



THE 2024 E-COMMERCE SURVEY

CROSS-BORDER E-COMMERCE

5000

CONSUMERS ON HOW THEY
E-SHOP FROM ABROAD.

HOW YOU AS AN E-TAILER CAN
SUCCEED ABROAD.

DHL ON IMPORT
AND EXPORT.

CONTENTS

- 1. We are increasingly e-shopping from other countries...**
Pages 4-6
- 2. ...But what do we buy and from where?**
Pages 7-10
- 3. Changed consumer behavior regarding purchases from foreign e-tailers**
Pages 11-22
- 4. How aware are we of the origin of e-tailers?**
Pages 23-26

SURVEY BASE, RESPONDENTS, METHOD, AND PURPOSE

DHL's E-commerce Insight 2024 is based on data* collected from 5000 e-commerce consumers via survey, proportionally distributed:

- Ages 18-78
- Across all of Sweden
- Between men and women

The response period was from March 31 to April 20, 2024.

This is how we categorize generations:

- Gen Z | 1997 - 2012
- Millennials | 1981 – 1996
- Gen X | 1965 - 1980
- Baby Boomers | 1946 - 1964

The purpose of the survey was to map out how e-shopping consumers e-shop between Swedish and foreign e-tailers, and their perception and understanding of where goods are shipped from, and where the e-tailer is based.

*THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED BY BARD BRANDING AND RESPONDENTS WERE RECRUITED VIA CINT.

WHY SWEDISH CONSUMERS INCREASINGLY E-SHOP FROM ABROAD.

You have surely read it before: Cross-border e-commerce is increasing more than ever. The interesting part is why. And how aware are we really of where we e-shop from? Clearly, “national e-commerce borders” - if they ever existed in the digital world - are being erased. This is especially true for younger generations, who are clearly driving cross-border e-commerce.

That almost half of Swedes report changes in their purchases from foreign e-tailers in the past year is remarkable. Even more striking is the evenly distributed nature of these changes - about as many increase as decrease their purchases from abroad. Perhaps is that a reflection of both economic changes and shifts in consumption habits - or the availability of products.

More exciting insights? Absolutely. When I look at the consumer survey we conducted in conjunction with this edition of E-handelskollen (The 2024 e-Commerce Survey) I see several reasons why

we are e-shopping more from other countries. Two not entirely unexpected reasons are the enormous product range and aggressive players who are skilled in social selling and other digital marketing strategies (more about this on page 22). Many consumers - especially younger ones - also do not differentiate between Swedish or foreign when e-shopping online.

As one of the world's leading logistics provider, we at DHL want to offer valuable insights for e-tailers by mapping consumer behaviors and effective strategies for international e-commerce. Below are some key takeaways that I hope can contribute new insights on the subject. You will, of course, find more detailed information further in the report.

Happy reading!

- Every other Swede has e-shopped from China in the past year.
- More than one in three Swedes have e-shopped online via social media.
- Parents and Gen Z are behind the increased sales of foreign e-shopping.
- Prices, larger product range, and aggressive advertising are underlying factors.
- Men shop for electronics four times as much as women do.
- 64% of all people with children e-shop more often than monthly.

Johan Widman
DIRECTOR ECOMMERCE

1.

WE ARE E-SHOPPING MORE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES.

But we still prefer “local”.



Swedes' purchases from foreign e-tailers are steadily increasing, reflecting global trends and the access to a larger market. Despite this, our survey shows that many Swedes still prefer to shop "locally." This section explores this ambiguity and the factors driving loyalty to Swedish e-tailers.

Four quick questions

ABOUT IMPORT AND EXPORT

WITH ANNA SWAHN - HEAD OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Does DHL see the same trends as the rest of the industry regarding cross-border e-commerce?

- Definitely! For example, I can tell you that our export parcels – i.e., the parcels that our e-tailers have sold to customers in Europe have increased by 40% since 2021.

Do you see the same trends in the rest of Europe, given that you are a global company?

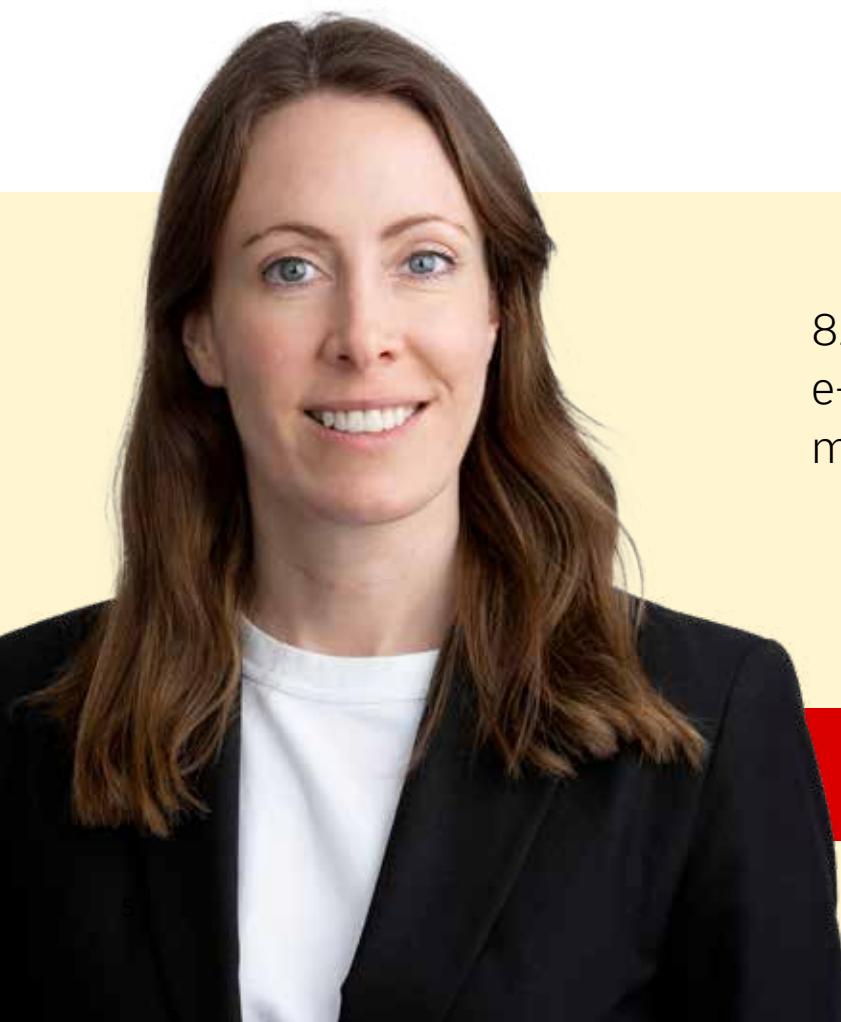
- Yes, again. If we look at the same figure for our European colleagues, export volumes have grown by 50% on average per country. This means that imports have also increased as the parcels in this flow are sent within the same DHL network.

Which market is the largest for Swedish e-tailers?

- Germany. It is also the market to which we send the most parcels (40% of all export parcels). Generally, the countries closest to us (in terms of distance and culture) are the ones that e-shop the most from us: Germany and the Netherlands, as well as our Nordic neighbors, account for 20%.

What else can you say about DHL's import flows?

- As the entire focus of our survey shows – how Swedes shop more from abroad – we see this in our own figures as well. Since 2021, our imported e-commerce parcels have increased by 75%. We are, of course, not the whole picture of how it looks on a broader scale in Sweden, but I guess that our industry colleagues have similar figures.



82% of Swedes shop from foreign e-retailers, 36% more often than monthly.

Anna Swahn
HEAD OF MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATIONS DHL FREIGHT

SWedes Prefer Swedish E-tailers

58% prefer to e-shop from Swedish e-tailers.

Despite the fact that 82% e-shop from foreign e-tailers, only 6% say they prefer it over Swedish e-tailers.

Among those who prefer foreign e-tailers, most state that it is due to price and a larger, or different, product range.

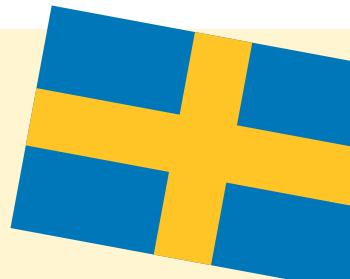
22% say it does not matter if the e-shopping site is Swedish or foreign.

25% of all people living in rural areas (without direct proximity to a medium or large city) report that they never e-shop from foreign websites.



