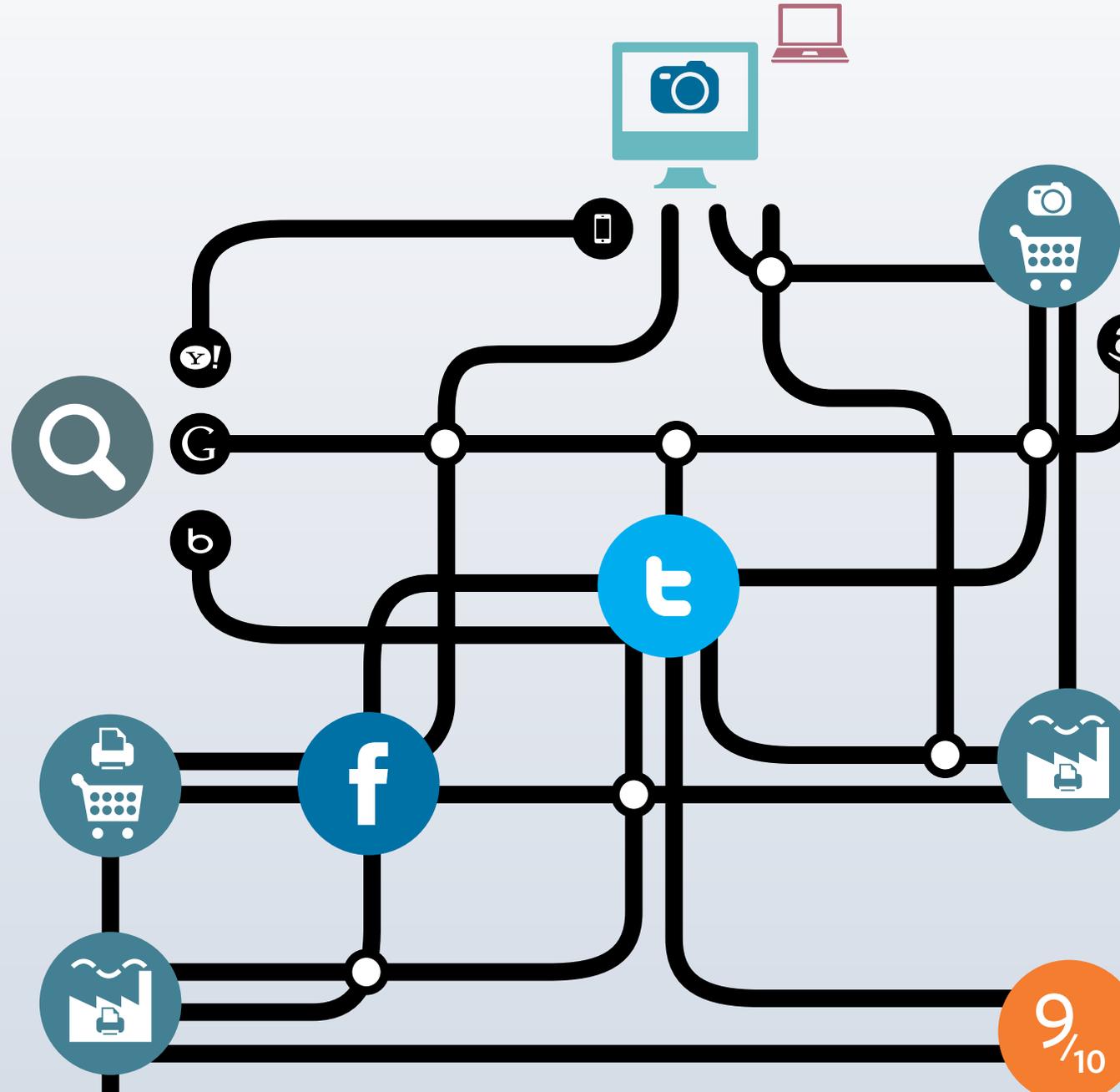


# The New Social Purchase Journey

Injecting trust to accelerate conversion



# No crowd, no commerce

Shopping has always been social. Since the first transactions in the earliest marketplaces, people bought from people – and discussed their decisions with other people.

But the first era of ecommerce dispensed with all that. As shopping became de-personalized, we all browsed clinical product pages, clicked through isolated, human-free purchase paths ... and left all-too-many shopping baskets abandoned.

