



2025 Holiday

# Shopping Trends

for Candle, Soap, and Home  
Fragrance Makers





# Welcome to CandleScience's 2025 Holiday Shopping Trends Report for candle, soap, and home fragrance makers!

As we approach another holiday season, this report shares the latest insights to help you navigate an ever-evolving retail landscape. Its focus is exclusively on shopping trends—the behaviors, preferences, and expectations—that shape how people discover, evaluate, and purchase handmade products like yours during this time of year.

While some trends may feel familiar from previous years, the data reveals consumer behaviors have matured from emerging patterns into confirmed realities.

For example, the 2025 consumer presents a complex picture where a majority plan to cut back on spending. Yet they're also driving record growth in areas like mobile commerce and Buy Now, Pay Later services. This paradox reveals that they may not necessarily spend less, but they are being more intentional about how, when, and where they spend.

For makers, this environment offers challenges and significant opportunities. And businesses that are adapting to these trends are seeing the rewards.

So let's dive into five trends that are likely to define holiday shopping in 2025 and learn how you can leverage each one for your handmade business.

- 1. Mobile-First Shopping Is a Must**
- 2. Buy Now, Pay Later Becomes Standard**
- 3. A Preference for Shopping Small**
- 4. Social Commerce Takes Center Stage**
- 5. Value-Seeking Leads to Smarter Spending**

*Want to see the product trends we identified for this fall and holiday season?  
Read the [CandleScience Fall & Holiday 2025 Trend Report](#).*

Trend 1:

# Mobile-First Shopping Is a Must

**53%**

Mobile devices were projected to account for 53% of online holiday sales in 2024.

**10%**

Mobile sales were up 10% year-over-year as of July 2024.

**77%**

In the personal care category, which includes bath and body products, purchases on mobile devices represented 77% of online sales.





## What This Means for Your Handmade Business

Shopping on mobile devices has moved from being a convenient option to the primary way consumers discover and make many of their purchases.

This shift is significant because mobile shoppers in the personal care sphere—and by extension the home goods space—are already primed to buy products like yours.

The visual nature of candles, soaps, and body products translates well to smaller screens, especially when the shopping experience is optimized for these devices.

Businesses succeeding in 2025 are more than mobile-friendly. They're mobile-first and are designing the online shopping experience with mobile users as the primary consideration.

## What You Can Do Now

### **Test your site's mobile experience regularly.**

Use your own phone or tablet to navigate your online store. Can you easily browse products, read descriptions, and complete checkout? If not, your customers can't either.

### **Optimize product images for mobile viewing.**

Ensure **product photos** are high quality, but with a reduced file size to load quickly on phones and tablets. Consider vertical orientations that work better on phones whenever possible.

### **Streamline the mobile checkout process.**

Make shopping easier and more pleasant by reducing the number of steps required to complete a purchase. Enable features like autofill for shipping information and one-click payment options.



Trend 2:

# Buy Now, Pay Later Becomes Standard

BUY NOW,  
PAY LATER!



ADD TO CART

## 37%

In 2025, 37% of holiday shoppers plan to use Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) services, up from 29% in 2023.

## 20%

BNPL options increase conversion rates by 20%.

## 54%

Most telling: 54% of BNPL users say they wouldn't have made their purchase without the installments option.





## What This Means for Your Handmade Business

BNPL has moved from a nice-to-have option to an expectation, especially among Millennial and Gen Z shoppers who represent a whopping 80% of BNPL transactions.

For small businesses that offer non-essential products, BNPL can make the difference between a browser and a buyer.

It removes the psychological barrier of a larger upfront cost that allows customers to justify purchases with more manageable, and typically interest-free, payments.

## What You Can Do Now

**Integrate BNPL options into your checkout process.**

Services like Afterpay, Klarna, and Shop Pay Installments are free and simple to add to most e-commerce platforms.

**Promote BNPL availability in your marketing.**

Don't be shy about sharing that you offer this option! Actively communicate that customers can "pay in 4 installments" in product descriptions, social posts, and in marketing emails.

**Create product bundles that meet BNPL minimum spending requirements.**

Some BNPL options can only be used on particular purchase minimums. Be sure to offer products that reach these thresholds, such as gift sets or bundles that start at \$35-50.



Trend 3:

# A Preference for Shopping Small

**84%**

84% of consumers express a desire to support small businesses during the holidays.

**87%**

87% say they're more likely to return to these businesses throughout the year after making a holiday purchase.

**59%**

59% of consumers are willing to spend more for eco-friendly products, with handmade businesses often positioned as sustainable alternatives to mass-market options.





## What This Means for Your Handmade Business

The Shop Small movement that began in 2010 has evolved from a feel-good concept to a genuine driver of purchases. Consumers are increasingly seeking alternatives to mass-market products and are willing to pay higher prices for handcrafted goods.

The key is that they often want to connect with a business's story and understand what makes it, and its products, special.

