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DELIGHTING SHOPPERS

Reduce Friction and Noise to Make Checkout Painless

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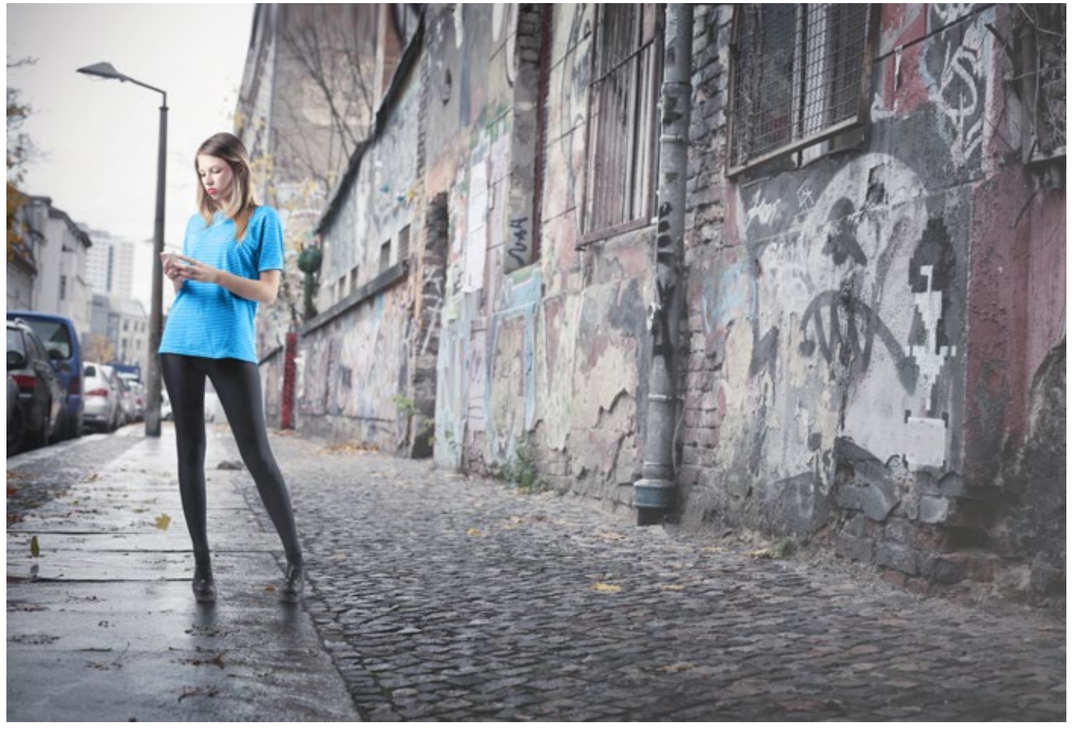
MERCHANT GOALS

The goal of every merchant is conversion, or simply sales. The more the better right? Every merchant should have specific targeted goals that are relevant to their own product offerings, consumer base and industry. These might be higher average order value, more daily volume, customer retention, cross selling, financing and the list goes on. But regardless of your goals one thing remains true for every retailer:



If your customer can't checkout you cant reach your goal. This guide will help identify some obstacles that consumers face and how this effects the bottom line and what can be done to improve these conditions.