Today, social commerce is back in a big way. As retailers discover the power of the crowd, it's hard to find a serious commerce site that doesn't have some form of ratings, reviews or user-generated content.

It's not rocket science: social commerce works because it addresses the number one issue in every online purchase: **trust**.

For retailers, brands and anyone selling online, social commerce has never been more important. In most markets, the winners will be those who best harness the power of the crowd – not just on their product pages but through the entire purchase journey.

That's what this ebook is all about: injecting trust into every step of the new social purchase journey to make it easy for people to buy from you – and to share their great experience with others.

The ideas discussed here are based on our experience as Europe's largest social commerce company. Because we see so many crowd-powered transactions across so many different retail, brand and social websites, we have a unique perspective on shopper behaviour. By sharing it, we hope to help marketers raise their game – which also helps consumers find the very best products for their specific needs. Win-win.

As they say after those disturbing TV documentaries, "If you've been affected by any of the issues raised in this program...", do get in touch.

"Customers have been providing user-generated content for a decade through reviews, forum posts, uploading photos, etc. Sharing tools now enable more eyeballs to see this fab content, and even better, the eyeballs know the fingers who created the content."

LINDA BUSTOS  
GETELASTIC

# The old purchase journey

It's hard to believe, but only a few years ago, the online purchase journey was a pretty straight line. We knew what we wanted; we trusted a few, select web retailers; and we bought.



## SEEMS ALMOST QUIANT, DOESN'T IT?

The old idea of a sales funnel that the marketer drives from start to finish has given way to something new.

“What was once a simple transactional process becomes a complex web of value shifts across several customer touchpoints. Now, brands must manage multiple revenue streams, where the retail space may not be primarily devoted to income.”

ALEXANDER GRÜNSTEIDL  
METHOD

# The new purchase journey

Today's consumer purchase journeys are multi-channel, multi-step pathways that reflect the unique motivations and dynamics of each specific purchase.

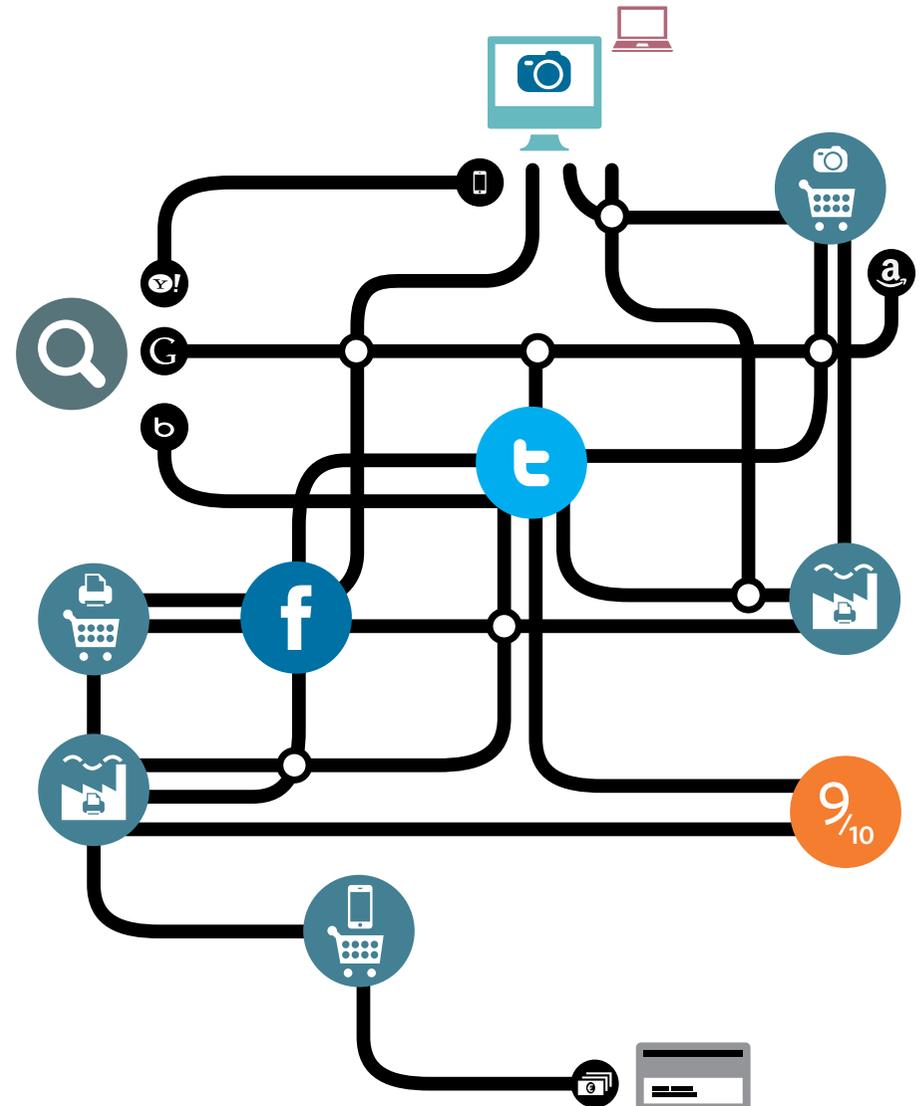
From the outside, it looks like the map of a pinball: random, chaotic, rudder-less. But from the buyer's perspective, each purchase journey is actually a fairly logical, goal-directed exploration of the web's rich content universe and the wide range of mobile and offline touchpoints.