...AND HERE'S WHY

- 1 Safety and Security:** Many express that it feels safer to e-shop domestically, primarily due to the handling of personal data.
- 2 Faster Deliveries:** Receiving goods quickly is appreciated by consumers.
- 3 Easier Returns and Complaints:** It is perceived to be easier to return products and handle complaints when e-shopping from Swedish e-tailers.
- 4 An Environmental Issue:** It is considered better for the environment to shop locally.
- 5 Consumer Rights:** Sweden's consumer laws and protections are considered strong, and this is cited as a reason for preferring Swedish e-tailers.
- 6 Support the Domestic Market:** Supporting Swedish companies and the country's economy is another common reason given. The older one is, the more important it is to support Swedish e-tailers.



2.

WHAT DO WE BUY AND FROM WHERE?

Every other Swede has e-shopped from China in the past year.

In this section, we take a closer look at which countries we e-shop from, as well as what Swedes e-shop and why they do it.





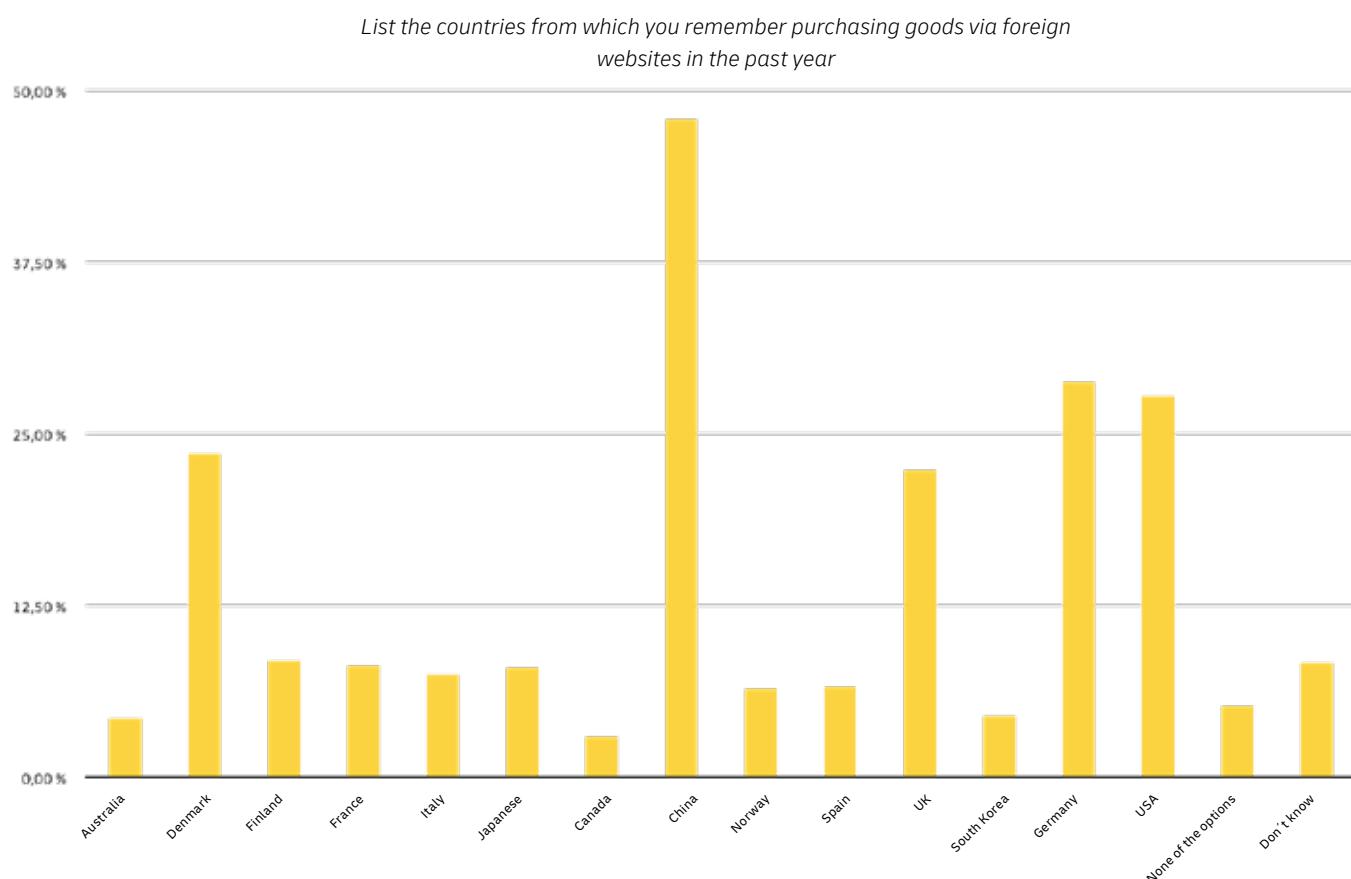
CHINA, GERMANY, USA, AND THE UK AT THE TOP!

As seen in the bar chart, four countries dominate Swedes' "foreign" purchases. Interestingly, the way people e-shop varies by age.

- A clear majority - every other Swede (48%) reports having e-shopped from China in the past year.
- One-third of Gen Z has e-shopped from the USA in the past year.
- Older generations, baby boomers, e-shop to a greater extent (37%) from Germany compared to 24% from Gen Z.



Every other Swede has e-shopped from China in the past year.

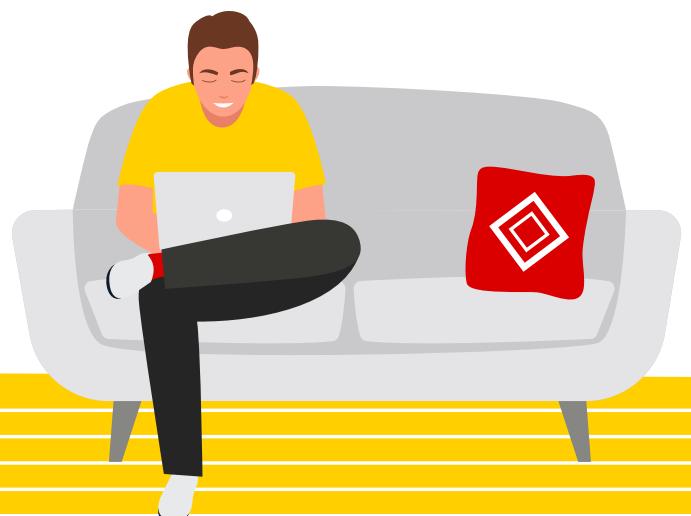


HOW WE SHOP LOCALLY COMPARED TO INTERNATIONALLY

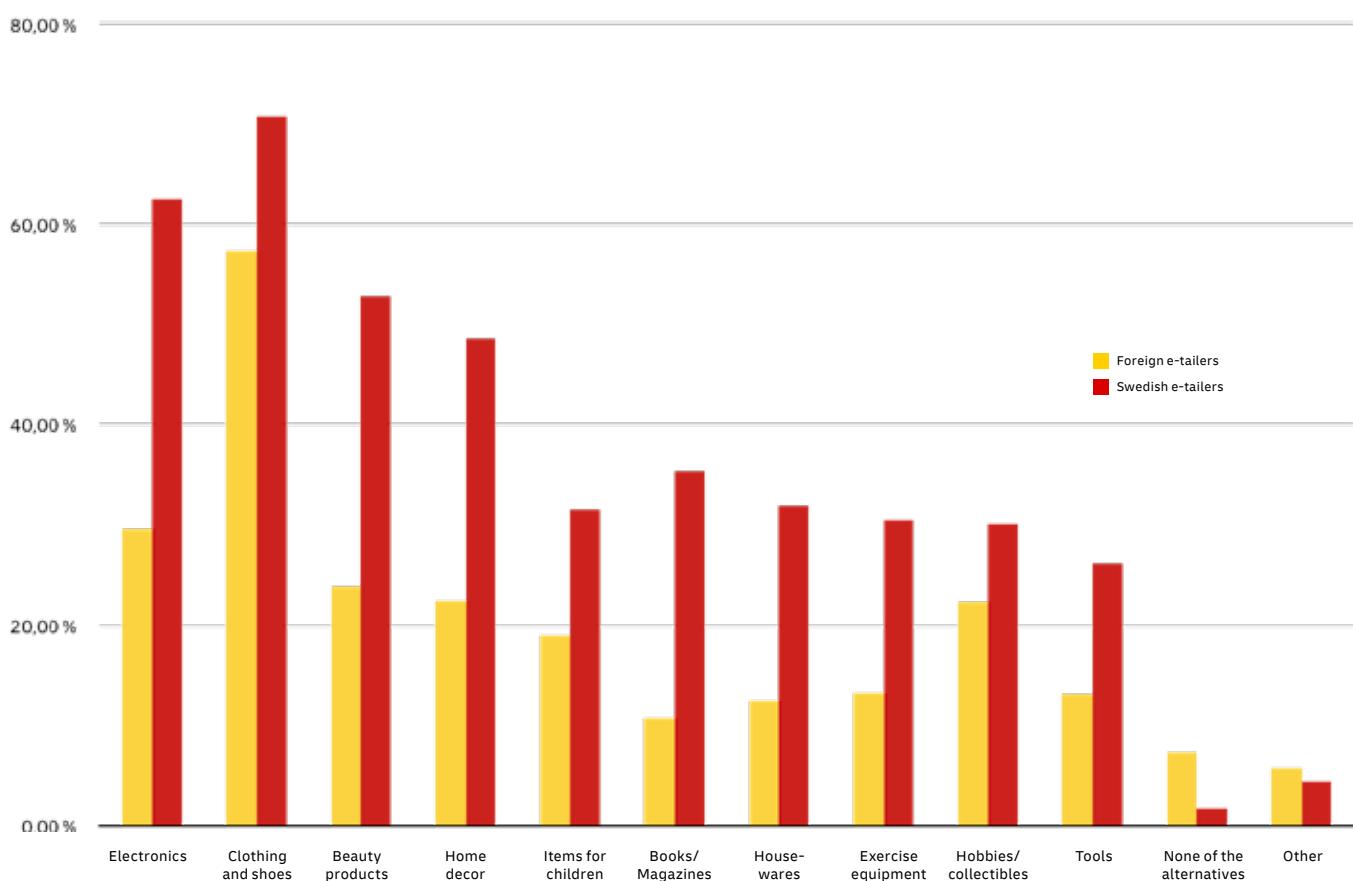
Clothing and shoes are the category we consume the most. It is also the category within which we e-shop the most from foreign e-tailers (almost as much as from Swedish ones).



