

# Understanding Today's Shopper

Understanding shoppers' buying behaviors is more important than ever for our CPG clients and retailers. To learn more about the path to purchase, Acosta is building a wealth of shopper research and powerful selling information through *The Why Behind the Buy* shopper surveys.

"Understanding why shoppers behave the way they do helps us make better decisions for our clients and brings more actionable insights to retailers," said Colin Stewart, Senior Vice President of Insights.

The online 62-question survey goes to more than 1,000 shoppers throughout the United States twice a year. The results reveal shopping trends, such as how often shoppers visit grocery stores, and also provide insight on shopper attitudes, such as how they feel about the economy and job security.

This survey studies the behavior of the "shopper" — the person actually making the purchasing decision at the store. "This helps us deliver results for our retail clients where the 'shopper' is in control," explains Stewart.

The summer 2010 *The Why Behind The Buy* report shows that while consumers are



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less concerned about the economy than they were a year ago, they are spending less on groceries now than last year. Monthly grocery budgets have declined by 7 percent, but 28 percent are making fewer trips to the store.

"Fewer trips mean fewer opportunities to get shoppers' attention," says Stewart. "So our marketing strategies have to jump out and appeal to shoppers boldly."

One in five shoppers report a loss of income in the past year and 18 percent report a negative change in employment. "Both retailers and CPG clients can continue to expect a holding pattern on spending as shoppers settle into their 'new normal' behavior," says Stewart.

The survey showed that more than half of shoppers are cooking more at home, with about 45 percent planning the menu the day of the meal.

"Shoppers need last-minute meal solutions that are easy to put together, cook and eat," says Stewart. "One strategy is to combine complementary products to create 'meal solutions' and display these ideas near the front of the store to get shoppers' attention on their way home from work."

The survey also noted that most shopping lists are general in nature, not brand-specific (bleach vs. Clorox), and that 40 percent of shoppers indicate they are likely to buy more store brands to save money.

"Everyone — families and singles, young and old — is looking for a variety of money saving ideas," says Stewart. "National brands must communicate why their brands are worth the extra cost. More are offering special promotions resulting in a winning situation for shoppers."

The trend toward buying groceries at a mass merchandiser or supercenter (like Super Target) is growing — over one quarter of shoppers buy most of their household groceries at a mass merchandiser and 66 percent of these shoppers feel this type of outlet has better prices and value.

"Having this type of information helps Acosta work more strategically with our clients rather than just focusing on execution," explains Stewart. "Providing this level of detailed shopper information is another way of showing our commitment to being the best sales and marketing outsource solution for our clients."

## *The Why Behind the Buy Shopper Findings:*

- Two-thirds of shoppers eat dinner at home more than four times a week.
- Primary drivers for store selection are "lower prices," "better value" and "already shopping there."
- One-third of all shoppers say their food budget has decreased compared to a year ago.
- While women still do most of the shopping, the percentage of male shoppers is rising.
- Use of EBT (food stamps) doubled in the past year.