

For millennials, planning new purchase is in the bag

By Joe Incollingo GLOBE CORRESPONDENT MAY 20, 2016

Sleek design. Spacious interior. Leather trim. There's a lot to consider when shopping for their next new handbag, but it seems millennials put more effort into comparing options and look for different features than their mothers and grandmothers.

According to data from market research firm The NPD Group, 41 percent of women between 18 and 34 said they start planning their purse purchase more than a month ahead of time, putting them more in the realm of cars than of clothing.

"The millennial customer is shopping for handbags very differently than other generations," said Rohan Deuskar, CEO of fashion tech company Stylitics, a partner on the study, in a statement. "For example, this customer starts with specific product attributes, not brand, when looking for her next handbag, and invests more time and research in her purchase than brands and retailers realize."

Because they focus less on brand names, the study concluded, millennial women are pushing up emerging and smaller brands, rounding out the handbag market into something more meritocratic.

It's no small shift, either. Last year, the study found, US millennials spent \$11.5 billion on handbags, up 2 percent from 2014. While older generations saw bigger bumps in handbag buying habits, it stands to reason that since millennial buyers will be buying for years to come, brands of all sizes will soon see the opportunity to unpack the best of what they can offer.

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