Men and women do not differ in the number of electronics purchases from Swedish e-tailers.



Primarily men stand out when it comes to e-shopping electronics from abroad. Men e-shop electronics from foreign e-tailers almost four times as much as women.





WHAT WE BUY FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

When it comes to the countries we e-shop the most from, clothing is the most common category regardless of the country of origin. From China and the USA, it is primarily electronics that are purchased. This includes everything from smaller electronic parts and toys to specific devices like mobile phones, chargers, and headphones.

In addition to clothing and electronics, the following stand out for the various countries:



- Home decor items and decorative objects.
- Various types of toys.
- Hobby items - e.g., craft materials, paint brushes, and sewing supplies.
- Electronics in the form of tools and entertainment items.



- Books, often specified as special types or specific genres.
- Car parts for vintage cars or specific vehicle parts for both mopeds and cars.
- Tools - everything from household tools to more technical tools.
- Shoes. Often athletic shoes or specific brands, such as Nike or Converse.



- Vinyl records, music, car parts, and cosmetics.
- Records and other items related to pop culture and music from the UK.
- Car parts, specifically parts for British car brands. Even in the used markets, many seek various rarities related to the British car and automotive industry.
- Cosmetics purchased from brands perceived as unique to the UK.

3.

CHANGED CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR REGARDING FOREIGN E-SHOPPING

What are the driving forces behind how we e-shop from other countries? And has everyone really increased their consumption, or just a certain group?

Here, the driving forces behind the recent changes in Swedes' use of foreign e-shopping platforms are explored. This section aims to understand why some consumers have increased their consumption from abroad while others have decreased it.



SWedes' DIVIDED SHOPPING BEHAVIOR: INCREASED OR DECREASED CONSUMPTION OF FOREIGN E-SHOPPING

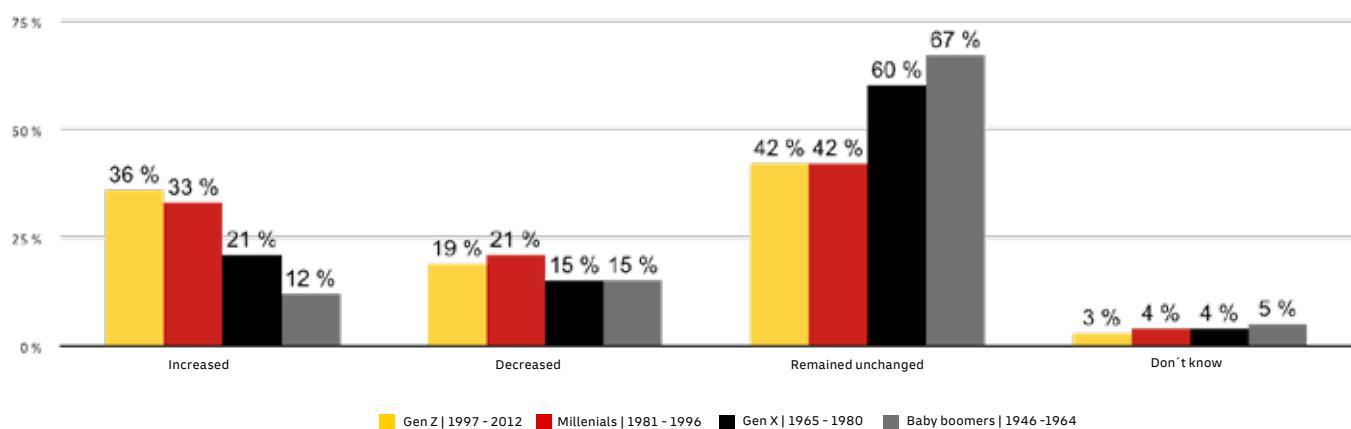
Nearly every other Swede reports that their shopping behavior from foreign e-tailers has changed over the past year. Remarkably, the changes are almost evenly distributed – roughly equal parts of the population have increased their purchases from abroad as those who have decreased them.

This split in shopping behavior underscores how individual and varied the response to global events can be and highlights the importance for commerce to understand these shifting patterns to better meet consumers' needs.



Gen Z and Millennials have changed their shopping habits the most.

Do you feel that your purchases of goods/products from foreign websites have increased, decreased, or remained unchanged over the past year?





WHY WE ARE ATTRACTED TO E-SHOP MORE FROM ABROAD

Consumers are primarily attracted by lower prices and greater availability from foreign e-tailers, but also by unique products that are not available in the Swedish market. It is also clear that we are increasingly exposed to international advertising.

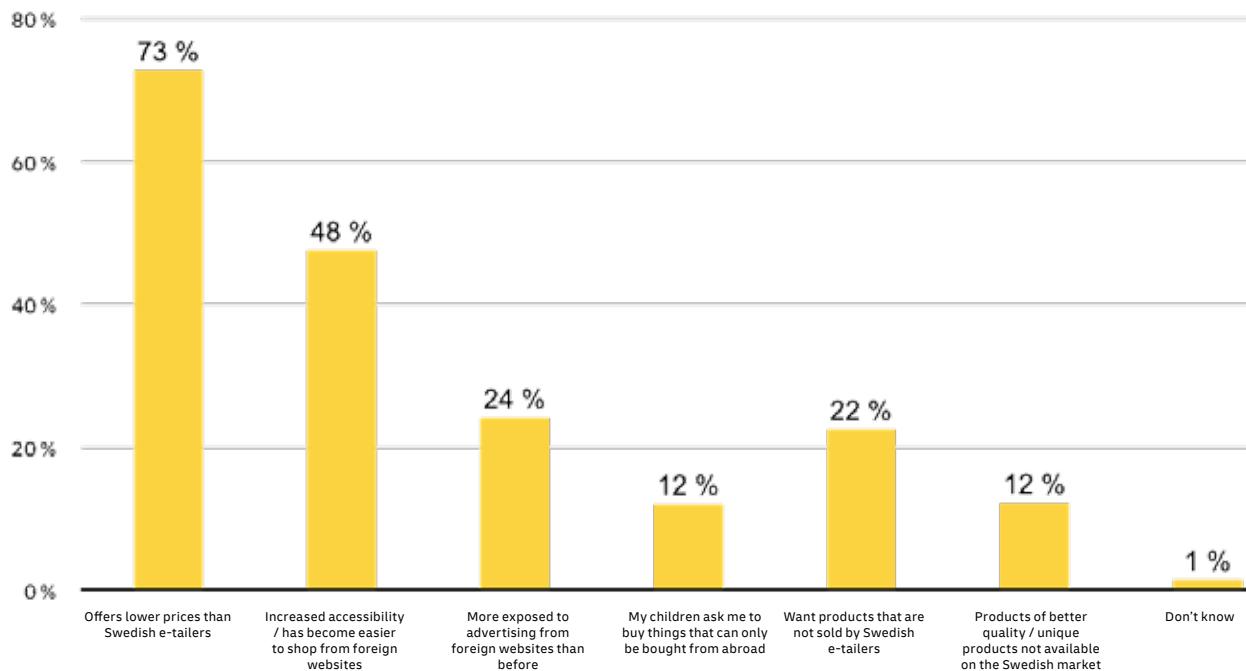
Accessibility and Convenience: It has become easier to e-shop from other countries. An observation is that people from rural areas do not experience the same increased accessibility: Only one in four people from rural areas compared to one in two from larger cities believe that accessibility has increased.

