

The Right Time for Retailers to Target Home Movers



Advertisers in markets as diverse as DIY, home appliances and financial services could achieve substantial sales growth by **targeting their communications at home movers**, new research suggests. Two studies present different ways of identifying house buyers and their spending patterns before and after the purchase.

Online retailer eBay has compiled insights into home movers' shopping behaviour by cross-referencing its own customer database with the Land Registry, which records every home purchase in the UK. This enables eBay to match addresses and identify which of its users have moved home at any given time. It then uses this data to analyse their spending patterns anonymously and to provide advertisers with actionable insights for use on the eBay platform.

First Buying Signals

The company claims there are various 'first buying signals' that indicate that a shopper is preparing to purchase a home. According to the research, kitchen appliances are one of the first things that home purchasers think about, with an average sales increase of 27% for cookers, ovens and hobs in the three months before eBay customers buy a home, compared with the previous month. Meanwhile, furniture sales rise by 28% and sales of storage solutions by 25% in the three months prior to a purchase.

Robert Bassett, head of UK and EU multinational advertising at eBay, believes the data is indicative of how people adjust their spending habits around particular life

events. “More and more we’re talking about the idea of ‘shopping moments’ and how these significant events in people’s lives are the point at which they make fundamental choices about brands,” he says.

“We are already on top of maternity – we know the patterns of purchase that people have before they have a child – but moving house is also a big one.”

Time Dictates Behavior

The data also suggests that purchasing behaviour changes according to the length of time before the move. For example, there is a spike in people buying practical products just before they move home, with sales of curtains and blinds rising by an average of 332% among eBay customers in the month leading up to their house purchase. In addition, sales of lighting fixtures rise by 241% and sales of baths surge by 222% in the same time period.

Sales of other items spike once people have completed the purchase and moved home. This includes a rise in people buying garden furniture after moving, with sales of outdoor benches up 293% between two months before and six months after the home purchase. Sales of bricks and stones also rise by 67% six months after a home purchase, suggesting that people look to complete DIY tasks or improve their new gardens after moving.

Bassett says that advertisers need to think carefully about the types of messages they aim at homebuyers. “It’s the time to help them to buy – that’s the operative phrase,” he says. “You don’t have to sell to them, you have to help them to buy. They are already in this big surge of purchasing.”

When People Move

Separate research from Royal Mail Data Services also pinpoints the times of the week and year when people are most likely to move home. From an analysis of data provided by Royal Mail customers who took out its redirection service, the study shows that Friday is by far the busiest day, accounting for 27% of all home moves. This is followed by Monday (17%) and Thursday (15%).

Summer is the busiest time for moving, with June, July and August accounting for 28% of all moves. Jim Conning, managing director at Royal Mail Data Services, says that knowing when people are moving home can help brands to gain new

customers or prevent them from losing existing ones.

“Utilities companies are a good example,” he says. “They have big challenges around knowing where and when people are moving, so that they can sort out payments of final bills and so on. Some of the largest utilities are beginning to talk to us about [identifying] early warning signs for retention, to stop the pattern of movers moving into properties and inheriting another utility provider, and not bothering about whether they had a great relationship with the previous provider.”

More People Are Renting Than Ever Before

The Royal Mail report also points to the swelling ranks of ‘generation rent’, as the lack of affordable housing prompts more and more people to rent rather than buy. This trend, combined with a potential slowdown in the housing market following Brexit, could negatively effect the purchasing power of consumers moving home.

However, Conning suggests that as renting becomes the norm for large parts of the population, spending patterns in the rental sector will start to reflect existing patterns among homeowners, as people look to improve and upgrade their rental properties. Regardless of Brexit, he also urges brands to look carefully at their data to identify home mover behaviours and improve customer engagement.

“Whatever happens in the housing market, there is a huge opportunity for organisations to understand what’s going on in their customers’ lives around property, so that they can market to them in an appropriate and permissioned way,” he says.

By: Jonathan Bacon

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