Of course, no two purchase journeys are identical. There are as many unique purchase paths as there are web transactions (and that's a lot).

But as diverse, as these journeys may be, a pattern is emerging that lets us distil some principles from this mess.

"Today's digital landscape is complex. Customer interactions are spanning an increasing array of touchpoints, with customers often crossing multiple channels."

RONALD ROGOWSKI  
FORRESTER



# The new social purchase journey is:



## Fast

For example, our research shows that a £200 electronics purchase journey tends to take place over several days – but only 6 minutes are spent on the product page of a given brand. Duration varies widely but one thing is clear: the whole cycle is speeding up.

If you can't respond quickly to purchase intent signals, you're out of the game.



## Search-enabled

Many purchase journeys start with a search engine, but nearly all involve several searches, whether on Google or an on-site search.

You need to understand your keyword dynamics and make sure your site is optimised with plenty of social content.



## Social

Above all, today's purchase journey is socialised – fuelled by ratings, reviews, 'Ask an Owner' services, Facebook visits and Twitter queries.

You need to master social commerce content – on your own site and beyond.

Today's purchase journeys aren't always confined to the web. Offline channels – from branded retail stores to the big box retailers, kiosks and traditional advertising – still play their part. And mobile apps are playing an increasingly important 'bridging' role between online and offline touchpoints.

The most progressive marketers are deploying integrated, multi-channel campaigns that combine online, offline and mobile into a seamless journey.

# The new social purchase journey is...



## Complex

From the first twinge to the ultimate ka-ching, most purchase journeys involve much more than just a single visit to one website. And the more expensive the item, the more complex the path.

You need to be ready to convert interest into action in many different ways.



## Buyer-driven

Yesterday's path was heavily guided by the vendor. Today's is buyer-initiated and self-directed. You can influence it, but you can't drive it.

The key is to be helpful to the shopper, making it easy for them to find exactly what they need instead of trying to frog-march them to the checkout.



## Multi-channel

Today's purchase journeys hop from search engine to social site to price comparison engine to mobile app, showroom and back. They often involve multiple retailer and manufacturer sites, plus review sites, expert blogs and mobile services.

You need to be in the right place at the right time with the right content.

“The reality is that just like most other things in life, there is no one thing that makes something happen. People use a variety of methods to make decisions using a combination of tools and resources.”

FRANK REED  
MARKETING PILGRIM

# The new social purchase journey

Without ignoring the incredible diversity of purchase journeys, it is possible to represent the entire decision cycle in a simplified model that breaks the journey down into four decision steps and four research stages.

## THE KEY DECISIONS AND RESEARCH STAGES

Each of the four decision points either triggers or is triggered by a research phase. The decision points are, as the name implies, moments in time when the buyer's mindset moves to the next level of the purchase cycle. The research stages are more prolonged and might extend over days, weeks or months.

### IDENTIFY A NEED

The moment you realise there's a product out there - a new camera, car, holiday or insurance package - that might be just what you need.