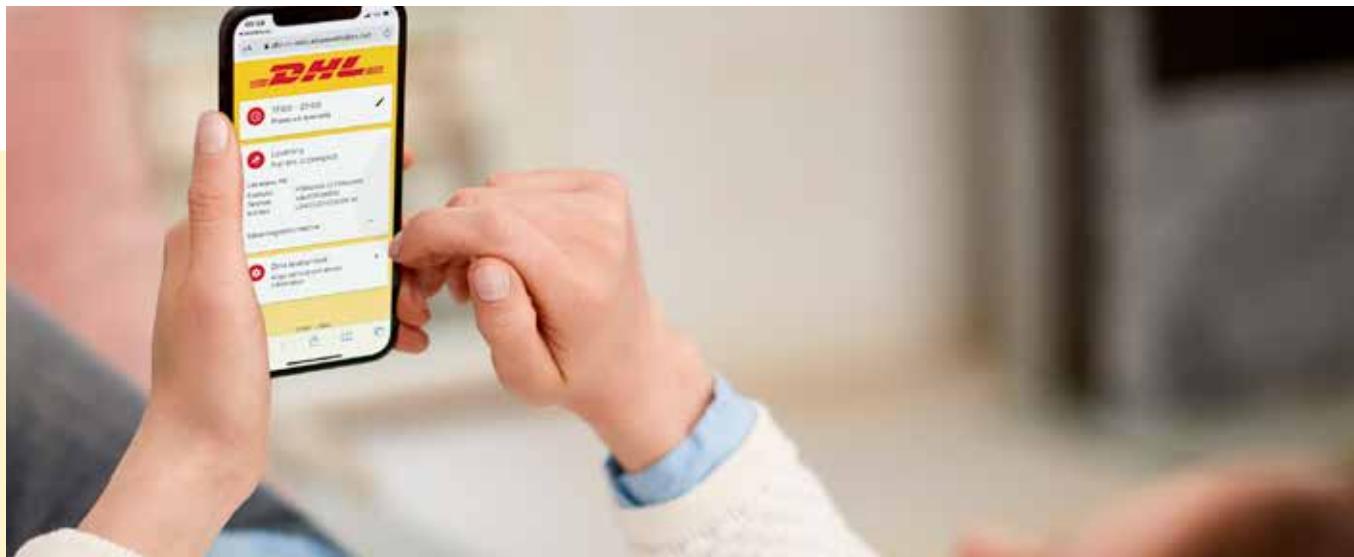
Advertising: A quarter of respondents feel - more than before - an increased exposure to advertising from foreign e-tailers.

Price: Many consumers choose to buy from foreign websites because of the lower prices. Interestingly, women report this reason significantly more than men.

Unique Selection: A quarter of consumers want products that are not sold by Swedish e-tailers and therefore turn to foreign websites to find these products.

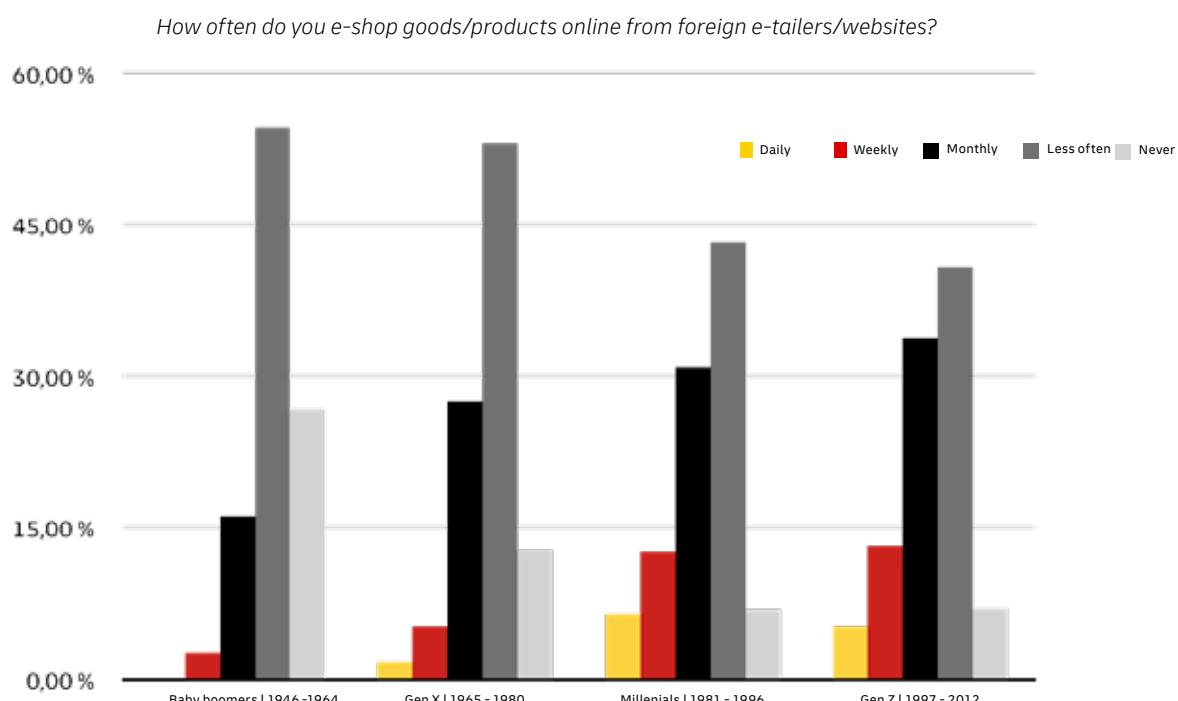
What are the reasons for your purchases of goods/products from foreign websites increasing over the past year?





GEN Z DRIVES PURCHASES FROM FOREIGN E-TAILERS...

Gen Z reports to a greater extent than other generations that they e-shop items such as clothing from foreign e-tailers - one in five do so on daily or weekly basis.



PARENTS DRIVING THE INCREASE IN E-SHOPPING FROM ABROAD

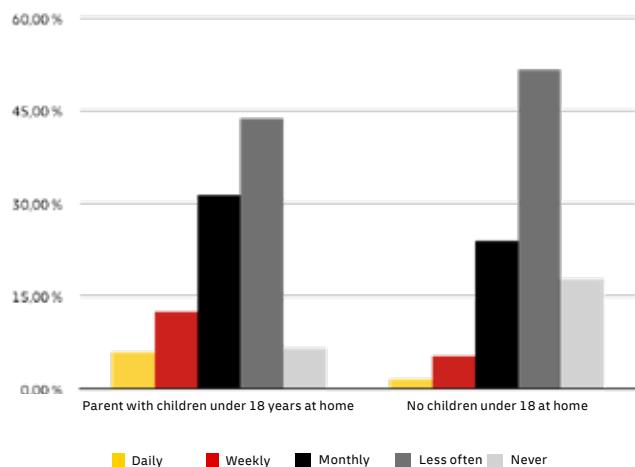
Parents tend to e-shop from foreign e-tailers to a significantly greater extent, and also report that their purchases from these e-tailers have increased over the past year.

64% of all parents with children at home e-shop more often than monthly...

26% is the same figure for consumers without children.

40% of all parents report that their e-shopping consumption (from other countries) has increased.

How often do you e-shop goods/products online from FOREIGN e-tailers/websites?



