

UNRULED
OUTDOOR AGENCY



2025 HUNTING INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

A DATA-DRIVEN REPORT
FOR HUNTING BRANDS





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Hunting Industry Insights Report reveals that hunting isn't just a pastime—it's a deeply rooted lifestyle shaped by tradition, passion, and purpose. Most hunters surveyed (60%) inherited their love for the field from family, with many (39%) viewing it as a lifelong passion, and 14% saying it defines who they are. A majority have been hunting for over a decade, and their outdoor commitment extends to fishing, camping, and backpacking, reflecting a rugged, self-reliant ethos. While modern

hunters embrace technology—like GPS apps and smart optics—many use it with intention, maintaining the soul of the hunt by occasionally going analog. Ethics, conservation, and challenge remain central, and gear choices follow suit: quality and durability top the list, with hunters willing to pay more for brands that honor tradition. Brand loyalty, however, is flexible—performance and value matter. Influencers and peer reviews hold more sway than celebrity endorsements, and YouTube dominates as a trusted resource.





**THIS REPORT PAINTS A
PICTURE OF A COMMUNITY
THAT STRADDLES LEGACY
AND INNOVATION**

**—ONE THAT REWARDS AUTHENTICITY,
PERFORMANCE, AND CULTURAL ALIGNMENT FROM
THE BRANDS THEY TRUST.**

Sample size: 300

Age: 32-52

Gender: 76% Male, 24% Female

Income: \$63,500 – \$103,500

Region: 41% South, 22% Northeast



KEY FINDINGS



MAKE GEAR THAT HONORS THE HUNT, NOT JUST THE HOBBY

This is not a casual crowd. Hunting is interwoven with identity, values, and family tradition.

90%

primarily hunt deer;
88% also fish
82% camp regularly

60.7%

say hunting is a family tradition;
39.3% call it a core passion
14% say "it defines me"

60%

have hunted for more
than 10 years;
30% for over 20 years

INSIGHT

Brands entering this space must treat hunting as more than a sport—it's a legacy activity that spans generations and reflects personal identity.





SEGMENT BY SWEAT, BUILD FOR hardcore, NOT JUST HOLIDAY HUNTERS

Beyond passion and tradition, the data shows a high level of field activity:

44%

of hunters go out 6–15 days per year

27%

take 6–10 trips per season;
9% Go on 10+ trips

12.7%

hunt more than 30 days annually

INSIGHT

This is a field-tested audience. A significant portion of hunters are highly active, suggesting opportunities for deeper segmentation (e.g., hardcore vs. casual hunters) in product tiers, content tone, and ambassador profiles.



LET TRADITION LEAD, BUT INVITE TECH TO THE TABLE

Hunters are embracing technology—but only if it fits their philosophy:

59%

use precision rifles or archery equipment;
55% use GPS/mapping apps,
45% use smart optics

49.7%

have intentionally opted out of using tech to maintain a traditional experience

75%

say tech enhances or has no negative effect;
19% feel it erodes the hunt's spirit

INSIGHT

This audience values innovation—but only when it honors the experience. Tech must feel like a respectful aid, not a shortcut.



PUT THE CALL IN A TRUSTED VOICE, MENTORS AND PEERS MOVE THE MARKET

Today's hunters learn from both mentors and media—and trust is shifting:

Mentorship/family is the top influence on younger hunters (55.7%), followed by social media (49.3%)

YouTube is the most-used platform for hunting tips, gear research, and inspiration (66.7%)

47% trust **"everyday hunter" influencers most**; only 24% trust "hardcore pros"

INSIGHT

Peer-level content beats polished campaigns. The path to influence is through trusted, relatable creators who walk the same ground.



SELL THE STORY, NOT JUST THE SPECS

Hunters don't buy impulsively—they investigate before investing:

59%

spend over **\$500/year on gear**;
43% are willing to spend \$1,000–
\$2,500 on a dream hunt

Top research behaviors before a
major gear purchase:

- **53%**: Visit a store
- **41%**: Ask a friend or mentor
- **39%**: Watch a YouTube review

#1 driver

Quality/durability (67.7%)
beats price (59.2%)

INSIGHT

These are methodical buyers. Brands must focus on transparent performance, field-tested storytelling, and trust-building reviews.