### INTENT DECISION

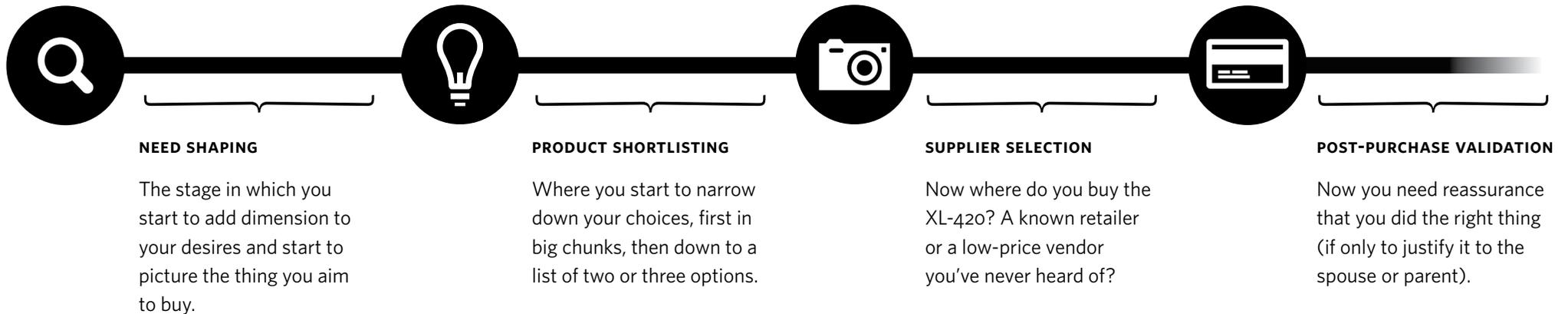
The moment when you realise that, yes, you are going to buy something and do it soon.

### PRODUCT DECISION

You've made your mind up. You want the XL-420 in beige with the left-handed widget option. Definitely.

### PURCHASE

Ta-da. You've found the right product at the right retailer and you've gone for it. Congratulations.



# Your experience may vary

Of course, there is no such purchase journey in real life.

Some journeys proceed in an orderly way through each of these steps. Others start with the supplier (*"I think I'll go to Zappo's for some shoes"*); the product (*"I need an iPad and I need it now."*); or the manufacturer (*"It's time for my next BMW."*).

Some journeys go from left to right in the model, others swim upstream or dance around.

It's still useful to analyse a generic purchase journey model, because it helps us see that:

- Each step or stage has its own buyer needs and its own set of questions
- Each involves different kinds of websites and resources
- Each requires a different approach for marketers
- Each needs a different kind of social commerce content

"In highly complex sales situations, participants in the buying process come and go. They may enter the process at the stage of needs specification, only to depart when alternatives are evaluated, or they may participate only when demonstrations are given, for example."

DR JEFF TANNER  
MYCUSTOMER

# The purchase journey question map

What are the key touchpoints as shoppers move through the purchase journey?

## THE IMPLICATIONS

If people ask different questions as they progress through their purchase journey, shouldn't you have different kinds of answers for them? And shouldn't you know where they go to get help?

### IDENTIFY A NEED



#### NEED SHAPING

- What's out there?
- Can I afford one?
- What features matter?
- How important is it?
- How urgent is it?
- Who else buys this?

### INTENT DECISION



#### PRODUCT SHORTLISTING

- What brands feel right?
- Which model is best?
- Which can I afford?
- What do owners think?
- What do experts think?
- Will this model be replaced soon?

### PRODUCT DECISION



#### SUPPLIER SELECTION

- Where should I buy?
- Where can I get the best deal?
- Who do I trust?
- Who will support me best?
- Who has the happiest customers?

