where this industry is heading.

Market conditions have had significant impact on the retail market in recent years. The pandemic accelerated the shift to ecommerce, while simultaneously reminding Canadians of how much they took in-person shopping for granted. Consumers are more tech-savvy today as a result, meaning they will be more likely to leverage digital tools to improve their shopping experiences, even in-store. More recently, inflation has had an impact on the retail market overall, but shouldn't be a hurdle for the growing relevance of omnichannel shopping.

The challenge for omnichannel stakeholders is to avoid wasting the opportunistic position they're in. There are single-channel retailers that are specialists in that channel – such as Amazon online, or Winners/HomeSense/Marshalls in-store – meaning they are stiff competition for other retailers that don't fully utilize both their in-store and online presence. Omnichannel optimization is becoming the standard for the industry and those that aren't taking advantage of it will lose ground.



"Omnichannel retailing is the natural result of a market that has widely adopted ecommerce, but refuses to abandon physical stores. The future of omnichannel retailing will be driven by stakeholders that innovate to separate themselves from the pack, creating an experience that's better than either in-store or online can be on their own."

- **Scott Stewart, Associate Director, Lifestyles & Retail**

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That said, the opportunity for those retailers with both online and in-store presence is to create a shopper experience that is greater than the sum of its parts. In-store shopping has its advantages and drawbacks, just like online shopping does. But retailers that can harness the best of both – the engaging, tangible experience of in-store shopping and the convenience of online shopping – can be leaders in the industry simply by optimizing the channels they already offer.

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Table of Contents

OVERVIEW

- What you need to know
- Key issues covered in this Report
- Definition

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Top takeaways
- Market overview
Figure 1: Category outlook: omnichannel retailing, 2023-28
- Opportunities
- **Canadians are comfortable with digital tech, opening opportunities for retailers**
- **Omnichannel shopping leverages the advantages of in-store and online shopping**
- **Digital tech innovations offer limitless possibilities**
- Challenges
- **Omnichannel strategies are must-have within a highly competitive market**
- **Purchase channels vary by category, making it difficult to have a universal strategy**

THE MARKET – BY THE NUMBERS

- **Retail sales are up, supported by rising prices**
Figure 2: Retail trade sales, 2019-2022
Figure 3: Retail ecommerce sales, 2019-2022

MARKET FACTORS

- **Economic challenges for the consumer market overall**
- **Some experts predict a Canadian recession in 2023**
- **Consumers are financially stable, but are growing more concerned**
Figure 4: Top concerns over the next six months (NET: any top-three concern), 2022
- **Attitudes towards COVID-19 set the stage for omnichannel success**
Figure 5: Concern about exposure to COVID-19, 2020-2022
- **The labour market makes omnichannel retail mutually beneficial**
Figure 6: Retail job vacancies, Q1 2021-Q3 2022
- **Canadians are equipped for omnichannel habits**
- **Changes in how Canadians live and work will impact omnichannel demand**

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- Executive Summary
- Full Report PDF
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- **Populations are shifting to higher density areas and homes**

Figure 7: Distribution of occupied private dwellings by type, 2011-2021

- **Remote work has shifted to hybrid in the past year**

Figure 8: Working location, 2021 and 2022

COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES

- **Amazon's US strategies make it a sleeping giant in Canada**

Figure 9: Amazon Fresh Instagram post, December 2022

- **Canadian Tire's mobile app illustrates how retailers can leverage tech**

- **Shein reverses the omnichannel shopping experience**

Figure 10: Shein Japan Instagram post, November 2022

- **IKEA's shift to omnichannel is reflective of the market**

OMNICHANNEL RETAILING – FAST FACTS

IN-STORE AND ONLINE SHOPPING CHANNELS

- **Most Canadians shop in-store and online**

Figure 11: How purchases have been made in the past 12 months, 2022

- **Younger consumers make more of their purchases online**

Figure 12: How purchases have been made in the past 12 months, by age, 2022

- **Age skews have a ripple effect on other demographic groups**

Figure 13: Past 12 month purchases mostly online, some in-store, by race, parental status and social media usage, 2022

BENEFITS OF IN-STORE AND ONLINE SHOPPING

- **Experience is in-store shopping's key differentiator**

Figure 14: Most significant benefits of purchasing in-store rather than online, 2022

Figure 15: Shoes Try On Augmented Reality (AR) Filter – Snapchat, August 2020

- **Trial drives the unique experience, but shopping in-store can also be enjoyable**

Figure 16: Most significant benefits of purchasing in-store rather than online: experience, 2022

- **There are some potential cost benefits to shopping in-store**

Figure 17: Most significant benefits of purchasing in-store rather than online: experience, by living location, 2022

- **In some ways, in-store shopping is more convenient than online shopping**

- **Online shopping is all about convenience**

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Full Report PDF

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Figure 18: Most significant benefits of purchasing online rather than in-store, 2022

- Consumer groups perceive convenience differently**

Figure 19: Most significant benefits of purchasing online rather than in-store: convenience, by age, 2022