SHOW UP EVERYWHERE THEY SHOP, CONSISTENCY BUILDS CREDIBILITY

Hunters aren't limited to one type of retail experience—they're shopping across physical and digital channels:

67.7%

shop at **large sporting goods stores** like Bass Pro Shops, Cabela's, and Academy

46.3%

buy from **online marketplaces** such as Amazon and Walmart.com

38.7%

purchase directly from **brand websites**

INSIGHT

This audience blends in-store and online shopping fluidly. While big-box retail dominates, nearly half are open to DTC and marketplace options. Brands should ensure consistent product availability and messaging across all retail channels—and strengthen direct-to-consumer ecosystems where brand storytelling and loyalty programs can thrive.



BUILD YOUR BRAND ON LEGACY, NOT HYPE

Storytelling matters—but only when it's grounded in values:

53%

say **heritage storytelling** adds meaning; **29%** say it's core to their identity

Most resonant brand themes:
47.3%: Family legacy & tradition

88%

are somewhat to extremely likely to pay more for brands that **honor tradition**

39.7%: Made-in-USA & rural authenticity

42%

say **younger hunters** are more connected to traditional values; **39%** say less

37.3%: Sustainability and conservation

INSIGHT

Brands that lean into legacy—without being performative—will build stronger emotional bonds. Authenticity, not just aesthetics, wins long-term loyalty.



HUNTING PERSONAS



THE HERITAGE-DRIVEN MODERNIST

46%

say they use tech but **maintain traditional ethics**

49.7%

have opted **not to use tech at times**

Uses GPS apps, trail cams, and precision gear—but draws a line to **preserve “the spirit of the hunt”**

Most likely to trust **everyday hunter influencers** and seek gear that blends performance with principle

Will pay more for brands that honor **family tradition, conservation, or Made-in-USA** authenticity

Values **legacy, ethics, and food sourcing** as core motivators



THE MENTORED MARKSMAN

60%

say hunting is passed down

Typically introduced through **family or mentors**

Hunts with parents or brings kids/mentees (36–40% report **multi-generational hunts**)

Consumes **YouTube and forums** to self-educate, but prioritizes advice from trusted peers over pros

Balances tradition with curiosity—**willing to explore new gear** if it enhances their evolving skillset

Seeks gear that’s **durable, practical, and validated** by experience—not hype



THE VALUE-CONSCIOUS EXPLORER

58%

say they’ll switch brands for better performance or value

Not brand loyal

Heavily influenced by **YouTube, podcasts, and peer reviews** before making purchases over \$250

Researches extensively: compares online, visits stores, asks friends

Cares most about **price, durability, and honest reviews**—not flashy endorsements or gimmicks

May use tech, but only **when it proves useful in the field**—not for show

MEDIA STACK & CONTENT



WHERE HUNTERS GO FOR INSPIRATION



66.7%

YouTube



42.7%

Facebook



34.3%

Instagram



29.3%

TikTok



30%

Podcasts



29%

Hunting-specific forums

PREFERRED CONTENT TYPES



Product reviews & gear comparisons (46%)



How-to and instructional content (40%)



Podcasts/ interviews (35%)



Hunting trip documentaries/ vlogs (47.3%)



Lifestyle/behind-the-scenes from hunters/brands (35.7%)



Short-form entertainment (memes, reels) (37%)

CONTENT RECOMMENDATIONS

YouTube

Gear reviews, field tests, hunting vlogs, ethical debates, generational stories

Facebook

Community polls, product updates, legacy stories, conservation efforts

Forums

Honest product feedback, brand trust threads, deep gear comparisons

TikTok

Relatable humor, quick tips, gear hacks, morning-of-the-hunt POVs

Podcasts

Long-form storytelling, conservation conversations, interviews with relatable hunters

