

Golden rules for creating happy shoppers who spend more

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The fact that happy shoppers spend more is one of the most under-appreciated truths in retail. TNS's global database of retail and shopper studies shows a clear correlation between shoppers' satisfaction and the amount that they spend. At a time when brands and retailers face a shared growth challenge, the value of this insight is greater than ever.

The secret of happiness

To focus on making shoppers happy, the first step is to acknowledge the experiences that do not. Shopping should be a positive experience, centred on finding solutions to satisfy wants and needs, but the reality is very different. Shoppers spend their time deselecting large numbers of products so that they can focus on the ones that they are actually interested in. Searching is essentially a negative experience and a shopper only experiences positive emotion when he or she sees a relevant product. So, to make shoppers happier, it is necessary to make it easier for them to find and buy what they want to buy.

"Make it easier for shoppers..." sounds simple enough. However, most people consider grocery shopping a chore, and most of us can name some categories we don't like to shop for. Shopping is not a destination; it is a diversion that we are forced to take on the way to living our lives. It is therefore necessary to appreciate that most of them would like to spend less, not more, time in the store.

The "...to find..." part is where this becomes difficult. There may be 80,000 items to choose from in a modern supermarket, but often a shopper buys just a handful on any trip, so trying to find the items he or she wants can be like searching for a needle in a haystack. To help shoppers find what they are looking for, it is useful to understand their specific task at shelf when shopping in each particular category.

This brings us to "...and buy what they want to buy." Shoppers buy to satisfy a myriad of different consumption or usage occasions. They often require either help to make a choice or reassurance that the choice they are making is the right one. But if shoppers are assisted in buying what they want to buy, then it is important to understand why they are shopping - and what occasion they are shopping for.

Simply put, if the goal is to make shoppers happy, it is necessary understand why and for what occasion they are shopping, what their task at each shelf therefore is, and how the time that they spend completing that task can be reduced.

The three principles of shopper understanding

Beginning our approach to shopper research by asking what the agenda for each shopper is, can develop a far more effective framework for understanding shoppers' behaviour - and therefore a far more effective toolkit for improving their experience and growing their spend. TNS has developed three principles of shopper understanding that are fundamental to making shoppers happier, and therefore developing winning strategies for brands and retailers.

1. The shopping mission and the intended consumer usage occasion are the primary drivers of shopper behaviour and product choice

Category purchases take place in the context of a broader shopping trip or mission and are made to satisfy a particular consumer need or usage occasion. The same shopper will behave very differently depending upon his or her shopping mission. A weekly stockup shop, for example, represents a very different mission to rushing out to buy an urgently needed

item. Within the context of a single trip, the same shopper will also make very different product choices depending on his or her intended usage occasion - a family meal versus a special occasion, for example.

Shopper segmentations that assign each shopper to a particular typology fail to recognise that the behaviour and motivations of each shopper will vary hugely in this way. It is critical to acknowledge shoppers' missions and intended usage occasions as the primary drivers of their behaviour. In developing activations that link shopper missions to different consumer usage occasions, we have the key to unlocking new channel and customer growth opportunities.

2. Shoppers are either 'Decided' or 'Open' when shopping a category and this determines their task at shelf

The task at shelf for each shopper depends on whether he or she has already decided what to buy, or not. The task of the first group is to find a particular product; the second group still has to make a choice at the shelf. Distinguishing between 'Decided' and 'Open' shoppers is key to understanding their needs.

For the majority of shoppers, the purchase process has little to do with decision-making; it has everything to do with finding something that the shopper has already decided to buy. Shopper purchasing data show that 69 percent of supermarket shoppers buy the same brand as they did the last time they purchased from that category.

Shoppers spend the vast majority of their time at the shelf searching for the product they know they want - and when they are busy searching for specific products they are not open to influence.

Most category managers and shopper marketers attempt to interrupt the search process and jump-start a consideration process instead. However, the problem here is that the shopper has a clear task at hand and any disruption to that task will likely delay the shopper and cause frustration.

The way to opening the minds of Decided shoppers is to work with the shopper's agenda rather than trying to change it. Only then will they have the time and inclination to consider additional purchases. For this reason, it is essential that category organisation reflects the navigation needs of the Decided shopper.

At the same time, however, the big opportunity lies with the Open shopper. Open shoppers act differently and actively make decisions: they spend more time at the shelf, they are more likely to read information, and they have different needs to the Decided shopper. Therefore, product assortment and call-to-action messaging on packs and POS must be designed to appeal to the needs of the Open shopper.

Distinguishing between Decided and Open shoppers can make the difference between success and failure for any in-store activation, but actions must target the needs of both kinds of shoppers.

3. Making it faster and easier for shoppers to find the products they want is proven to increase shopper spending.

Making shopping faster and easier is the single biggest thing that can be done to make shoppers happier and increase their spending. Given that shoppers spend most of their time searching for the products they know they want to buy, anything that reduces this time and thereby increases the speed at which shoppers spend will lead to sales growth.

Retail efficiency is often measured in terms of sales per square foot, and many strategies and tactics are based on the mistaken belief that the longer a shopper remains in store the more they will spend. Yet research consistently shows that reducing shopper time by increasing spending speed is the key to success - there is a strong correlation between spending speed and basket size, with large basket shoppers spending up to 10 times less time in store than small basket shoppers.

Talk of engaging shoppers at shelf and creating theatre in store is fine, but nothing engages shoppers more than getting through the store quickly. For this reason, easy shopping has to be the priority.

Summary

Once the goal is shifted from making brands happy to making shoppers happy, the growth challenge for both brands and retailers becomes a great deal easier to resolve. The simple fact is that happy shoppers spend more.

This insight leads to a clear recommendation: make it easy for shoppers to find and buy what they want to buy, and it is possible to grow sales for categories as a whole and the brands within them.

About TNS

TNS advises clients on specific growth strategies around new market entry, innovation, brand switching and stakeholder management, based on long-established expertise and market-leading solutions. With a presence in over 80 countries, TNS has more conversations with the world's consumers than anyone else and understands individual human behaviours and attitudes across every cultural, economic and political region of the world. TNS is part of Kantar, one of the world's largest insight, information and consultancy groups. Please visit <http://www.tnsglobal.com> for more information.

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