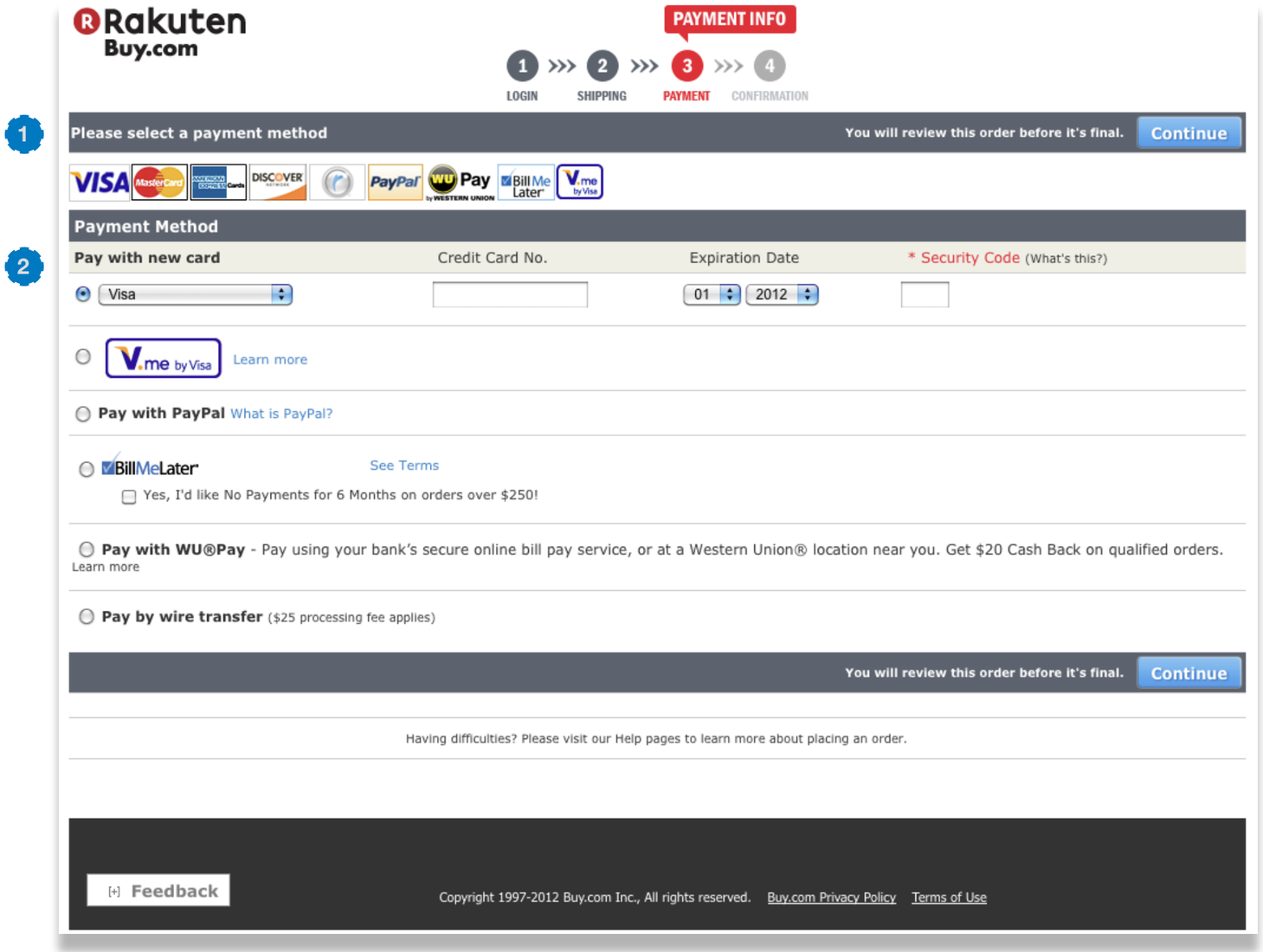
CONFUSION IN THE CHECKOUT EXPERIENCE

There are a multitude of hidden problems in every checkout flow. These range from text and link color issues, foreground and back ground contrast ratios between content, labeling, construction and design of action elements, data entry fields and more. This guide will address the **visual noise** within the checkout space and the ramifications of overwhelming your consumers with it at a time when you should be simplifying the experience. This sounds like simple enough tip to adhere to but often times merchants over estimate the value of the various elements they put into their checkout flows. Elements like social sharing icons, security and virus protection icons, better business bureau logos, feedback buttons, banner adds, checkout buttons and navigation components. All of these elements in combination add to the confusion consumers experience as they try and navigate their way down your checkout flow. Often times this cacophony of visual noise inhibits a streamlined checkout experience and creates confusion and fatigue for shoppers at a time that should become simplified and guiding in an effort to ensure conversion.

This merchant has made paying for your item a difficult task by providing too many options. Consumers can easily become confused as to what is being asked of them when they arrive on this payments page.

Exp 1- The instruction text "Please select a payment method" is in the first grey header bar. It appears that this is a label that pertains to the content directly below it. Yet the small payment icons are not clickable. Users are first led to believe that they should select a payment method from the icons then click on the continue button to the right in the grey bar area. Also this text is smaller than the label in the next grey bar below it. After trying this method the customer realizes that they need to move down to the section below to select their payment source. It is not clear what selecting the radio buttons will accomplish on this screen.

Exp 2 - Here they are accosted by a large and confusing selection of payment options. Since the Visa credit card option is pre-selected the customer is more likely to use this payment method because the choice has been made for them and determining what the other payment options are will require too much time and energy to discover the difference and value between V.me and Visa much less any of the others. But already we have confused the customer and slowed down their ability to checkout quickly and painlessly.



