



# Voice Search US Retail Industry Data Q4 2020

## SUMMARY

This report illustrates how each smart speaker device (Google Home with Google Assistant, Amazon Echo with Alexa and Apple HomePod with Siri) measure up when asked specific questions about the **Retail** industry. **Over 900 questions** were programmatically asked to the devices, covering multiple categories including Home and Auto products, Personal and Child Products, Questions, and Retailers. Examples include:

- “Alexa, what is the most popular video game?”
- “Hey Google, where to buy a tv?”
- “Hey Siri, where is the nearest Target?”

How does your brand “sound” to your audience? Similar to SEO 20 years ago, today’s voice experiences pose a **threat to brand safety** as the devices are frequently delivering many incorrect answers or no answer at all – aka “Sorry, I don’t know that...” The short-term opportunity is to **own your brand**. Retail brands need to provide the “right” answer to the questions their customers are asking. Structuring your content to deliver answers to critical questions posed in voice search could put you ahead of the competitive curve.

The long-term play is in capturing the non-branded queries that are also happening earlier in the buyer journey. Consider a hot topic like **Smartphones**. The brand that provides the answer to those early stage queries will gain topical authority and competitive advantage.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Device intelligence in Q4 of 2020 was strong for the 3 smart speaker devices we tested with Alexa, Google, and Siri all answering at least 85% of the questions asked. However, the intelligence of the response can vary by device.

Alexa answers general questions but is often confused and responds with “I don’t know that.”

- Alexa provided an answer 85% of the time, usually for location-based queries (**“Where is the nearest Walgreens?”**).
- Alexa will occasionally misinterpret the question, resulting in an irrelevant answer. When asked **“What is the best fitness tracker?”**, Alexa responded with “there’s no workout in progress.”
- 15% of the time Alexa did not know the answer. For example, when asked **“Where can I find desks?”**, Alexa answers “Sorry, I don’t know that one.”

Google Assistant provides an answer 100% of the time with more relevant results and is better at answering questions all the way through the buyer journey.

- Google provides accurate answers for general interest questions and provides quality answers for middle-funnel questions.
- For example, when asked **“What is the best-selling video game?”** Google answers **“Video games frequently mentioned include We Sports, We Fit, WE play and others.”**

- Google is also much better at citing their sources. For example, when asked **“What are the top skincare products?”** Google answers *“I found a list on the website Townandcountrymag.com. the 32 skincare products we rely on...”*

### **Apple Siri on the HomePod provides less relevant results than other voice devices.**

- 21% of the time, Siri did not have an answer or responded *“I can’t help with that”*
- Of the questions answered, Siri often misinterpreted queries, resulting in incorrect answers.
- One example of this was when asked **“Where to buy comforters?”** Siri responded with *“One option is Comfort Inn and Suites, about 3.7 miles to your east on South East 27<sup>th</sup> St, which averages 4.0 stars, according to Tip Advisor.”*

## **BRAND PERFORMANCE**

### **Retail brands that have structured their content to deliver accurate answers to questions in voice search are leading the pack.**

- For **non-branded** questions, the below brands stood out as having better voice performance. Below are the numbers of answers that each brand provided:
  - Amazon - 214 Questions
  - Target – 112 Questions
  - Walmart – 104 Questions
  - Best Buy - 82 Questions
  - Bed Bath and Beyond - 55 Questions

## **THE OPPORTUNITY & ACTION FOR BRANDS**

Today, consumers are no longer constrained by screens and keyboards. Access to a world of information is now controlled simply by our voice. Tremendous white space opportunities exist today across the industry. Unlike desktop search, there’s only one answer in voice search, and this first mover opportunity may not exist again for quite some time.

Don’t miss the boat - WPP’s Voice Practice can help you provide relevant, accurate answers to the questions your customers are asking the voice assistants. All of this is done at Enterprise scale.

Contact us today for a consultation: [contact@globalstrategies.com](mailto:contact@globalstrategies.com)