Businesses that are most successfully capitalizing on this trend are authentically connecting with shoppers about why being small makes them different, and better.

And after the holidays, take advantage of the 87% return rate by creating follow-up strategies for holiday customers. Use **email sequences** that introduce them to your full product line and notify them when favorite items are restocked.

## What You Can Do Now

### **Tell your story prominently.**

Share what drives your passion for the products you make, and what makes your process unique. Put this narrative front and center on your website and **social media**.

### **Highlight the handmade advantage.**

Emphasize the benefits that small businesses like yours provide—whether that's superior-quality ingredients, unique fragrances, customization options, or personalized service.

### **Create exclusive experiences.**

Offer services that big retailers simply cannot match like custom scent options, behind-the-scenes workshop tours, or individually tailored product recommendations.

### **Participate in small business events.**

Engage with Small Business Saturday, local markets, and community partnerships where there are natural opportunities to connect with customers who are actively seeking small business alternatives.



Trend 4:

# Social Commerce Takes Center Stage

**24%**

24% of U.S. consumers say they plan to make purchases directly through social media platforms.

**81%**

In February 2024, 81% of U.S. sales on TikTok Shop came from returning customers.

**89%**

89% of consumers say social media influences their holiday purchases, with 13% more likely to make purchases directly within social media apps this year.





## What This Means for Your Handmade Business

Social commerce is the new window shopping. Customers can see your products in use, learn about your process, and complete a purchase without ever leaving the app.

Among Gen Z, influencer accounts have more impact on purchase decisions than traditional retail and brand accounts, while Gen Alpha trusts influencers as much as family and friends for product recommendations.

The key to understanding social commerce is that it's about storytelling, community building, and creating content that naturally leads to purchases, as opposed to straightforward selling.

At the same time, the businesses winning in this space treat their social media accounts as sales channels, and not just a marketing tool.

## What You Can Do Now

### **Set up shoppable features across the social platforms you use.**

Enable Instagram Shopping, Facebook Shops, and TikTok Shop if it's available in your area. These features allow customers to purchase directly from your posts and stories.

### **Partner with micro-influencers.**

Focus on influencers in relevant niches for better engagement and conversion rates.

### **Create behind-the-scenes content.**

Show off your candle- or soap-making setup and the craftsmanship that goes into your products. Visual storytelling content like this performs well on TikTok and Instagram—and builds trust with viewers.

### **Encourage user-generated content.**

Create branded hashtags and invite customers to share photos and videos of their unboxing experience or them enjoying your products. Repost this content to build community and provide social proof.



Trend 5:

# Value-Seeking Leads to Smarter Spending

**69%**

In 2025, 69% of consumers plan to cut back on spending.

**11%**

The University of Michigan consumer sentiment index was down 11% in April 2025, reaching its lowest level since June 2022.

**9.7%**

Despite spending concerns, consumers are willing to pay a 9.7% “sustainability premium” when purchasing products they perceive as higher value.





## What This Means for Your Handmade Business

Value-conscious consumers aren't simply looking for the cheapest products, they're seeking the best value. This includes unique products they can't find anywhere else, experiences that feel special, and items that provide clear benefits relative to their cost.

For handmade businesses, this trend is advantageous because your products offer what mass-market alternatives cannot:

uniqueness, quality craftsmanship, and a personal story.

Shoppers are willing to spend when they perceive distinct benefits and qualities. Your job is to communicate your unique value proposition—such as **signature scent blends** or sustainable ingredients—and how your handmade products deliver superior value compared to mass-market alternatives.

## What You Can Do Now

### **Offer a range of accessible price points.**

Offer smaller items or travel sizes in the \$10–15 range alongside more premium products.

### **Offer free shipping.**

Set minimum order thresholds that encourage larger purchases while covering your shipping costs—many customers will add items to their cart to qualify for free shipping.

### **Create limited edition collections.**

These seasonal or specialty products with limited availability increase perceived value.

### **Bundle products strategically.**

Package complementary items together in gift sets at price points that provide clear savings compared to individual purchases. For example, pair a candle with matching soap and room spray at a 15–20% discount versus buying them individually.





# Connect With Us

The 2025 holiday season offers significant opportunities for candle and soap makers willing to adapt. While consumers are spending more cautiously, they're actively seeking the high-quality, handmade products you create.

By implementing mobile-first experiences, flexible payments, compelling storytelling, social commerce, and clear value communication, your business can connect with customers who want to support makers like you.

Here's to your success!

**The CandleScience Team**

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Visit [candlescience.com](https://candlescience.com) for candle making, soap making, and flameless home fragrance supplies, along with business guides and inspiration.

## Follow

Follow us on YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.

## Contact

Contact our Customer Support team so we can help with any of your making questions.

## Connect

Connect with other makers in our private Facebook group *Candle Making for Everyone: A CandleScience Community*.