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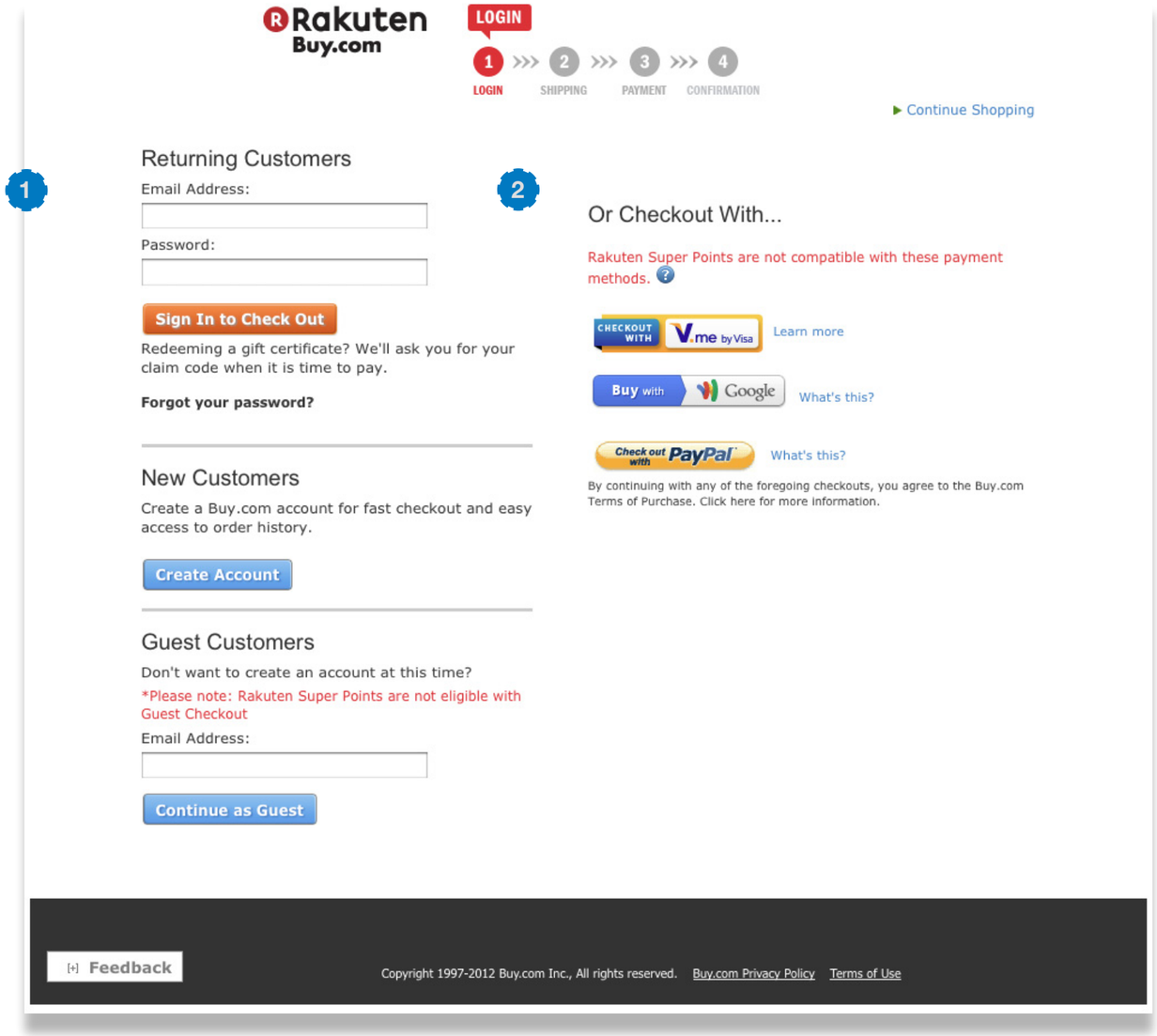
WHAT CUSTOMERS REALLY WANT

Its important to keep the customer and their needs in mind when we design experiences for them. We also need to ensure that our experiences are driving those customers down the conversion funnel in a manner that is both ideal for them and aligned with our own goals as merchants. Clarity, usability, conversion, engagement and simplicity all need to be balanced in these experiences. The further down the purchase funnel a customer moves the more mindful we need to be when customizing our experiences for them in order to facilitate a conversion. Payment choices should be an easy, quick and painless function within every checkout. It should be easier than shopping in stores where there is a pre-conceived notion of what is expected of a shopper after their purchases have been rung up by a cashier. Customers don't expect to have to think about this at great length and many preform the activity completely out of habit. Conversion should be a guiding principal as we craft our checkout experiences online. This perhaps is easier said than done, but all too often we place this burden on our customers and expect their desire to complete the sale as a fail-safe to the hurdles we run them through.

This sign in page appears in the checkout flow before the page shown in the previous example.

Exp 1- Here again the customer is confronted with too many checkout options. The time it takes to comprehend all of the different methods of checkout is too long and will surely lead to cart abandonment. If you were presented with this many options in a store you would probably throw up your hands in frustration. Customers want to pay and get out. Online shoppers do not have time to spend contemplating payment options. The buttons grab your attention before the section headers so you tend to read the buttons first and the copy related to the buttons afterwards.

Exp 2- Studies have shown[1] that 2 column form layouts in checkout flows are less effective than 1 column views. This analysis means that it is harder for customers to recognize the information on a page and discern what actions need to happen in order to successfully progress through the purchase. In this example customers must comprehend the different options on the left column and then discern and weigh them against the options on the right. In total there are six different options to choose from in order to pay for their purchase. Online and offline the only thing a customer wants to know is which option will allow me to do this as quickly and painlessly as possible.



“AIDING AND ABETTING

is a provision in United States criminal law, for situations where it cannot be shown the party personally carried out the criminal offense, but where another person may have carried out the illegal act(s) as an agent of the charged, working together with or under the direction of the charged party, who is an accessory to the crime.”[3]

Merchants provide products, engaging experiences and a way and means to acquire them. But all to often we are committing serious offenses when it comes to helping our customers easily pay for their purchases. Many studies have shown[2] that customers don’t want to spend any more time than they have to filling in forms, providing information and paying for their purchases. In fact studies have shown that decreasing the amount of information you ask customers to input directly relates to higher conversion rates[3].

