

Online retailers moving abroad: differences and similarities compared to the Netherlands

Experienced Dutch online shoppers have higher expectations of their delivery services than other European shoppers

Amsterdam, October 2021 – The Netherlands is a very e-commerce savvy country, with more and more Dutch e-commerce entrepreneurs eyeing the markets abroad as good opportunities to expand their business. And it is. However, a good look at local expectations from the delivery of online purchases can save costs, prevent mishaps and create opportunities, according to a European 2021 survey among online consumers by Seven Senders.

Delivery, wherever and whenever we want it – or not?

Seven Senders, in cooperation with YouGov, held a survey among 8602 European online shoppers to ask them about their preferences for online shopping and delivery. The survey results show the Dutch customers' eCommerce savviness as well as some big differences between Dutch online shoppers and their counterparts abroad. Food for thought for Dutch eCommerce shops wanting to take the leap abroad.

When one looks at preferences of Dutch online shoppers, it shows to what level of flexibility eCommerce shops operating in the Netherlands are accustomed to. The Dutch customers expect quick and easy delivery and, if possible, some level of control. Out of all the European respondents, the Dutch are most eager to receive their packages in the evening. And they know convenience comes at a cost: 39% would pay between EUR 1 and EUR 4 for evening delivery. In other countries, things are different. On average, 64% of online shoppers are not willing to pay for evening delivery. And the British certainly do not (76% are not willing to pay a penny).

Another difference between customers in different countries is the expected flexibility and level of control the consumer expects of online retailer deliveries. Offering preferred delivery date/time is a popular service in the Netherlands. Almost half of Dutch online shoppers used this service at least once in their last five orders. And if you want to do it really well, delivery services offer the option to change the time and place where a delivery is being made until only a short time before planned delivery.

“Dutch customers are very much used to online shopping and this shows in their preferences and expectations”, says Dr. Johannes Plehn, Co-Founder and Managing Director from Seven Senders. “The online retailer who can meet and even surpass these expectations with its delivery service, has a big advantage over its competitors.”

Be aware of international differences and expectations

But the fact that us Dutchies require maximum flexibility in delivery services, does not mean an online retailer shipping abroad needs to offer those same services everywhere.

Dr. Johannes Plehn continues: “It is good to understand the cultural differences in what online shoppers expect from their online retailers. That way, you prevent that you are paying for services that are not expected in a certain country.”

Online retailers also do not have to be scared that international orders take longer to arrive. European customers in almost all countries are prepared to make allowances for delivery times when ordering from abroad. 87% will accept a longer delivery time when they know the store operator doesn't have a local branch in the country.

"Customers do expect international delivery to take a couple of days longer than national orders take", the Co-Founder from Seven Senders continues. "In general up to three to four days longer. The interesting result here is that, especially in Southern European countries, customers are sometimes even willing to pay extra for a quicker delivery from abroad. These country-by-country differences show it is imperative for an online retailer wanting to move its services abroad, to really dive into expectations of local customers and select matching delivery partners."