

E-tailers, fix your glitches before the festive shopping frenzy

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A new research report warns of the importance for online retailers to fix technical glitches like slow site speed and payment errors well before Black Friday and the festive season really hits.



During the last Black Friday, Takealot experienced widespread credit card failure soon after going live with its campaigns. While the issue was resolved hours later, irate customers took to social media en masse to criticise the online retailer. This embarrassing gaffe should have sent a stern warning out to online brands to avoid making the same mistake.

Unfortunately, new research by Rogerwilco and ovatoyou, a mobile research tool, reveals that the incident didn't quite hit home: almost 60% of those surveyed for the [South African Digital Customer Experience Report](#) – a study that ran during Q3 of 2019 and had 1,700 responses – said that payment failure was the number one reason that they had abandoned an online purchase.

This was echoed by Thomas Pays, CEO of i-Pay who was reported as saying last year that “payment portal glitches (also [contributed to consumers spending less](#).”

“Almost a year later, and we're still seeing that brands are getting it wrong at the digital tillpoint,” says Charlie Stewart, Rogerwilco CEO. “As we head towards Black Friday 2019, I'll hazard a guess that we'll see other brands do a 'Takealot' – unless they address this critical issue in the next few weeks.”

Online retail should be DIY

Site speed is another glitch that needs to be fixed by brands (this bothered 38% of survey respondents), as is being unable to find what they were looking for (37%) and getting support when they get stuck (37%).

This last point, in particular, was of surprise to the researchers as online should be self-service. “There needs to be improved on-demand support for customers and brands also need to look at why do customers need help to make online

purchases in the first place? You shouldn't need service support – what is failing in the journey that is causing customers to feel they need support, this is a big red flag," comments Amanda Reekie from ovatoyou.



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Local is not necessarily lekker

Reekie goes onto say that local brands should take tips from international brands, many of whose apps – Amazon, Google, Uber, Netflix, etc. – sit side-by-side local brands' on a mobile phone as was evident from consumers' screens which they took a photo of as part of the research.

"Don't delude yourself, people are not kinder to you because you are local. The standards get set by billion-dollar examples with the best CX and UX. Brands need to recognise the fact that the internet has created the ability for us to connect with organisations that we wouldn't have had before – the bar is very high.

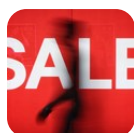
"Brands need to pull their heads out of the sand; the competition is not necessarily someone who will provide the same service, it is the service that has set their expectations. We're not going to go through the pain points if brands don't provide us with an experience that we're used to."

Vicious venting

When customers do get frustrated – something 49% of the sample said they do – a whopping 99% tell friends and family. "In research terms, this is unheard of!" comments Reekie.

Customer experience professional, Julia Ahlfeldt explains the impact of this overwhelming insight: "In a world where we rely more and more on recommendations and advice from friends and family – and that then influences them as to where they spend their money – these experiences are more powerful than above the line marketing; you believe your friend over an ad.

"For existing brands, if there are negative experiences out there, it just piles onto the brand. People still talk about experiences that happened years ago. Experiences are the silent killer; you don't feel the pain until it's too late."



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Get it right – before the shopping frenzy

When brands do get it right – better service, better prices, variety and selection, better information, speed and ease-of-use and convenience – customers are more than happy to reward them financially with 44,5% saying that they would buy more from a brand if the experience was good. This increases to almost 60% among those who earn more than R30k a month.

"Brands care a lot about the customers that can pay more. So if close to 60% of those earning more than R30k are willing to buy more from you, it pays to invest in this. Don't duck out of fixing your online experience; people are choosing to interact online, so it's key that brands get it right – especially as we head towards peak trading periods that kick off on Black Friday when consumers come credit card in hand," says Reekie.

"Don't disappoint them with an online experience that is sub-par and doesn't give them what they want – you can almost guarantee that they will tell their friends and family," Reekie adds.

Stewart concludes by saying, "With consumers spending billions on one day only, not to mention the festive season that is coming up, it is in brands' best interest to fix glitches and capitalise as much as they can on the online shopping frenzy."

Research methodology: The South African Digital Customer Experience Report was commissioned by Rogerwilco. Researcher ovatoyou surveyed 1,700 consumers from their 18,000+ panel during Q3 of this year through its online, app and social media channels. The ovatoyou tool allows for photo upload which provided sight of respondents' phone screens, giving a unique look at their look personalised mobile phone screens.

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