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INTERMEDIATE PLUS 2
MID-TERM TEST

READING

Consumer Trends

Online shopping

For many consumers, online shopping makes complete sense because it's by far the most convenient way to shop. It gives you access to a wide range of products and it's easy to find a bargain. It's not surprising that online purchases have grown by about 30 percent in recent years. However, some people are warning that the current model of online shopping will need to change. While most of us expect free delivery, the high costs are causing some companies to make a loss. This might be acceptable in the short-term, but will companies keep offering it in the longer-term? What's more, many consumers are finding that the quality of the products is getting worse and worse. People are becoming increasingly disappointed with what they receive. While online shopping is here to stay, it's unlikely to continue growing as quickly.

Customer attraction

For years, companies have focused on achieving brand loyalty. The idea is that even if their products are more expensive than the competition's, consumers will continue to buy them. However, recent studies have shown that there's less brand loyalty among the younger generation of consumers. That's because they'd rather get the best deal than continue to buy the same things. They're far more likely to use online reviews to compare prices, quality, and other people's opinions before making a decision. At the same time, younger consumers are more worried about personal identity and less interested in owning the same things as everyone else. As a result, companies need to come up with new ways to sell their products and attract the younger generation of consumers. This means that new businesses with original products find it easier to compete with better-known brands.

Eating out

The internet also offers a more convenient way to choose restaurants, book tables and leave reviews. Apps also allow customers to access digital menus and pay without the need for cash or credit cards. Many restaurants have also been looking for ways to serve their customers more quickly. Their customers lead busy lives and they don't want to be kept waiting. In the past, good quality restaurants were unlikely to be self-service. However, some of them now ask customers to serve themselves and even tidy up afterwards. Interestingly, a lot of customers are happy to do this if it means saving time. Restaurants have also been looking for new ways to increase their profits. The latest trend is to offer ingredients for customers to buy and take home with them. At the end of their meal, customers are able to buy the same products as the ones used in the restaurant, like olive oil and pasta, which provides extra income for restaurants.

1) Read an article about how the ways we consume are changing. Match the phrases (a–h) with the trends they are connected to.

a) some businesses have been losing money

b)customers are comparing products before making purchases

c) some businesses are trying to provide a faster service

d) customers can choose from many different products

e) customers are finding it easier to choose places to go out

f) customers are less interested in always buying the same products

g) some businesses have found new ways of making money

h) customers are showing less satisfaction with their purchases

2) Read the article again. Are the statements True (T) or False (F)?

1 There are more convenient ways to shop than online.

2 The quality of products bought online is not always better.

3 Consumers will only buy products if they are cheaper than the competition.

4 Brand loyalty is more important to older generations than younger ones.

5 Younger people want to have the same things as the people around them.

6 Most restaurants will only accept payment by cash or credit card.

7 Many customers don't mind changes to the way they are served in restaurants.

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