Figure 20: Most significant benefits of purchasing online rather than in-store: convenience, moms vs dads, 2022

- Online shopping provides some cost savings, but they are secondary to convenience**

CATEGORY ANALYSIS OF SHOPPING CHANNELS

- Some categories are still very dependent on in-store shopping**

Figure 21: Category analysis: I've done all of my purchasing in-store, among past 12 month purchasers, 2022

- Older consumers drive in-store shopping**

Figure 22: Category analysis: I've done all of my purchasing in-store, among past 12 month purchasers, by age, 2022

- Online-only shopping is a reality for some categories**

Figure 23: Category analysis: I've done all of my purchasing online, among past 12 month purchasers, 2022

- Remote workers are more dependent on online shopping**

Figure 24: Category analysis: I've done all of my purchasing online, among past 12 month purchasers, by work location, 2022

- Younger consumers are not prepared to shop entirely online**

Figure 25: Category analysis: I've done all of my purchasing online, among past 12 month purchasers, by age, 2022

- Offering the 'best of both worlds'**

- Clothing stakeholders have the opportunity to capitalize on omnichannel**

Figure 26: Category analysis: mixed channel purchases, among past 12 month purchasers, 2022

Figure 27: How To Make a True Fit Profile 2022, June 2022

- Learnings for other categories**

RETAILER USAGE

- Most Canadians shop in-store at Walmart, online at Amazon**

Figure 28: Retailers purchased from in-store in the past 12 months, 2022

Figure 29: Retailers purchased from online in the past 12 months, 2022

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Executive Summary

Full Report PDF

Infographic Overview

Powerpoint Presentation

Interactive Databook

Previous editions

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- **Cultural differences in retailer usage highlight omnichannel opportunities**

Figure 30: Retailers purchased from in-store in the past 12 months, overall vs Chinese and South Asian Canadians, 2022

Figure 31: Retailers purchased from online in the past 12 months, overall vs Chinese and South Asian Canadians, 2022

- **Walmart and Best Buy have shoppers who use both channels**

Figure 32: Distribution of in-store and online purchases made in the past 12 months, by retailers, 2022

- **Walmart exemplifies how younger shoppers want both in-store and online shopping**

Figure 33: Walmart: distribution of in-store and online purchases made in the past 12 months, by age, 2022

- **Omnichannel shopping is about flexibility**

Figure 34: Walmart: distribution of in-store and online purchases made in the past 12 months, by work location, 2022

- **It is possible, but challenging, to succeed with just one retail channel**

- **Winners Merchants International uses value to offset lack of ecommerce**

Figure 35: Retailers purchased from in-store in the past 12 months, 2022

Figure 36: Purchased from Winners, HomeSense and/or Marshalls in-store in the past 12 months, by age, 2022

- **Amazon dominates ecommerce, but needs to be exceptional to do so**

Figure 37: Retailers purchased from online in the past 12 months, 2022

- **Men are more likely than women to shop on eBay**

Figure 38: Retailers purchased from online in the past 12 months, men vs women, 2022

OMNICHANNEL SHOPPING BEHAVIOURS

- **Consumers go online before shopping in-store**

- **Pre-visit research skews to men and younger consumers**

Figure 39: Pre-visit research behaviours (% agree), men vs women, 2022

Figure 40: Pre-visit research behaviours (% agree), by age, 2022

- **Omnichannel shopping behaviours are the future of retail**

Figure 41: Pre-visit research behaviours (% agree), by shopping channels, 2022

What's included

Executive Summary

Full Report PDF

Infographic Overview

Powerpoint Presentation

Interactive Databook

Previous editions

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- **Half of grocery shoppers have a shopping list on their phone**
- **Most young consumers grocery shop with a phone**
Figure 42: "When I grocery shop, I have a shopping list on my phone" (% agree), by age and parental status, 2022

ONLINE PURCHASE DELIVERY AND PICKUP

- **In-store pickup will remain relevant moving forward**
Figure 43: Ways of receiving online purchases, 2021 vs 2022
- **In-store pickup has strong momentum**
Figure 44: Ways of receiving online purchases: unscheduled delivery vs in-store pickup, by generation, 2022
- **Online returns remain a weakness for that channel**
- **Younger shoppers are the most likely to want easier returns**
Figure 45: "I'd purchase more products online if it was easier to return them" (% agree), by age, 2022
Figure 46: "I'd purchase more products online if it was easier to return them" (% agree), by race and parental status, 2022
- **Remote workers illustrate how online returns can modernize ecommerce**
Figure 47: "I'd purchase more products online if it was easier to return them" (% agree), by work location, 2022
- **Assessing current online return policies**

APPENDIX – DATA SOURCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

- **Data sources**
- **Consumer survey data**
- **Consumer qualitative research**
- **Mintel Trend Drivers**
- **Abbreviations and terms**
- **Abbreviations**
- **Terms**

What's included

Executive Summary

Full Report PDF

Infographic Overview

Powerpoint Presentation

Interactive Databook

Previous editions

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