



The psychology of shopping

Over the past few years next market management consultants have conducted numerous in-depth interviews about shoppers' motivation, specifically when shopping in supermarkets, liquor stores and shopping centres.

We have examined shopper behaviour and the possibilities for retailers to better satisfy consumers' needs. It is important to understand retail behaviour and the reasons behind consumers' brand choices, since it can contribute to more effective marketing strategies. Our research determined four key psychological groupings of shoppers; the Strategist, the Flutterer, the Explorer and the Impulse shopper. Each group exhibits differences in retail behaviour and brand choice decisions.



The Strategists have a written and mental shopping list before they go shopping, with specific brands in mind. In the retail environment they progressively tick off the items. They have specified days for shopping and are not prone to special offers or new influences. Marketers need to get into their decision cycle before they go shopping, through methods such as direct mail.

The Flutterers have a shopping list but it is less specific. They do not go about shopping in a strategic way. They often find coping with shopping overwhelming and therefore move back and forth around the store. They are easily persuaded by promotions or something that catches their eye.

The Explorers find that even the mundane task of grocery shopping can be exciting. New products, special offers and interesting finds, often influence them. They can take a significant time to shop and may visit more specialty shops.

The impulse shopper feels that they are continuously missing something and are frequent users of 24-hours shops. They like to shop when it is convenient for them. They are easily distracted and often buy more products than they originally intended.

We have found that these traits are not only evident in grocery shopping but also common across shopping centres, liquor stores and even high street shops. Additionally, it is important to understand the relationship between the principal shopper and other family member consumers. The Strategists and Explorers use shopping as an instrument for family management. They are interested in price points, promotion and categories. The Explorer may use the purchase of a particular product for their children as a bargaining chip; to get children to do what they are told. Alternatively, the Strategic shopper is more likely to use shopping as a controlling factor in the family environment. On the other hand, the Flutterers and Impulse buyer have more laissez-faire attitude.

Shoppers are continuously weighting up the tensions between stability and innovation. They want to provide for their family but also broaden their horizons. Marketers can find methods to fulfil both the provider and the visionary needs of the shopper. By understanding the deep psychological needs of shoppers, marketers can find enormous competitive opportunities to enrich the shopper's experience.

Many consumers are feeling overwhelmed by the overload of brand, packaging and pricing choices available in the marketplace. Excessive choice in a category may lead to the consumer avoiding the entire purchase out of frustration. Adapting to this knowledge is the German private label retail giant Aldi, who have been extremely successful at reducing the complexity of shopping.



For more information please contact Stefan Grafe Managing Director
Email: Stefan.grafe@mext.com.au mobile: 0400 575 410