



Purchase Decision and Category Management Studies

Brand and Category Managers want to know consumer purchase and shopping behavior, decision hierarchy and consumer motivations in order to effectively influence consumers' purchase habits. Sorensen Associate's In-store Study designs can be tailored to meet specific needs and effectively address these elements at the point-of purchase.

Objectives

Objectives of a study can vary widely, but the following are issues commonly addressed:

- **Shopping Behavior**

- How do consumers shop the category?
- How much time do they spend at the category?
- How many brands/flavors/sizes do they consider prior to purchase?
- Do they look at the side panels prior to purchase?
- What would they purchase instead of the brand they purchased?
- Is the category on their shopping list?
- Is the brand name on their shopping list?

- **Dynamics of Purchase Decision**

What are the key drivers of the purchase decision, into what sequence does each of these elements fall, and where does the consumer make the decision for each of these drivers?

Method

In order to quantify consumers' shopping behavior, an interviewer is unobtrusively positioned to observe the section in question.



- Some measures that can be collected include:
 - % of shoppers passing by the section
 - % of shoppers stopping at the section
 - Average # of seconds spent at the section
 - % of shoppers touching a product and putting it back
 - Average # of packages touched
 - % of shoppers reading the nutritional label
 - % of shoppers who looked at multiple brands vs. "Grab and Go" behavior
 - % of shoppers purchasing multiple brand / multiple flavor
- If follow-up interviews are not required, or to supplement the observation phase of the project, videotaping of shoppers can be employed.

Method (con't)



After the purchase decision has been made, the consumer is approached and asked to participate in a survey to understand the “why” behind their behavior.

- Respondents are asked questions such as:
 - Record brand(s), flavor(s) and size(s) purchased
 - Open-end “Why purchase that brand/flavor/size rather than another?”
 - Review of decision process “What do you look for first as you approach the section? Second? Third?”
 - Reasons behind decision process “Why do you look for that first? Second? Third?”
 - Substitution (“If this were not available, what would you have purchased instead?”)
 - Products, brands or flavors considered before purchase, if any?
 - Open-end “When did you decide to buy the product?”
 - Importance rating of the purchase criteria (brand, flavor, price, size, etc.)
 - Rating of the brand for each of the purchase criteria (brand, flavor, price, size)
 - Shopping list review
 - Coupon or TPR (temporary price reduction) usage
 - Demographic and Classification questions

Deliverables



Sorensen Associates’ 25 years observing and interacting with shoppers provides the experience and understanding of shopper behavior that ensures an effective study design to address your objectives.

- **How Consumers shop the category through In-store observation**
 - Do they approach the shelf knowing exactly what they want, or do they scan the shelf considering several options prior to making their decision (Stop & Shop vs. Grab & Go)?
 - Do they inspect the nutritional information or not?
 - Do they read the back, side or front panels of the package?
- **How consumers move from visiting a section, to shopping a category, and then purchasing a product.** Through direct shopper interaction there is identification of the purchase decision tree, discovery of purchase decision drivers, and the knowledge of when and how these drivers can be impacted. Consumer behaviors are clarified and consumers’ perceptions of each brand can be mapped.
- **Working closely with you, Sorensen Associates’ insightful, and strategic analysis provides the information you need to adjust promotion strategies and/or packaging.**

Purchase Decisions

If most of the decisions are being made at the shelf, then more POS promotion would be advisable. However, if “Grab and Go” is the dominant behavior, it is clear that the consumer’s decision was made prior to reaching the shelf and promotion activities would be most effective reaching the consumer at home or outside the store.

If the first purchase decision driver is Brand, the package should put more emphasis on the brand name. However, if the first element consumers look for is a flavor or variety, they should be called out on the package.