

Attitudes Toward Shopping

Considerable research has been done on people's attitudes toward shopping. Such attitudes have a big impact on the ways in which people act in a retail setting. Retailers must strive to turn around some negative perceptions that now exist. Let us highlight some research findings.

Shopping Enjoyment: In general, people do not enjoy shopping as much as in the past. So, what does foster a pleasurable shopping experience--a challenge that retailers must address? Many shoppers enjoy bargain hunting ("I get a thrill out of finding a real bargain"), recreational browsing ("window shopping"), being pampered by salespeople (difficult for retailers to accomplish in this era of self-service and cost cutting), and the opportunity to get out of the house or office.

Attitudes Toward Shopping Time: Retail shopping is often viewed as a chore: "Consumers now attempt to limit the time they spend shopping. Time-pressed by family and work responsibilities, they spend fewer hours cruising the mall in search of the perfect item, and look to get what they need as quickly as possible. This trend has been dubbed 'precision shopping.' The upside of precision shopping is that consumers spend more money each time they visit a store."

Shifting Feelings About Retailing: There has been a major change in attitudes toward spending, value, and shopping with established retailers: "The same shopper who buys commodity goods at a BJ's Wholesale Club Inc. may also buy expensive apparel at Nordstrom. This shift does not appear to be transitory, but rather seems to define a more enduring pattern of the sameness of malls, with their closed-in windowless feel and identical cast of retailers and food court vendors."

Why People Buy or Do Not Buy on a Shopping Trip: It is critical for retailers to determine why shoppers leave without making a purchase. Is it prices? A rude salesperson? Not accepting the consumer's credit card? Not having an item in stock? Or some other factor? According to Kurt Salmon Associates, here are the top 10 reasons why shoppers leave an apparel store without buying:

1. Cannot find an appealing style.
2. Cannot find the right size or the item is out of stock.
3. Nothing fits.
4. No sales help is available.
5. Cannot get in and out of the store easily.
6. Prices are too high.
7. In-store experience is stressful.
8. Cannot find a good value.
9. Store is not merchandised conveniently.
10. Seasonality is off.

Attitudes by Market Segment: According to Adjoined Consulting, shoppers can be broken into four types. "Thrifties" are most interested in price and convenience. They are apt to shop at Wal-Mart. "Allures" want a "fun, social shopping experience." They gravitate toward retailers such as Bloomingdale's and Limited Brands. "Speedsters" want to shop quickly. They shop disproportionately at Target and Costco. "Elites" want quality merchandise, an unhurried shopping experience, and the ability to be educated about products. They patronize retailers such as Neiman-Marcus and Amazon.com. Adjoined Consulting believes that many "retailers don't know how their customers prefer their shopping experience and compete by doing what their competitors do. But that doesn't work. Customer insight will allow a retailer not only to survive but to thrive against even the toughest competition."

Attitudes Toward Private Brands: Many consumers believe private (retailer) brands are as good as or better than manufacturer brands: "For American consumers, private brands are brands like any other brands. In a landmark nation-wide study, 75 percent of consumers defined store brands as 'brands' and ascribed to them the same degree of positive product qualities and characteristics--such as guarantee of satisfaction, packaging, value, taste, and performance--that they attribute to manufacturer brands. Moreover, more than 90 percent of all consumers polled were familiar with private brands, and 83 percent said that they purchase these products on a regular basis.