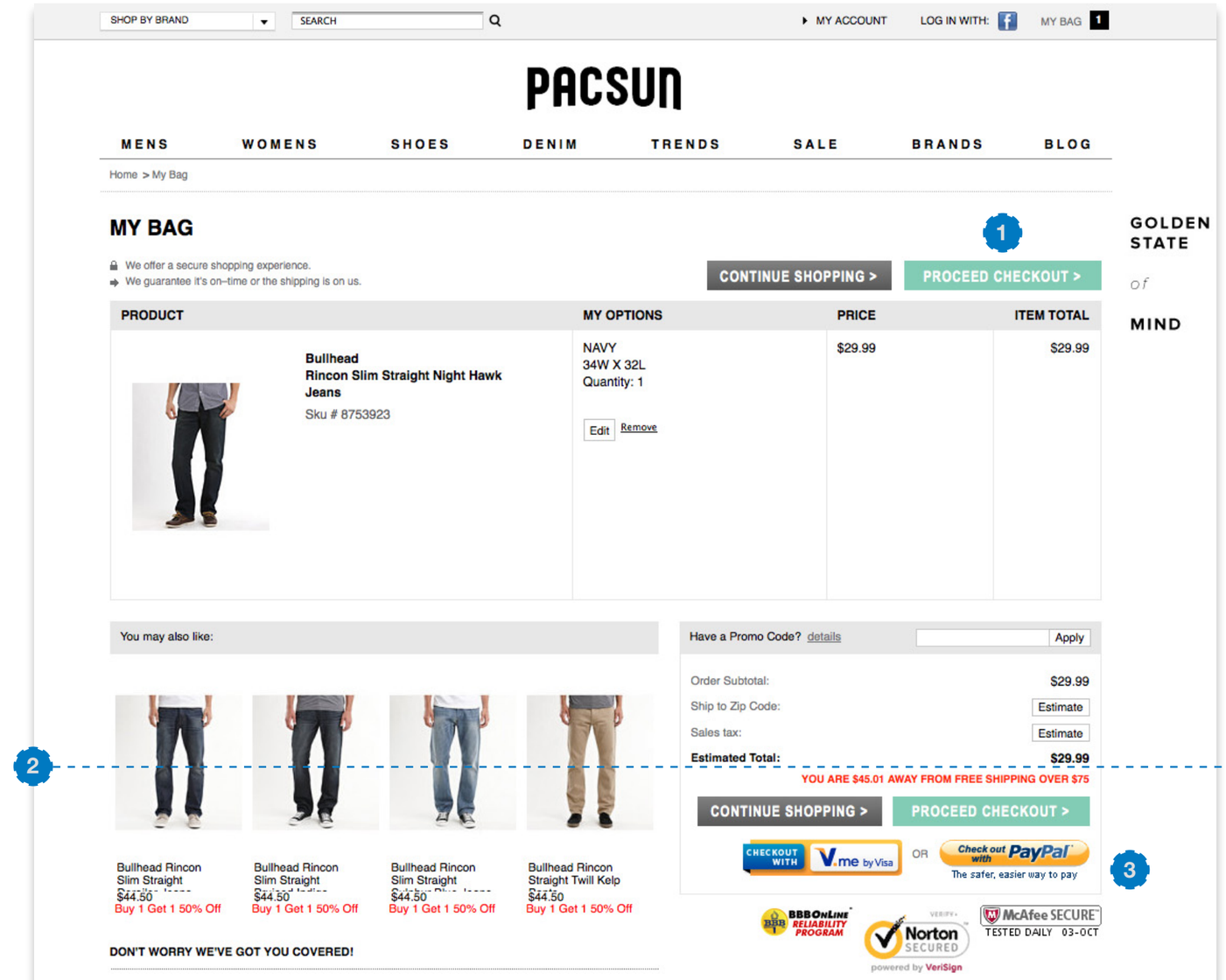
But one of the biggest crimes we commit is making this process more difficult than it needs to be. Customers want an easy, secure and flexible way to pay for their purchases on and offline. PayPal provides flexibility and speed coupled with industry leading security that has made us the experts in payments. Merchants goals should be to provide the right goods to the rights customers any time and where. PayPal is here to help facilitate these payments anytime, anywhere and anyway. PayPal is funding agnostic. We help customers quickly checkout with any payment source they wish to use.

This merchants cart page suffers from numerous usability issues. And each in some way makes it harder for their customers to easily checkout.

Exp 1- Providing checkout functions at the top and bottom of a page has been shown to be effective especially when item review lists are populated with multiple items and elongate the length of the page. The absence of this functionality only makes it harder for customers to checkout.

Exp 2- The dotted line represents the page fold on a laptop screen set at 1440x852 pixels. Consumers may not scroll and will completely miss the item totals and express checkout options.