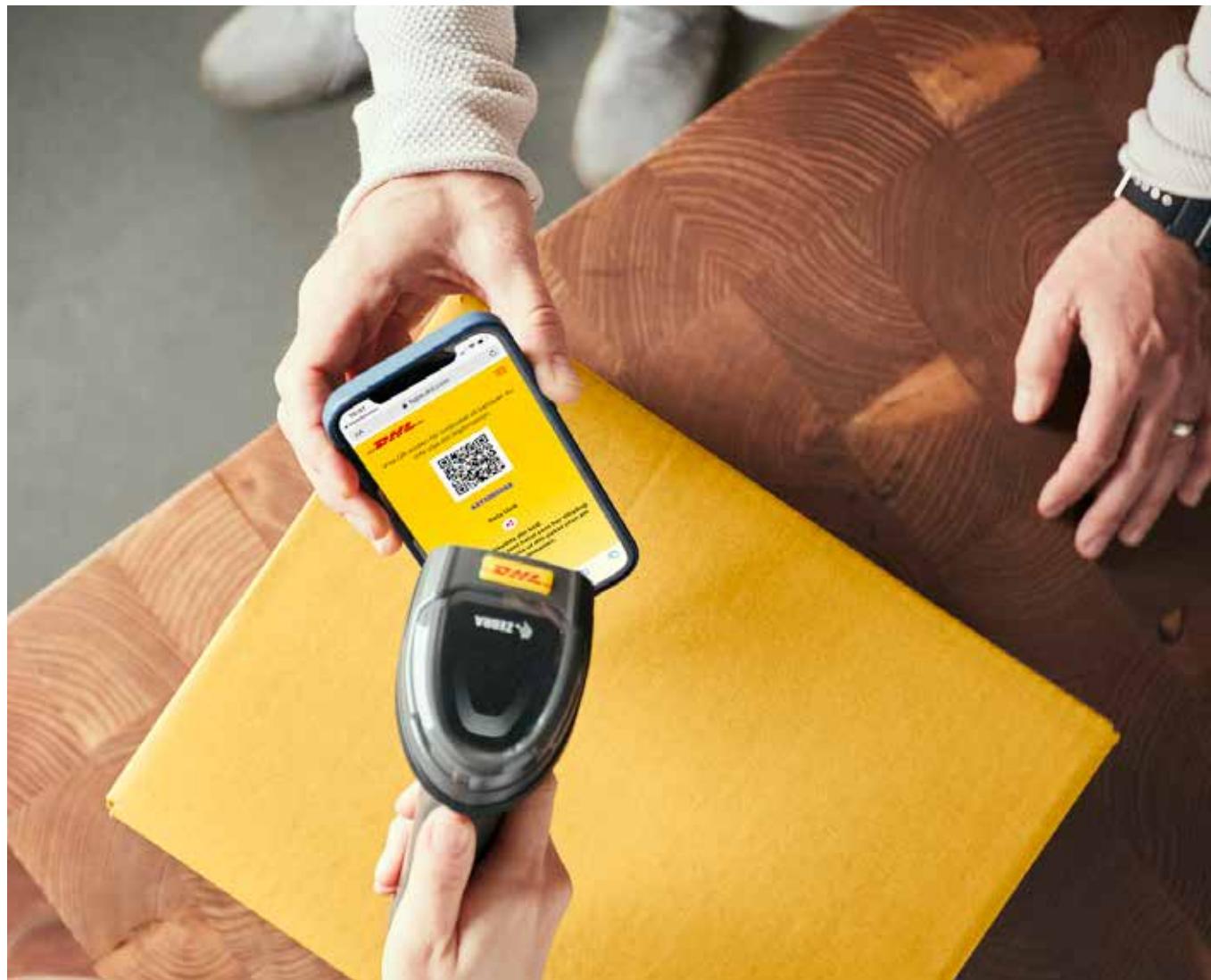
Many parents report that their children primarily want various types of toys and clothing - often those related to characters and figures from games and/or movies.

WHY MANY AVOID E-SHOPPING FROM ABROAD

The economic downturn, the exchange rate of the Swedish krona, and greater awareness of purchases are the most common reasons why many e-shop less from foreign e-tailers.

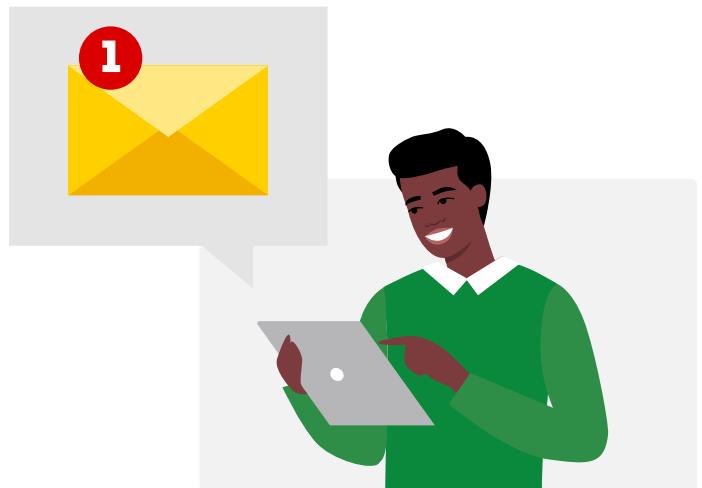
Women report more often than men that their purchases have generally decreased due to the economic downturn or having less money to spend.

Baby Boomers indicate to a greater extent than others that the exchange rate of the Swedish krona is the reason their purchases from abroad have decreased over the past year.

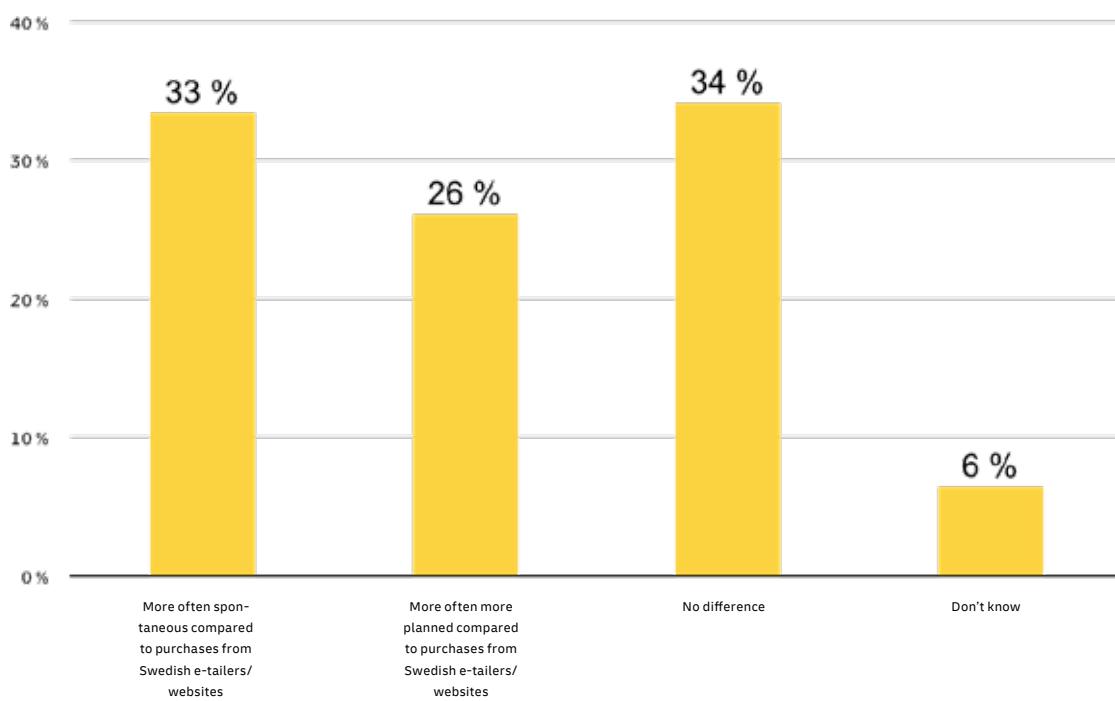


MORE THAN HALF SHOP MORE SPONTANEOUSLY OR PLANNED FROM ABROAD

- 60% state they e-shop more spontaneously or planned from abroad.
- One-third feel their e-shopping purchases are more often spontaneous.
- 25% state instead that the e-shopping purchases are more planned.
- Mainly Generation Z states that their e-shopping purchases differ (more planned or spontaneous) depending on whether the e-tailer is Swedish or foreign.
- Parents indicate more frequently (than parents without children under 18) that their e-shopping purchases are more spontaneous.



Are your e-shopping purchases from FOREIGN websites more often spontaneous or planned compared to e-shopping purchases from SWEDISH e-tailers/websites?



WHY MORE PLANNED?

1 Longer Delivery Time

Many mention that they need to plan their purchases more carefully due to the longer delivery times from abroad.

2 More Research and Control

Consumers feel the need to carefully check the company, product, and terms when they e-shop from abroad. They are also more cautious due to the perceived higher risk of errors.

3 Price and Cost of Shipping and Customs

The price is often a significant factor, including costs for shipping and potential customs, which requires more planning.

4 Harder to Return

Concerns about difficulties in returning goods abroad motivate more care and planning. More from the Baby Boomers and Generation X indicate this as an obstacle to e-shopping goods from abroad.



WHY MORE SPONTANEOUS?

1 Price and Offers

Buyers are attracted to lower prices and discounts, which is often a major reason for unplanned purchases.

2 Advertising and Marketing

Many consumers feel that they see more advertising from foreign actors, which can attract impulse e-shopping purchases.

