

South Africans browse on their smartphones, then purchase in a store

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Two-thirds of connected consumers use their smartphones in their purchase journeys



South African internet-connected consumers still gravitate towards brick-and-mortar shops for their purchases, with more shoppers practicing “webrooming” than “showrooming”.

[GfK South Africa](#)’s report, *E-commerce 360: Navigating the Technical Goods E-Commerce Market in South Africa**, indicates that 58% of shoppers bought a product in-store after seeing it online, a phenomenon known as “webrooming”.

This stands in contrast to other BRICS countries where showrooming is more prevalent at 57%.

In South Africa, 47% purchased a product online after seeing it in a store (“showrooming”). Some 22% bought a product online from the same store’s website after seeing it in a physical shop, while 25% saw a product in-store and purchased through a competitor’s digital channels.

According to the research, 65% of South Africa’s connected consumers used their smartphone to help shop in the past six months. Around 40% check prices online and then make a purchase in a traditional store. Some 38% use a smartphone to browse or purchase products they see advertised while watching television.

“South Africans are smartphone fans, but they still value the immediacy and hands-on interaction of the store experience,” says Cherelle Laubscher, Senior Retail Manager at GfK South Africa. “The research shows digital and physical retail should no longer be treated as separate channels since they form an integrated experience from the consumer’s point of view. It is important for brands to have an omnichannel approach to truly capture all avenues customers are exposed to.”

The research shows that South African connected shoppers use their smartphones in practical ways:

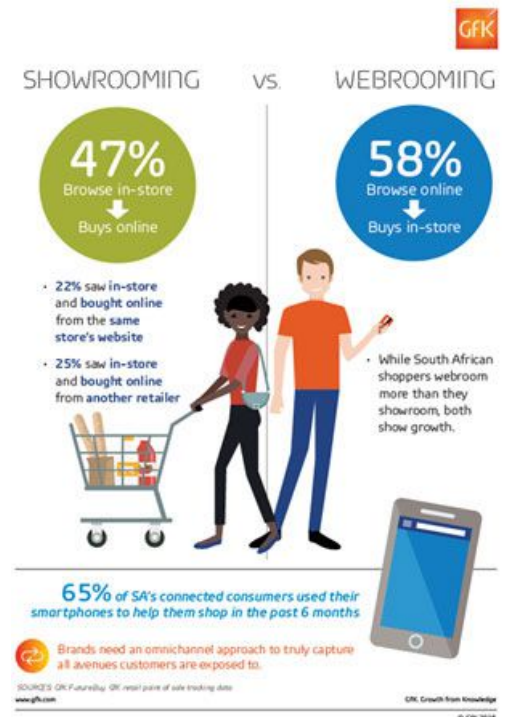
- 29% to compare prices
- 28% to search for info about the product
- 24% to check product availability in store
- 22% to access product reviews
- 21% to locate a store

Consumers are also increasingly using their mobile devices to transact online, despite their security fears. Around 64% agreed: "I'm worried about my personal information when using a mobile payment app." However, 57% said that making a payment from a mobile device is faster than other methods and 55% said having all payment methods on one device is a major convenience.

**The report is based on findings and insights from two studies recently conducted by GfK and provides a holistic view of the e-commerce market, with a focus on technical consumer goods. The full report is available for purchase.*

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