### PURCHASE

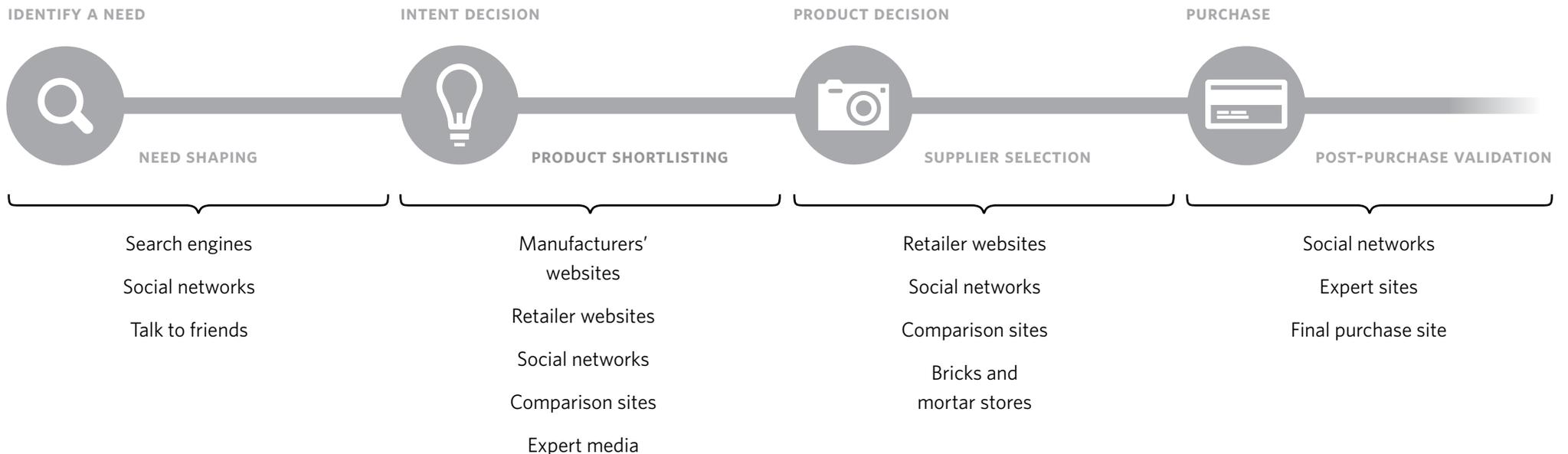


#### POST-PURCHASE VALIDATION

- Did I make the right decision?
- Did I get a good price?
- Has any new product been introduced since?
- Are there owners out there who can help me use the product?
- Can I help other shoppers the way people helped me?

# The purchase journey resource map

What channels and tools do shoppers use at each stage of the purchase journey?



# The social commerce dividend

On retail sites with reviews, shoppers spend an average of 13.6 minutes on product pages compared to 5.6 minutes for sites without reviews. Nearly two and a half times longer.

**Conversion rates increase by 177% when consumers engage with social content.**

Social commerce content includes anything that harnesses the experiences of other consumers to help the shopper make a better decision, including:

- Product ratings and reviews
- Service ratings and reviews
- Curated consumer Q&As
- Brand interaction forums
- Social media sites

The power of social commerce content as a way to inject trust into the purchase path is well documented in extensive research and supported by the first-hand experience of virtually every online retailer.

The evidence – from many different sources – is overwhelming. Social commerce content delivers significant benefits to online marketers, including:

**Increased traffic** generating the fresh content Google loves

**Increased conversion** as more people buy (typically an 11% uplift)

**Increased order value** as each shopper spends more (with a proven 5% uplift)

**Happier customers** because they made the right choice

**Fewer product returns** driving down a major cost centre

**Increased lifetime value** from all of the above

**Better customer insight** by simply listening

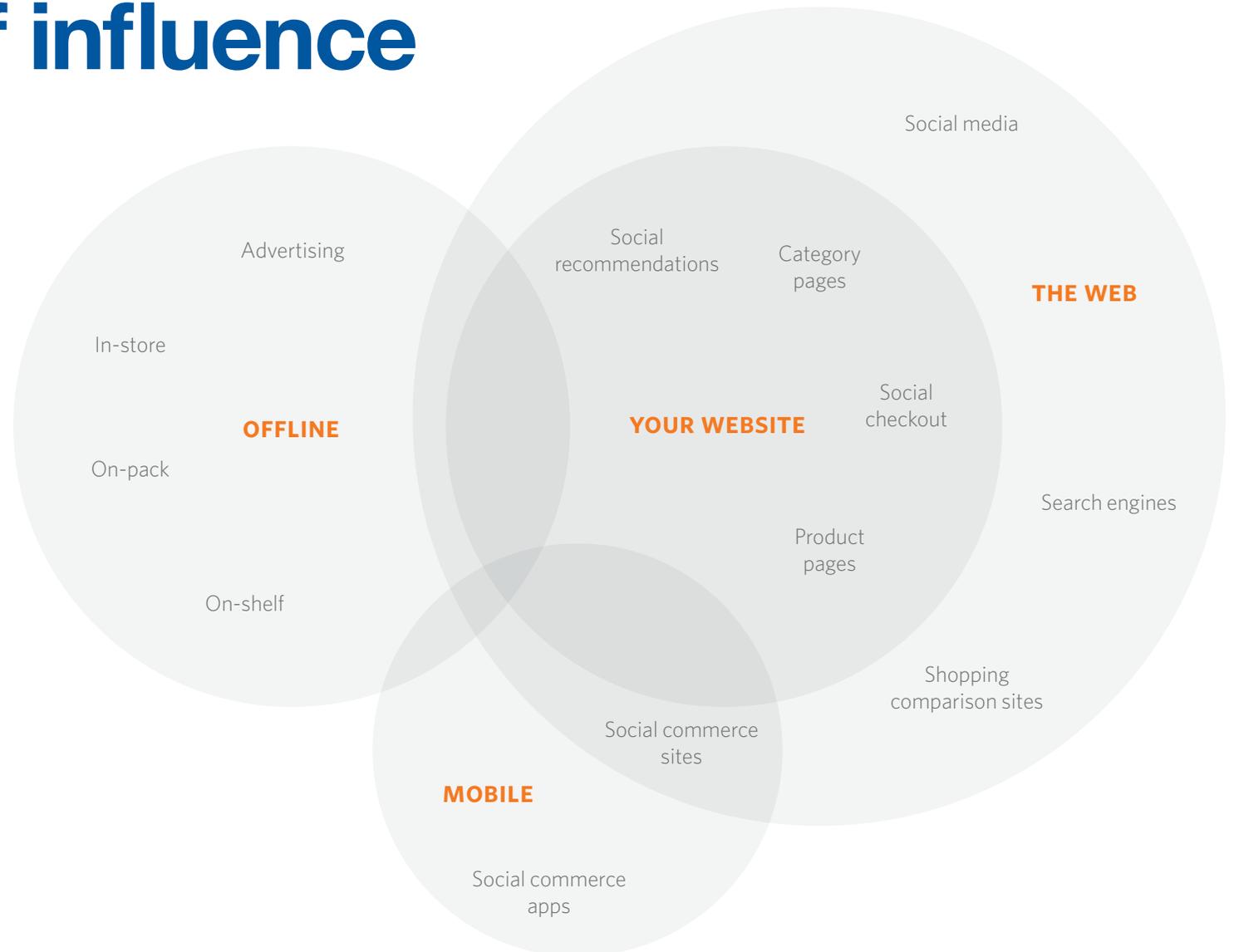
We won't bury you in statistics here, but if you need some data to support a business case, give us a call.

## The Six Essentials of Social Commerce

We've summarised best-practice social commerce in our ebook Six Essentials of Social Commerce. You might like to [download it here](#).

# The social commerce spheres of influence

Most marketers understand the power of ratings and reviews on their own website. But many ignore the full range of places where social commerce content can make an impact. Just as the New Social Purchase Journey touches many different kinds of website, it also crosses all these domains:



---

34% of consumers use their mobile phones to search for product or price information, in store and on the move.

## YOUR WEBSITE

The only place you fully control and the most important place for a well-executed social commerce strategy.

### THINK ABOUT

Product ratings and reviews on product pages and category pages

Service ratings and reviews on the home page and checkout pages

Socialised product recommendations ("People who viewed this, bought this...")

Consumer Q&A service on product pages

A Brand Response channel for joining the dialogue

Using ratings and reviews in emails

## THE WIDER WEB

You need to extend your social content beyond the confines of your site, to reach out to shoppers at all stages of the purchase journey.

### THINK ABOUT

Making it easy for people to publish reviews to Facebook and Twitter

Ensuring social commerce content is search-engine friendly to boost rankings

Broadcasting your ratings and reviews to comparison sites, publishers, blogs

Featuring social commerce content on your social media pages

## MOBILE DEVICES

Mobiles are fast becoming a major stop on an increasing number of purchase journeys. And the younger the user, the more likely they are to consult their mobile while shopping. Social content that ignores the mobile channel is missing an important opportunity.