3 Unique Selection and Availability

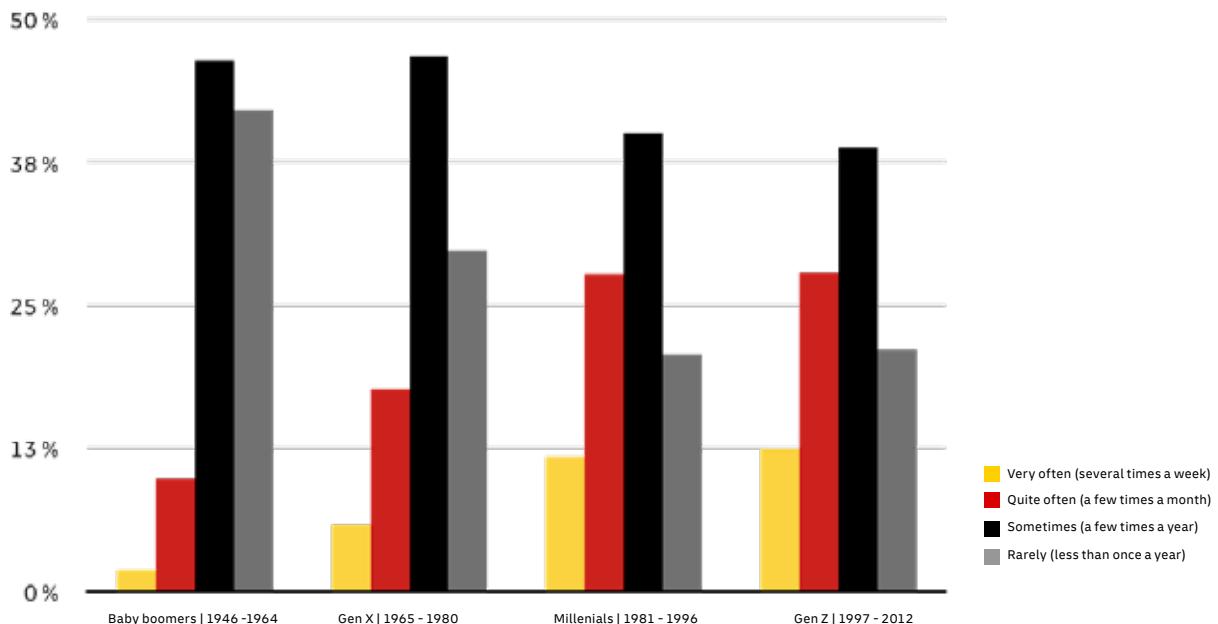
Products that are not available in Sweden or are unique to foreign markets attract spontaneous e-shopping purchases. Unusual or rare items not found in Swedish stores can encourage impulse e-shopping purchases.



SOCIAL SELLING DRIVES SPONTANEOUS -SHOPPING PURCHASES

More than one in three Swedes has e-shopped directly via social media.

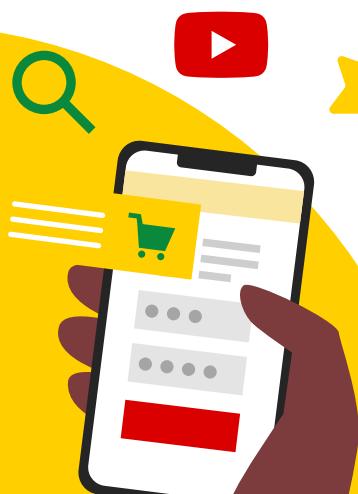
How often do you make your online purchases directly through social media platforms?



- Consumer responses in the survey reinforce the image of social selling as a growing force in e-commerce.
- More than one in three Swedes has e-shopped directly via social media.
- Advertising and marketing are seamlessly integrated into users' feeds on these platforms.
- Spontaneous purchases are becoming more common, especially among younger generations.

- Half of Millennials and Generation Z have e-shopped directly via social media platforms.
- Fewer than one in four Baby Boomers have tried e-shopping directly via social media.
- Slightly more women than men have e-shopped via social media.

**EVERY OTHER
MILLENNIAL AND GEN Z
HAS SHOPPED DIRECTLY
VIA SOCIAL MEDIA.**

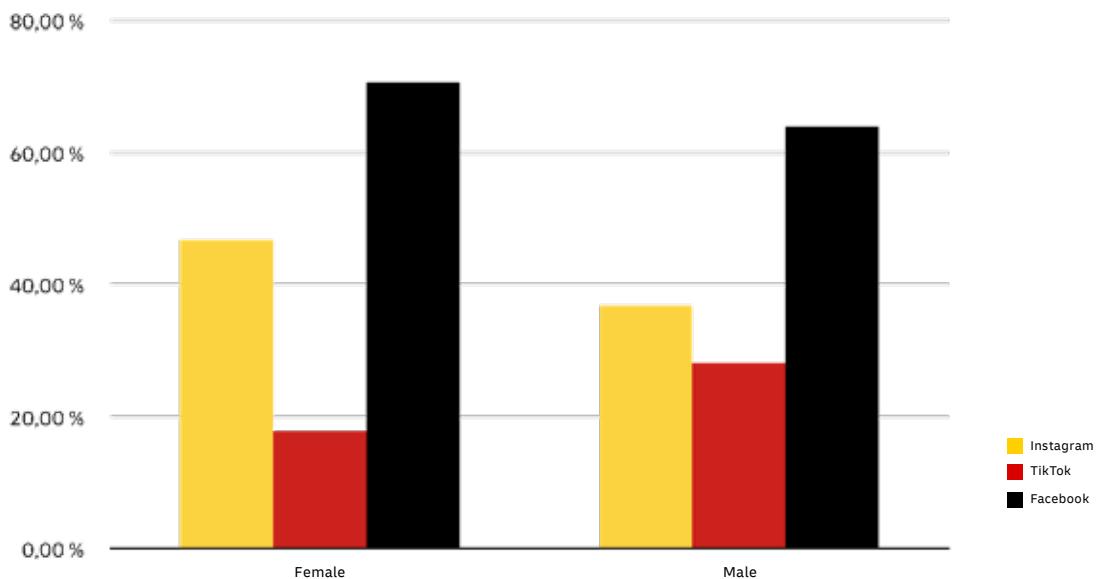


HOW WE SHOP FROM SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

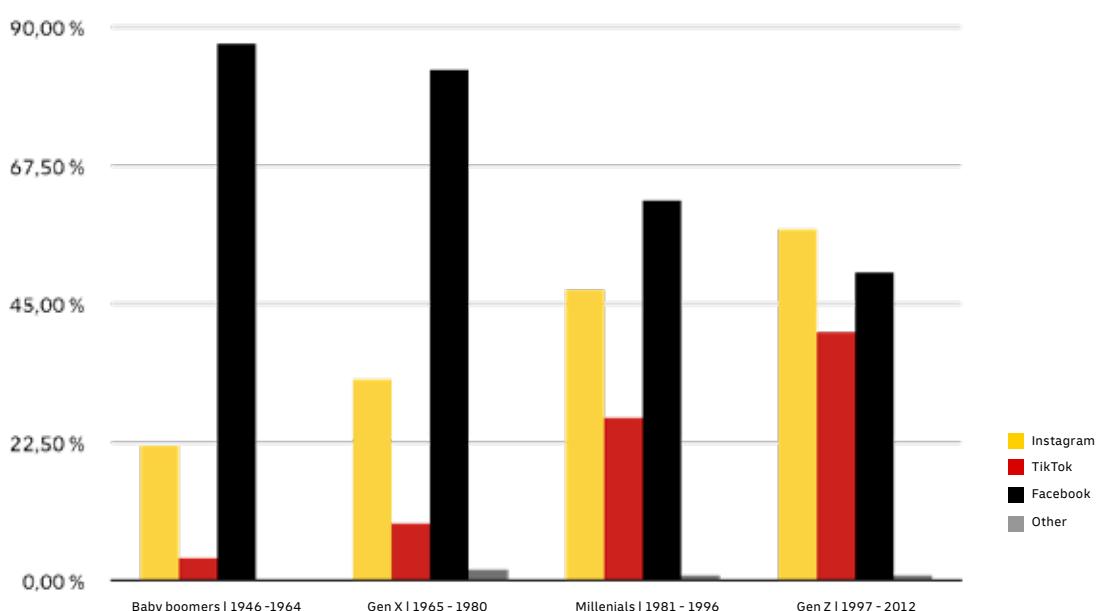
We e-shop frequently through advertising on social media. Instagram and Facebook dominate, although TikTok is rapidly increasing among the younger generation.