Instagram

Scenic shots, trophy moments, gear setups, mentorship highlights



MOST USEFUL DATA FOR HUNTING BRANDS

SPENDING POWER

59% of hunters spend **over \$500** annually on gear **\$**

43% are willing to spend **\$1,000–\$2,500** on a dream hunting trip **\$**

MEDIA INFLUENCE

YouTube

is the **most-used and most influential platform** for hunting tips, gear inspiration, and product decisions (66.7%)

PURCHASE DRIVERS

1. Quality and durability (67.7%)
 2. Price (59.2%)
 3. Product features (40.3%)
- are lead gear-buying decisions

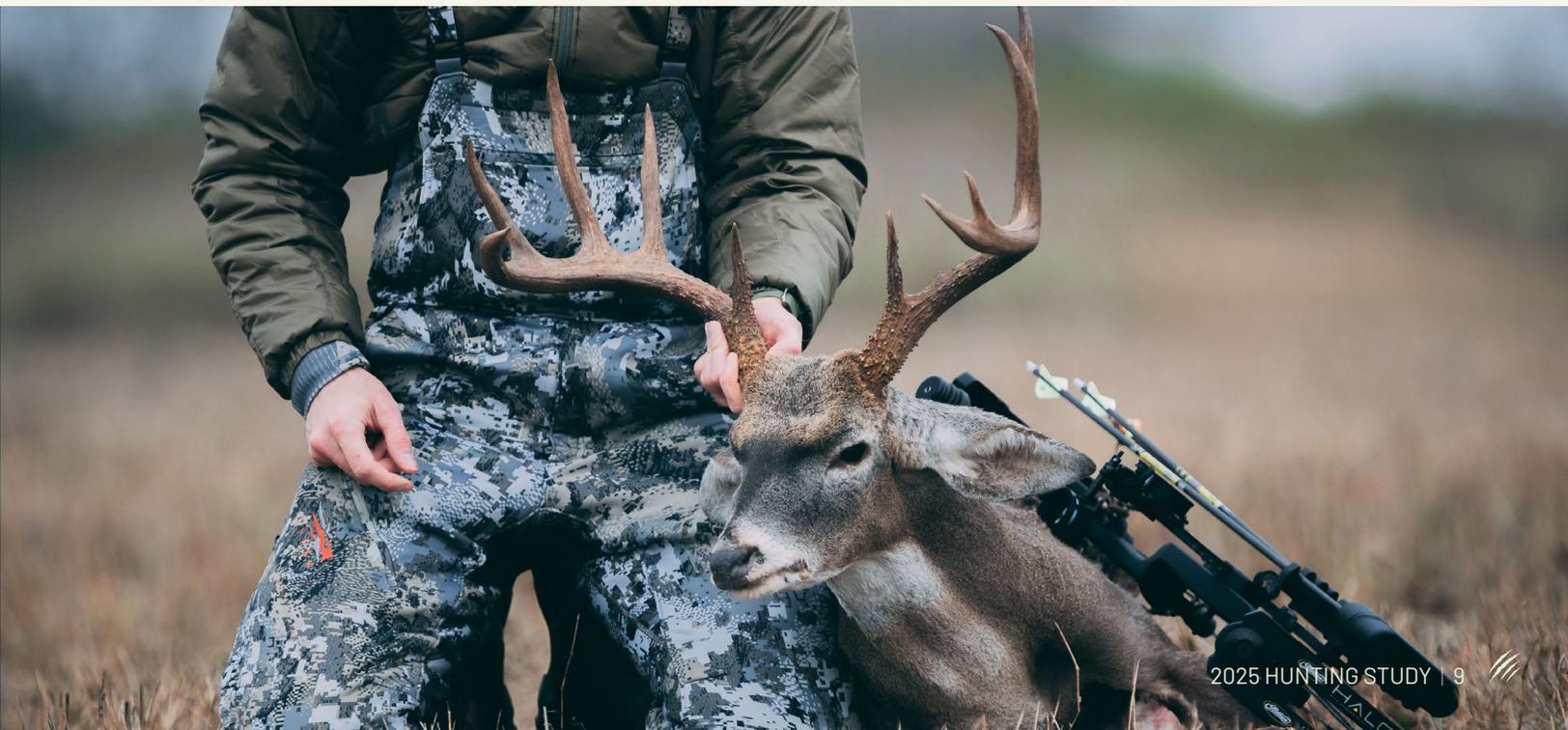
SWITCH TRIGGERS

58.3% will switch brands for **better performance or value**

3% cited values misalignment,
1.3% switched due to poor customer service

TOP STORY THEMES

1. Family legacy and tradition (47.3%)
2. Made-in-USA rural authenticity (39.7%)
3. Sustainability and conservation (37.3%)



THE MOST SURPRISING FINDING

TECH IS EMBRACED—BUT INTENTIONALLY RESTRAINED.

Nearly 50% of hunters have intentionally opted not to use a tech tool in order to preserve a more traditional experience. This is despite the fact that over 75% say tech either enhances or does not negatively affect the hunt.



WHY THIS MATTERS

- Even tech-savvy hunters want to feel connected to the ritual of the hunt—not just the outcome
- Innovation must be positioned as an aid to the spirit of hunting, not a shortcut
- Brands should emphasize ethics, legacy, and restraint in tech-forward messaging
- Over-indexing on modern features without honoring traditional values risks alienating the core customer
- This upends the assumption that more tech always means better adoption. In this space, technology must earn its place



TOP FIVE TAKEAWAYS

01. BUILD FOR PERFORMANCE, BUT SPEAK TO LEGACY.

Hunters value gear that works—durability and quality top all purchase drivers—but they'll pay more for brands that honor tradition, ethics, and identity.

02. EVERYDAY HUNTERS ARE YOUR INFLUENCERS.

47% trust relatable, peer-level hunters over pros or personalities. Authenticity beats authority. Invest in credible voices, not just credentials.

03. YOUTUBE IS THE DECISION-MAKING ENGINE.

It's the most-used platform for research and inspiration. Gear reviews, trip vlogs, and instructional content shape what hunters buy—and why.