### THINK ABOUT

Making sure your social content transfers to your mobile web pages

Creating mobile apps that encourage social shopping

Helping in-store users access ratings and reviews on their smartphones (with a simple QR code on-shelf)

## OFFLINE

Social commerce content is making an impact in the 'bricks and mortar' world too, as retailers extend their great ratings and reviews offline.

### THINK ABOUT

Putting product ratings and reviews on packaging, POS materials and on-shelf

Using digital signage for real-time review feeds in-store

Promoting your service ratings and reviews in-store

Using ratings and reviews in advertising

In one typical case, email click through rates improved 46% through the inclusion of review scores.

"The good and the bad need not all be within the domain of the store either. A quick Googling of the product name might tell a different story. Scanning its barcode in the store could pull up user-reviews (and possibly better prices at online stores or in a neighboring town)."

MARCIA CONNOR,  
ALTIMETER GROUP

Check out our free ebook **User-Generated Content for SEO** for lots of tips on using social content to rank higher on keyphrases.

[Download it here.](#)

# Socialising your conversion funnel

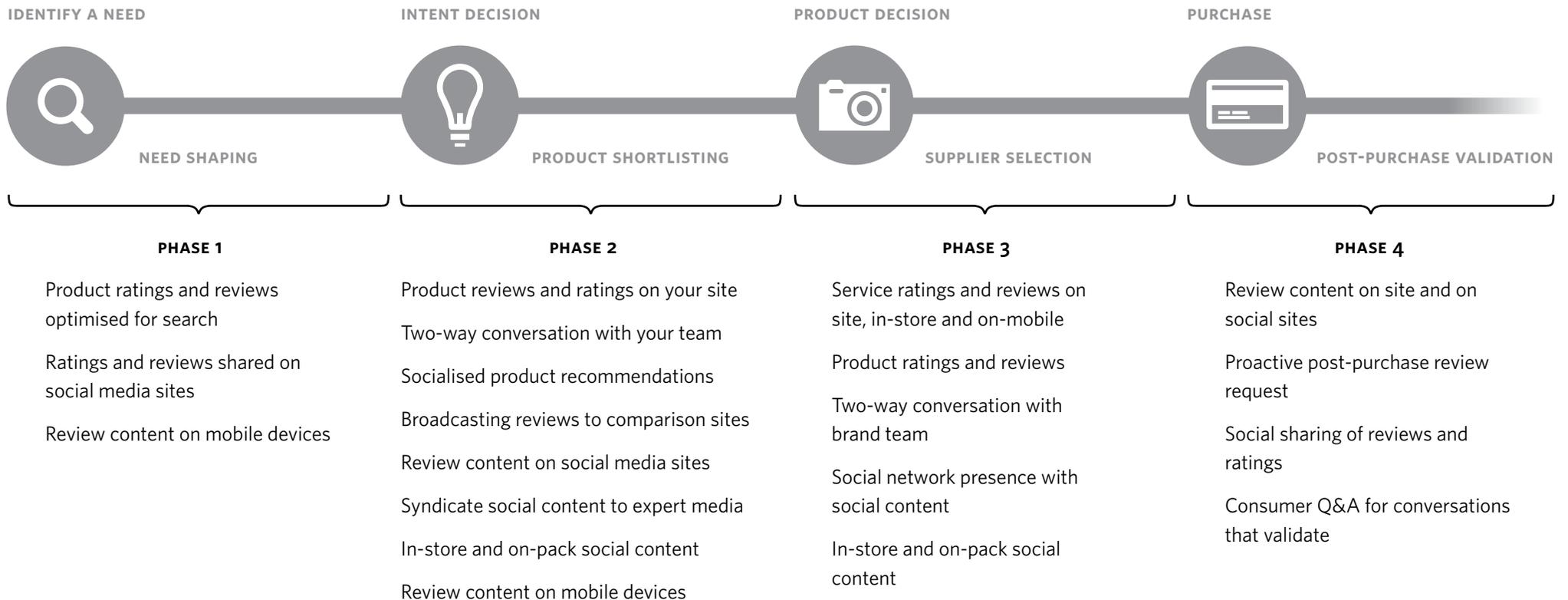
As we take a closer look at the journey within your own website, the 'funnel' metaphor can become useful again. But many retailers ignore most of this on-site funnel when deploying social commerce content - confining ratings and reviews to the product pages. The best performers spread social content throughout their websites, accelerating and injecting trust into the buying process.