- Men have tested e-shopping from TikTok to a greater extent than women.
- Women e-shop more frequently via Facebook and Instagram.
- People from large or medium-sized cities have tested e-shopping via TikTok at twice the rate.

Which social media platforms have you e-shopped directly from?



Which social media platforms have you e-shopped directly from?

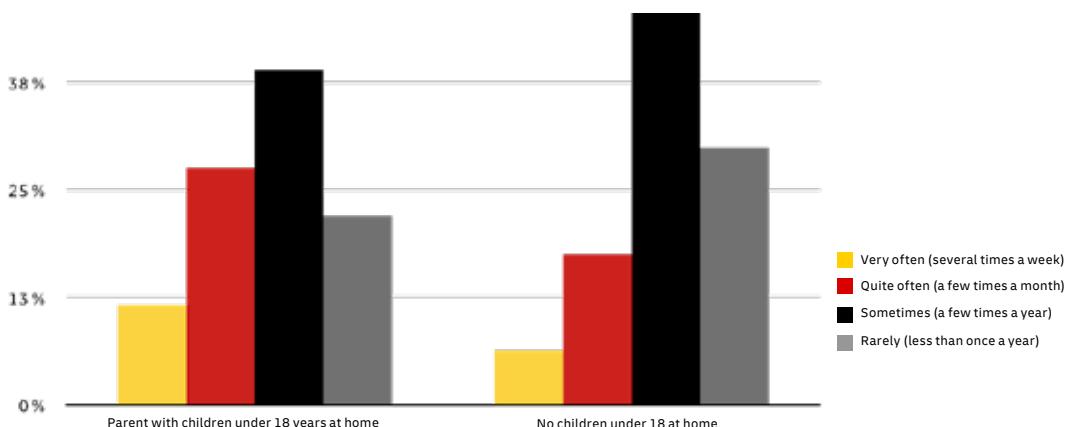


PARENTS E-SHOP MORE OFTEN VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

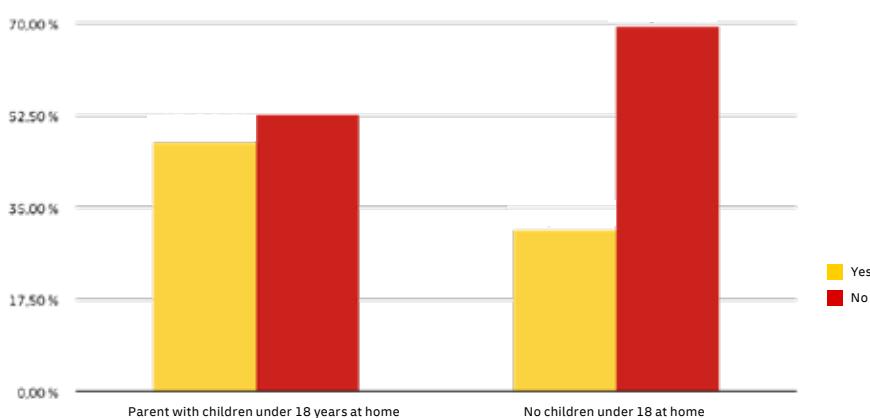
Parents with children under 18 years are significantly more likely to e-shop directly via social media than those without children at home. 58% of parents confirm that they have made purchases directly via social media compared to 24% of consumers without children at home. This suggests that this demographic group is more active - or alternatively more exposed to advertising - on social media. One could also argue that this is a group that, with a busy daily life, shops more "online." As many younger children use their parents' phones, it can also be speculated that they are more exposed to various types of advertising.



How often do you make your online purchases directly through social media platforms?



Have you made e-shopping purchases directly via various social media platforms, such as Instagram or Facebook?



THE SECRET BEHIND DIGITAL SUCCESS

EXPERT PETER JUNDIN ON HOW TO SUCCEED WITH YOUR E-TAILING

How should one think about social selling?

Social selling is not sales, advertising, or marketing on social media as one might think, but rather how you create and nurture customer and potential customer relationships through social media. Less direct sales - more conversation and sharing of valuable information, which in turn will create sales later on - both directly and indirectly. The goal is to create credibility and Top-of-Mind, which further generates recommendations and shares to new networks and potential customers. Once you have a working structure, the next step is to sponsor the articles and content that perform best (e.g., the most shares) to get even greater reach and engagement.

Explain why certain e-tailers often appear first in search (Google Shopping). What can a strategy look like?

- They have conducted a thorough keyword analysis within their business areas and verticals, where they have also optimized their product landing pages - meta descriptions, titles, headings (H1/H2/H3), body text, images (alt tags), Rich snippets / Rich results (e.g., customer ratings) according to the keyword analysis. They have also worked on creating their own unique product descriptions to avoid falling under "Duplicate content" in Google's eyes.

- Work efficiently on optimizing and fine-tuning product feeds according to the keyword analysis within their verticals, such as Clothing and Fashion, both for generic searches (e.g., "Dress") and long-tail searches ("Blue dress" / "Blue dress in size medium"). It is important that the same information found in the product feed is also present on the product landing pages.
- Use high-quality product images, which you A/B test against each other to maximize click-through rates.
- Work with campaigns/promotion feed and promotion ID under the promotions tab in Google Merchant Center - discount x%/discount code within a certain period/countdown. This increases the conversion rate and reduces the cost per conversion.
- Many of the companies that appear more frequently also have a significantly larger search budget. Having a high display frequency within, for example, clothing and fashion can cost several million SEK per month for a market like Sweden, and that's just for SEM.

Peter Jundin
CEO, MEMRY DIGITAL



4.

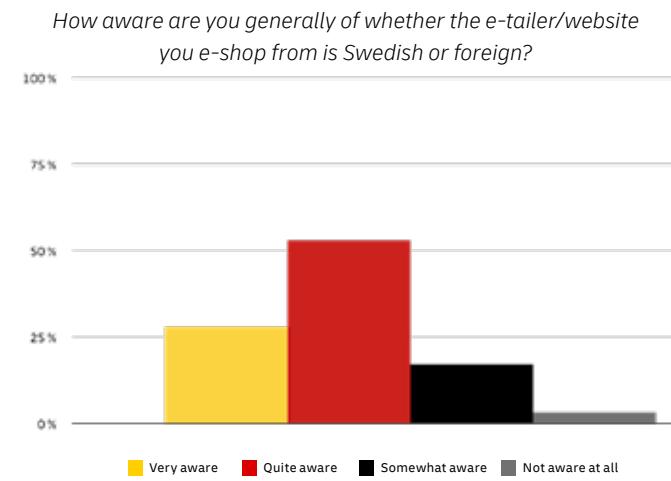
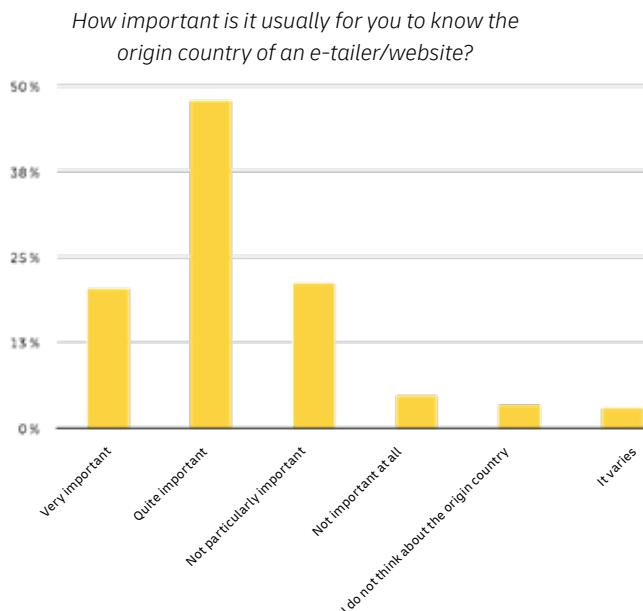
HOW AWARE ARE WE OF THE E-TAILER'S ORIGIN?



A deep dive into consumers' understanding and reasoning about the origin of e-tailers.

WHERE WE SHOP FROM IS IMPORTANT, BUT FEW ARE AWARE

68% state that it is very or quite important to know the e-tailer's origin country, but only 28% feel they are very aware of where they e-shop from.



As online shopping continues to grow and becomes increasingly cross-border, it can be difficult for consumers to fully understand where they are e-shopping from, even when they e-shop from what appear to be local e-tailers. This brings several important aspects to consider:

Origin Country and Manufacturing Country

A product sold on a Swedish e-commerce platform can be manufactured in a completely different country. Even if the platform appears to be local, its goods may be purchased from international wholesalers or directly from manufacturers in other countries.