Exp 3- These buttons will completely confuse customers as to which to push in order to complete the purchase. Challenging customers in this way adds to their shopping fatigue and frustration at a point in the purchase funnel where the experience should be streamlined and options simplified in order to facilitate the sale. The merchants own green checkout button is an odd color choice and is not perceived as a highly actionable color choice. It does not give the sense that option will be the best, right or fastest alternative. The security logos and services are cluttered and redundant and are only adding noise in this critical decision hotspot. This will in turn make it harder for customers to decide how to proceed from this page.



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SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCES

If we approach design challenges within the checkout experience holistically we can purposely drive conversion and leave customers with a satisfied experience. When careful consideration is given to the entire design of a page, all of its elements and the checkout technologies employed can measurably improve conversion, increase sales and improve repeat visits These considerations should be important to every merchant.

Crafting the perfect checkout experience is a balancing act between providing the best user experience and capturing sufficient customer information for business needs. Several studies have shown a direct correlation to the amount of information requested of shoppers and conversion rates. Selection boxes, drop down menus and text areas all have depressing effects on conversions metrics as well.

By following some simple User Experience guidelines and utilizing agnostic checkout technologies that facilitate a quicker easier checkout we can make it a painless experience with great rewards.

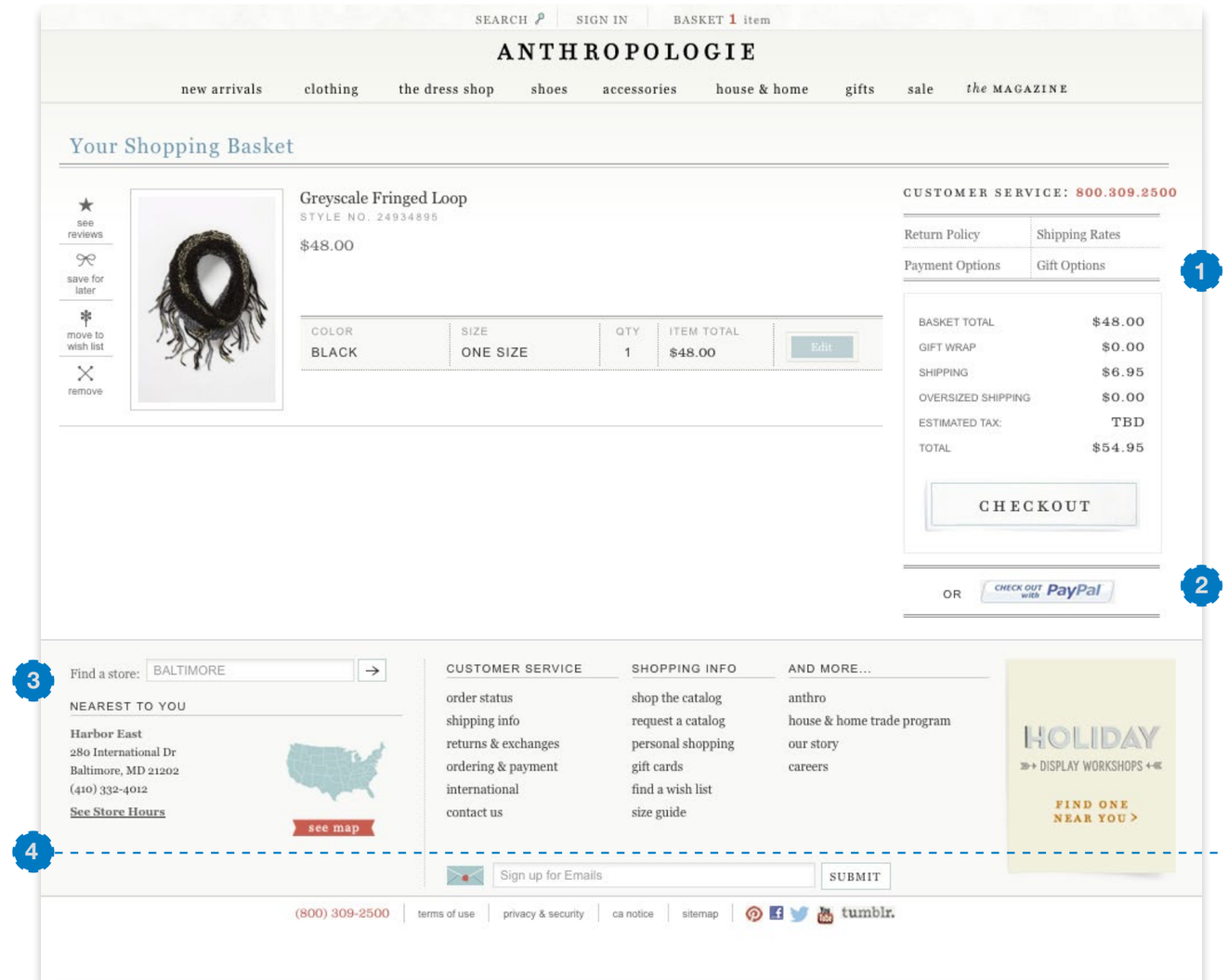
This merchant has gone through great pains to craft an optimized and well balanced checkout experience.