- 1 LANDING PAGES**  
Keyword-rich social content boosts traffic and earns the click-through.
- 2 CATEGORY PAGES AND PRODUCT FAMILY**  
Product ratings and reviews at the category and product family level inject trust in the navigation path.
- 3 CONFIGURATION**  
Product configuration pages can be socialised with consumer Q&A.
- 4 PRODUCT PAGE**  
Product reviews mean more revenue. Product recommendations and curated conversations also play a powerful on-page role.
- 5 BASKET**  
Service reviews minimise abandonment while real-time product information advises on availability.

# Socialising the entire purchase journey

## THE IMPLICATIONS

Social commerce content can make an impact far beyond the product pages on your site - if your social commerce strategy uses this precious content everywhere.



# Go forth and socialise

If you've taken one thing away from this ebook, we hope it's this: the new purchase journey works much harder for you if you can inject social commerce content at every stage and in all spheres of influence.

We hope the Social Purchase Journey model also proves useful as you think about where you can engage shoppers and what kind of content is most effective at each step and stage.

Finally, we hope we've widened your idea of what social commerce content can be – it starts with product ratings and reviews but extends much further, into service reviews, two-way conversations and consumer forums – used on your site, across the web, on mobile devices and offline.

At Reevo, we're passionate about social commerce. But we're also eager to simplify the subject for marketers who have a lot on their plates. So do get in touch – we'd love the opportunity to take you through our unique approach (we're a social commerce aggregator not a software vendor) and show how it can help you drive new revenue.

“Social media is now a ‘wherever I am’ option, integrated into the mobile-plus-social media users’ shopping experience and habits; 27% compare or check prices via social media, 24% refer to reviews for brands/places/services, and 16% (23% of Boomers) use social media to find coupons or other discounts for local businesses.”

NEIL GLASSMAN  
SOCIAL TIMES

Figures from 'The Faces of Social Media', Knowledge Networks, 2010

# About Reevo

Reevo is Europe's leading provider of social commerce solutions. We've pioneered a unique social commerce model and provided market-leading services to over 140 major brands including Sony, Best Buy and Tesco.

Reevo helps partners achieve average sales uplifts of 18% through boosted conversion rates and increased order values, turning browsers into customers.

Our unique model sets us apart from the social commerce software vendors.

- We proactively harvest reviews and ratings instead of sitting back and waiting for them
- We aggregate and syndicate review content , so all our partners get more content for more products, faster
- We're a trusted consumer advocate, because reviews collected by a third party are more trusted
- We're a full service -we're marketing partners, we don't just install software and run for it.

"Reevo's unique service protects our brand integrity and increases our conversion rates."

SIMON MOUTZOURIS  
SONY EUROPE

# The Reevoo portfolio

To discuss putting any of these products to work, contact us.

## REEVOO MARK

The leading product ratings and reviews service that aggregates review content so you convert more.

## REEVOO REPUTATION

Our service reviews are proven to build trust and boost conversion.

## REEVOO CONVERSATIONS

Our innovative 'Ask An Owner' service with 64% of questions answered by real owners within 24 hours.

## REEVOO SPARK

Social product recommendations drive conversions and order values.

## REEVOO LAUNCH

Maximise social commerce uplift for new products from day one.

## REEVOO INSIGHT

Leverage the power of Europe's largest customer experience database.

## SOCIAL COMMERCE CATALYSTS

Our growing range of social commerce catalysts help you increase the reach and impact of your ratings and reviews:

### TRAFFIC

Weaving social commerce content into three of your best traffic sources: SEO, PPC and the social web.

### OFFLINE

Take social commerce into your stores, packaging and marketing campaigns.

### ANALYTICS

Track your social commerce activity in real time.

### MOBILE

Leveraging trusted content for your mobile strategy.

### BRAND RESPONSE

Join the social conversation to protect your brand and improve customer service.

### BROADCAST

Publicise your social commerce content across our network of publishers and comparison shopping engines.

# Get in touch

If you're interested in talking to our commercial team, drop them an email.

**E:** [sales@reevoo.com](mailto:sales@reevoo.com)

**T:** +44 (0)20 7654 0331

**W:** [b2b.reevoo.com](http://b2b.reevoo.com)