04. INNOVATION MUST SERVE THE STORY.

Half of hunters intentionally opt out of using tech to protect the hunt's meaning. Tech that enhances challenge, connection, or ethics will resonate. Tech that shortcuts the experience won't.

05. DESIGN FOR GENERATIONAL CONTINUITY.

40% hunt with parents or mentors, 36% introduce kids or mentees. Gear, content, and messaging should celebrate the shared lineage of hunting—not just the lone experience.





KEY CUSTOMER TENSION

“CAN I MODERNIZE WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE MEANING OF THE HUNT?”

BALANCING TRADITION AND TECHNOLOGY

Hunters are walking a fine line between embracing modern tools and preserving the heritage that gives hunting its emotional depth.

ON ONE SIDE:

- 59% use precision rifles or archery equipment
- 55% use GPS or mapping apps
- 45% use smart optics or rangefinders
- 75% say technology enhances or at least doesn't harm the spirit of the hunt and innovation

ON THE OTHER:

- 49.7% have purposely opted out of using tech to preserve a more traditional experience
- 19% feel technology erodes the spirit of the hunt
- Only 14% say hunting is their entire identity, indicating many are cautious about letting tech redefine the experience

WHY IT MATTERS

Hunters want modern gear to enhance their self-reliance, not replace it. They value performance, but not at the cost of purpose. Brands that over-index on innovation risk alienating those who see hunting as sacred, while brands that lean too heavily into nostalgia may miss younger or more tech-savvy consumers

IMPLICATION FOR BRANDS

Don't ask customers to choose between tradition and innovation. Instead, bridge them. Position technology as a tool that respects the hunt, not a shortcut that undermines it. Tell stories that celebrate heritage supported by progress.





ROOTED IN TRADITION. READY FOR THE NEXT SHOT.

The modern hunter is a blend of legacy and leverage. They use trail cams—but still tell campfire stories. They want innovation—but not at the cost of meaning.

Winning brands will understand this tension, and build their products, messaging, and community around both tradition and performance.

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