Global Platforms versus National Stores

Amazon and eBay are global platforms that enable sales from many different countries and sellers. Many consumers might not reflect on or be aware that these platforms are not solely "American stores," but rather marketplaces where

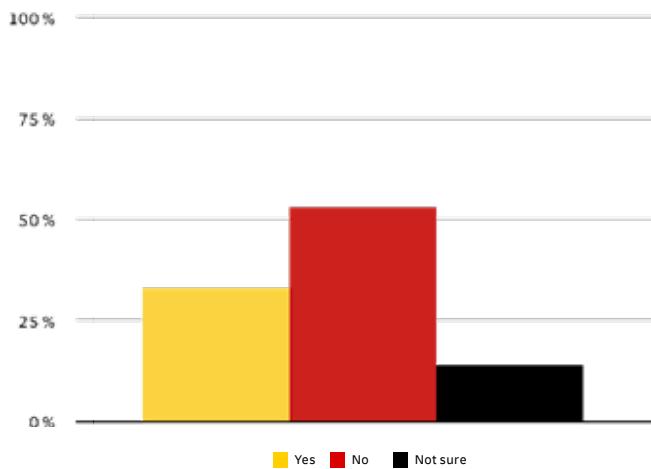
sellers from around the world can offer their goods. This can partly be explained by the fact that both companies are American and have a strong presence and branding in the USA.

Confusion about the Origin of E-commerce Companies

When it comes to companies like Shein, Temu, and Wish, which are registered in China, it is interesting that many categorize them as American.

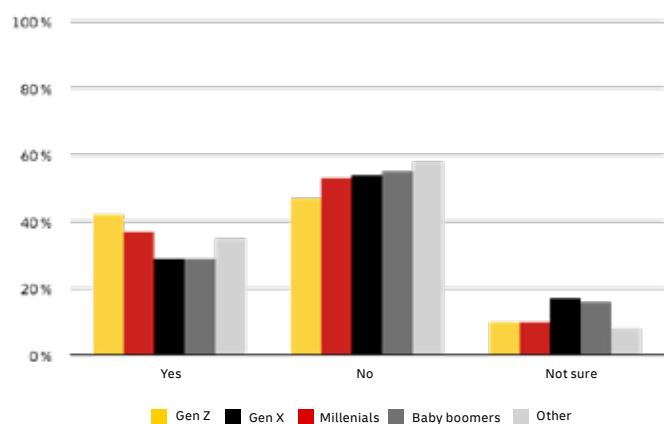
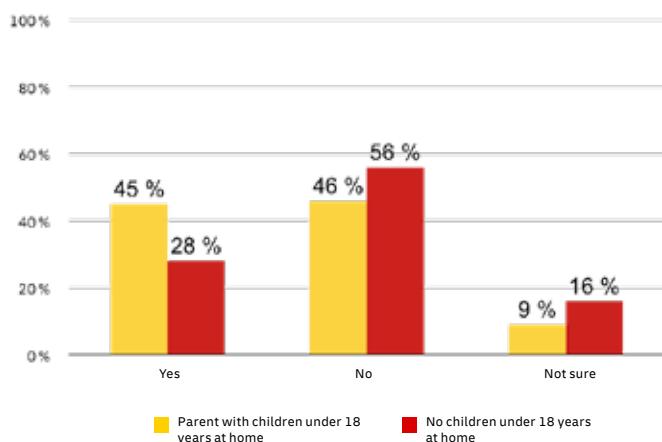
ONE IN THREE HAS SHOPPED UNDER THE FALSE IMPRESSION THAT AN E-TAILER WAS SWEDISH

Has it ever happened that you shopped from a website under the impression that it was Swedish, only to later discover that it was a foreign-based e-tailer?



MOST COMMON FOR PARENTS AND GEN Z TO MISUNDERSTAND WHERE THEY HAVE E-SHOPPED FROM

Has it ever happened that you shopped from a website under the impression that it was Swedish, only to later discover that it was a foreign-based e-tailer?



HOW TO SUCCEED AS AN E-TAILER IN A NEW MARKET

Whether you as an e-tailer come from the digital world or from a physical store and want to establish yourself in a new market, there are a number of challenges. But, of course - also opportunities. **Andreas Thieme**, senior partner at Steerlink, and **Linda Lazlo**, senior advisor at Business Sweden, answer our questions about how to succeed with your launch in a new market.

Where do you start?

Linda: If you are completely unknown in a market; assume that you need to build your brand from scratch. And in every market you enter, it's important to consider the cost, time, and effort required to create awareness around your offering.

Set up an export strategy with the following considerations:

1. Visibility in the right and relevant channels.
2. Understanding customers' behavior patterns and preferences, and...
3. ...Instilling trust so that local customers feel confident in purchasing your products.

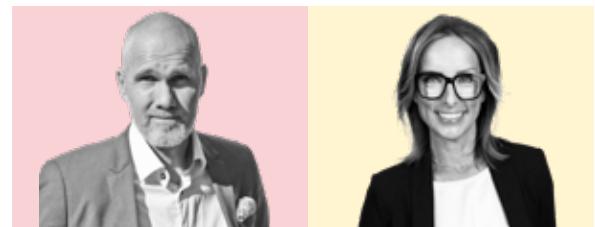
Andreas: Understanding the chosen geographical market is critical. It involves creating a deeper understanding of customer behaviors, preferences, and local conditions. This requires seeking information from various sources and building local contacts to get a comprehensive picture. My advice to companies looking to create a global presence is not only to focus on expanding but also to create customized and locally relevant customer experiences. This requires realistic expectations and careful planning to succeed on a global scale in e-tailing.

How important is it to have a logistics partner to create customized customer experiences?

Andreas: Collaborating with a strong logistics partner is crucial for offering customizable and flexible experiences for customers from the start. It also provides the opportunity to maintain simplicity in your own production process while delivering high-quality services to customers.

What is the biggest risk in expanding your e-commerce business?

Linda: Opening an e-commerce store to the entire world can be risky if you are not aware of the laws and regulations that apply in all markets. For example, it can become problematic if it turns out that customs duties and fees are disproportionately high upon import, causing the customer to refuse to pick up the goods. Another scenario could be failing to fill out export and import documents correctly or missing other import requirements, causing the goods to get stuck in customs. The customer does not receive their goods, and it costs both time and money. At a certain point, local registration, VAT reporting, or compliance with product requirements may be required.



How can you approach reaching new markets?

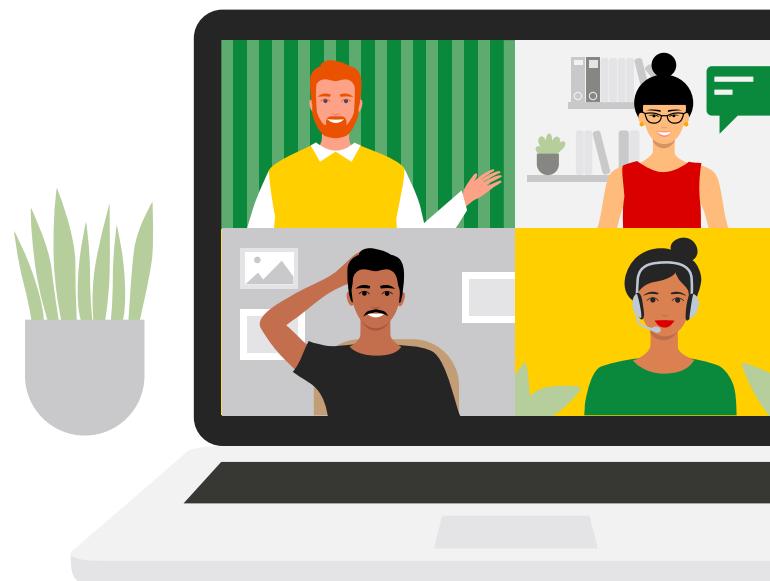
Linda: You don't need to go all out from the start and begin localizing for multiple markets directly. It can often be good to start with a so-called light expansion, i.e., maybe begin with a global .com site in English that is geographically limited to a few potential markets (preferably stay within the EU initially until you learn how it works).

How do you view the development of e-commerce as a sales channel today?

Andreas: E-commerce is now a mature and well-developed sales channel in most markets. Although it may be tempting to invest in standout logistics interfaces or performance, reliable solutions with stable functionality and high recognition form the foundation for a successful expanded establishment.

What opportunities do you see for cost-effective management as companies grow?

Andreas: As the company grows and volumes increase, there are various opportunities to explore for managing costs effectively. This can include evaluating different last-mile solutions or leveraging benefits such as consolidated shipping to streamline national distribution.



Do you have questions about this report?

Email: se.marketing@dhl.com

Do you have other questions, or want to
speak with a salesperson?

Call DHL Customer Service: 0771-345 345

www.dhl.se/freight