Exp 1- Sufficient negative space has been left around main features and elements like product listing, order total and checkout buttons. This extra space adds breathing room and makes it easier for shoppers to quickly discern the information on the page and what actions need to be taken in order to complete their purchase.

Exp 2- The checkout options have been simplified for consumers with plenty of white space and separation brackets to differentiate them from one another. This helps consumers quickly and easily discern what the two options are and what the difference and value is between selecting a standard checkout process or the Express Checkout option from PayPal.

Exp 3- All non essential page, store, communication options, specials, email submittal, social media links have been carefully displayed within the footer of this page for easy reference and use. Consumers have come to expect these functionalities to be positioned in an area like this. Its consistent display throughout the site contributes to customers muscle memory of their location and function and make it highly usable like a well placed and promoinent navigation bar.

Exp 4- Almost the entire page with one item in the cart fits above the fold on a laptop screen set at 1440x852 pixels. Even at lower resolutions the checkout buttons will still remain above the fold.



SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCES CONTINUED

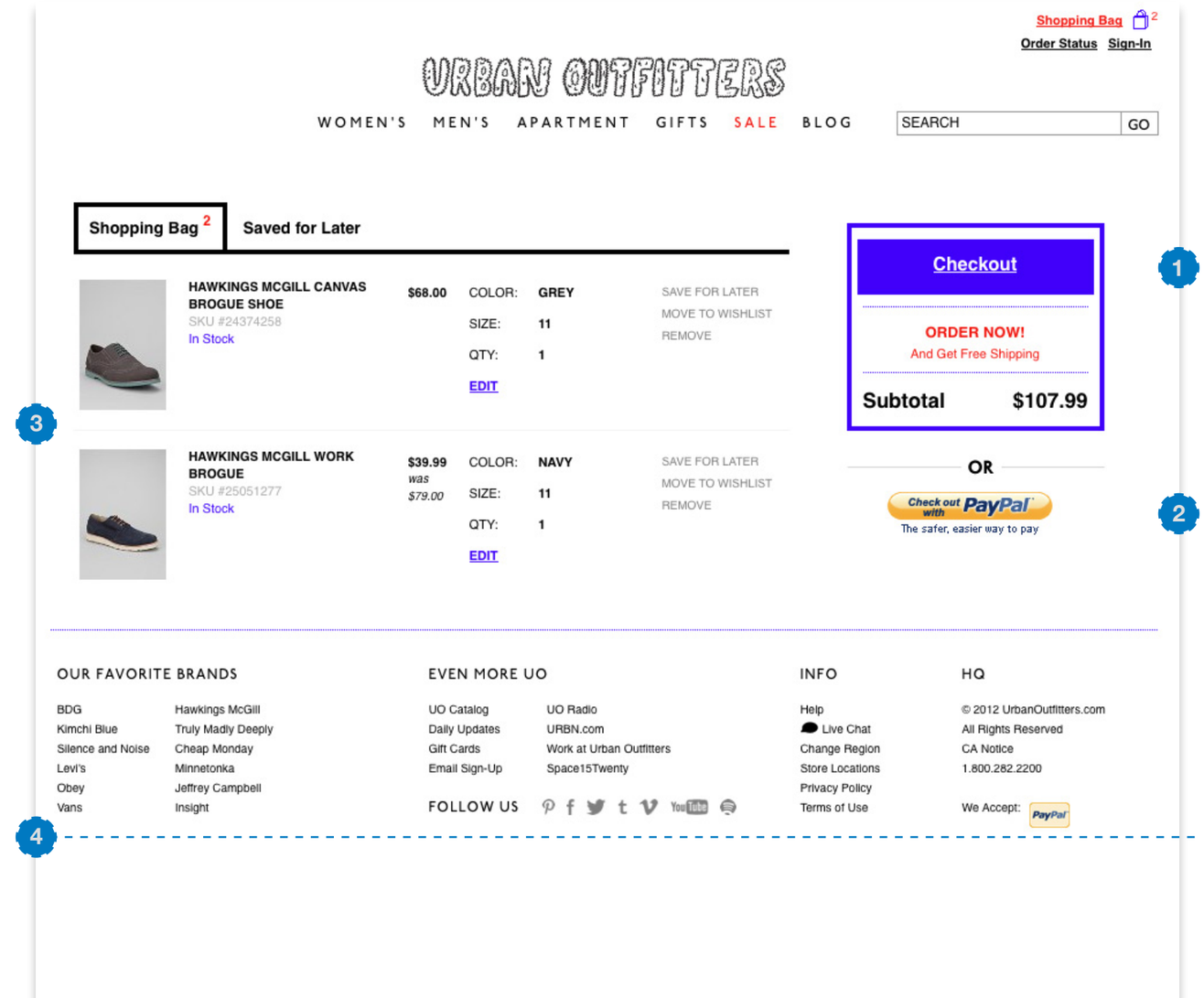
The process of creating experiences optimized for conversion takes the strain and effort of checking out **off** of the customers shoulders. Thereby simplifying the process and allowing it to happen at a quicker velocity which will increase conversions.

Here is another example of a merchant that has gone through great pains to craft an optimized checkout experience.

Exp 1&2- The checkout buttons are clearly and easily defined in a space to the right of the page enveloping the order sub total amount. The standard checkout and PayPal express checkout button are clearly displayed making them extremely easy to find and discern their functions and value to the shopper. The lack of clutter or visual noise around these elements drives your focus towards them and helps facilitate clicking on them.

Exp 3 - Plenty of room has been allocated for item details review. Regardless of how many products populate here the checkout buttons will float in the upper right corner well above the fold.

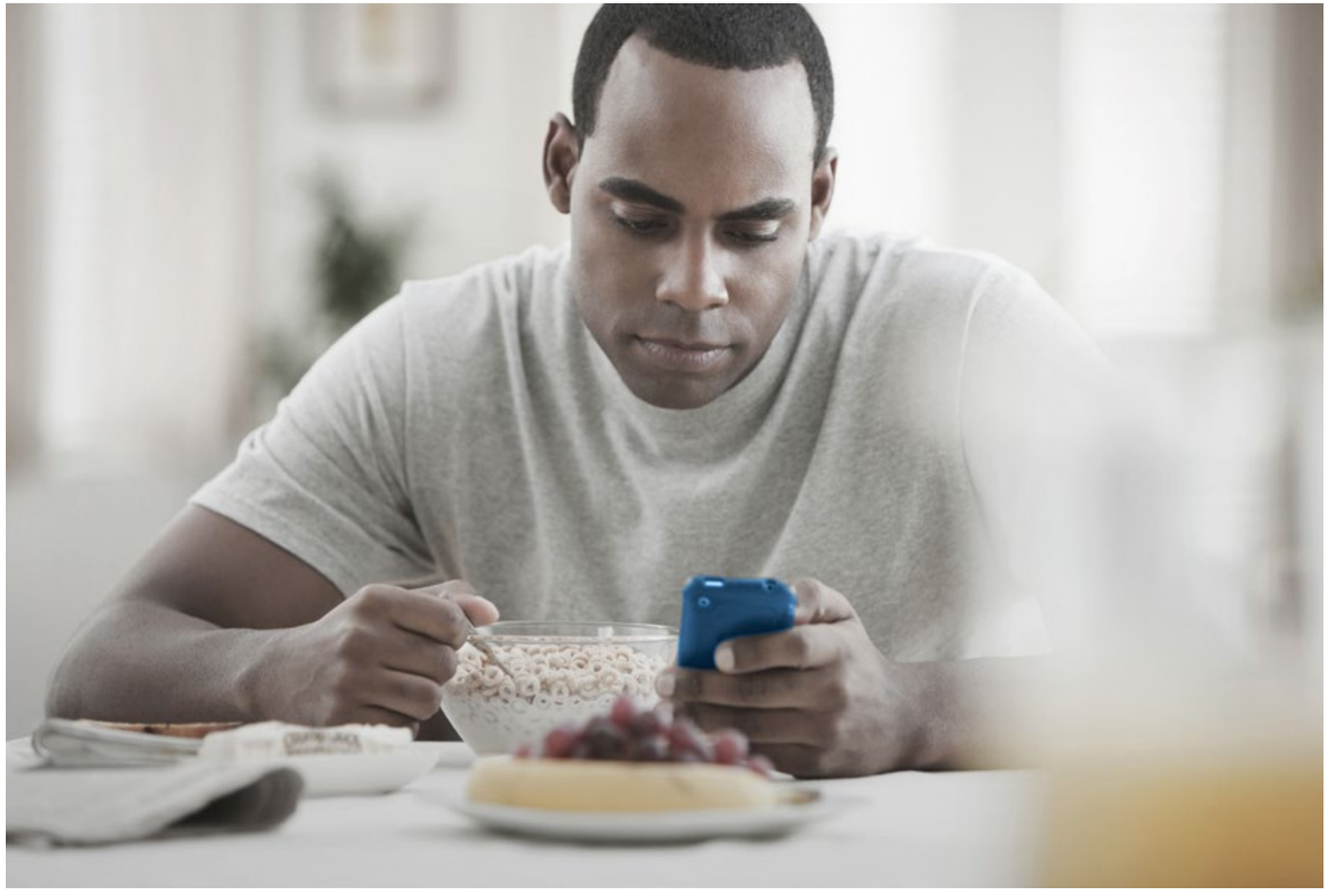
Exp 4- All non essential page, store, communication options, specials, email submittal, social media links have been carefully displayed within the footer of this page for easy reference and use. Even with two items in the details area the content for the entire page fits above the fold on a laptop screen set at 1440x852 pixels.



VALUE TO CONSUMERS

Todays consumers are extremly time crunched and shop online at work, home and now more frequently via a mobile device in the brief moments between their over scheduled day. They no longer have the luxury of spending hours shopping at retail stores. More common now they need to find a product, make a decision and pull the trigger in a matter of minutes. Retailers struggle to craft online experiences that entertain and delight shoppers and allow for chance purchases similar to their physical store experiences. But once a consumer has committed to make a purchase we feel it imperative to give them the ability to checkout as quickly and easily as possible. This is where PayPal can help drive conversions and delight your customers by making checkout quick, safe and painless. Noise is noise and its not going to help your customers make their purchases.

The PayPal digital wallet allows shoppers to use different funding sources at any merchant that offers PayPal. It gives them control over which credit source, bank acount or other method they wish to use for payment. There is no reason to add other digital wallets to your site as PayPal is fund agnostic and therefor ultimately the best option for shoppers. This is what truly sets PayPal apart from its competitors and makes it valuable to both merhcants and their customers. Adding other digital wallets will only add to customer confusion and slower than desired checkout times which may result in greater cart abadonment.



FURTHER PROOF

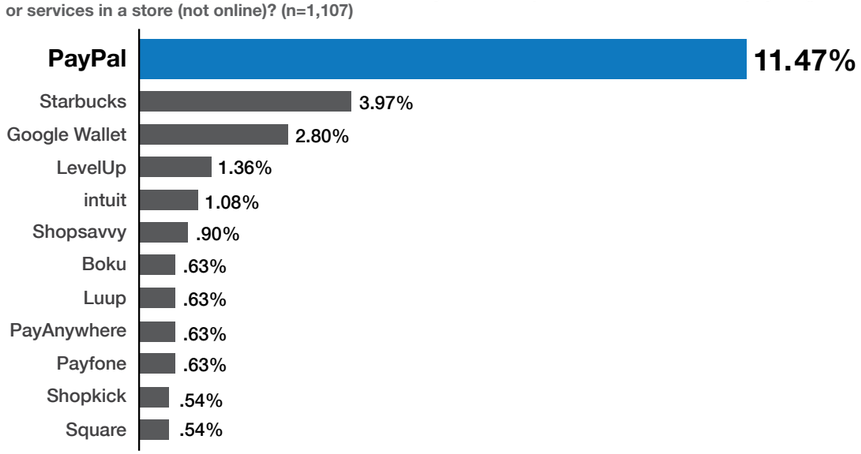
Yankee Group and ComScore confirm PayPal as the leader in mobile and digital payments

Two major analyst firms issued reports in February 2013 that offer expert outside analysis that PayPal is the mobile and digital payments leader. The analyst data clearly illustrates that no one else is even close in use or recognition by consumers.

The Yankee Group released a study entitled "Google Wallet Is a Top App for Mobile Transactions." But upon closer review, that title seems like a strange way to interpret the actual results of the survey. While Google Wallet did finish third in the polling, it was a very distant third to our PayPal mobile payment app and the popular Starbucks app. In fact, the survey says that PayPal is more popular than the next seven mobile payment apps combined.

You may not know that PayPal is the only built-in payment option within the Starbucks app and the Yankee data indicates that the PayPal app is used by three times as many people as the popular Starbucks app for mobile payments.

Which of the following applications have you used on your mobile phone in the last month to pay for goods or services in a store (not online)? (n=1,107)



Source: Yankee Group's 2012 US Mobile Money Survey, December
http://maps.yankeegroup.com/ygapp/content/efdff8ab686c4cad8b9f65df72d53936/50/DAILYINSIGHT/0

ComScore released a new report that notes almost ¾ of Americans equate digital wallets with PayPal and almost half of them have used the PayPal digital wallet. Usage drops from 48 percent to just 8 percent for the next most popular wallet.

Consumer Awareness and Usage of Digital Wallet Offerings
November 2012

Digital Wallet	Percentage of Total Respondents Aware of Digital Wallet	Percentage of Total Respondents Who Used the Digital Wallet
PayPal	**72%**	**48%**
Google Wallet	41%	8%
MasterCard PayPass Wallet	13%	3%
Square Wallet	8%	2%
V.me by Visa	8%	2%
ISIS	6%	1%
Lemon Wallet	5%	1%
LevelUp	5%	2%

Source: comScore Digital Wallet Road Map 2013: http://www.comscore.com/Insights/Press_Releases/2013/2/comScore_Study_Highlights_Digital_Wallet_Market_Potential

At PayPal this is a topic we talk about every day – how can we bring our customers great products and delightful experiences that add real value without bogging them down with technology for technology's sake? Our commitment to serve them and our merchants is why we find it imperative to offer simple tools, streamlined and delightful experiences that bring true value to their busy and hectic lives.

Sources:

1- **Fewer Form Fields Drive More Online Conversions** http://advertising.yahoo.com/blogs/advertising/infographic-fewer-form-fields-drive-more-online-conversions-000213189.html
2- **How to Create an Online Form that Converts** http://blog.formstack.com/2012/creating-form-converts/
3- **Which Types of Form Fields Lower Landing Page Conversions?** http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/6746/Which-Types-of-Form-Fields-Lower-Landing-Page-Conversions.aspx#ixzz2Mz9fqBZ0