

Supermarket Surveys Give Tips on Consumer Buying Habits

Many of the findings made by marketing experts who have extensively investigated supermarket buying habits of the American consumer can be used by the pro to increase sales in his shop.

An article in the December 1955 issue of *Esquire* magazine describing the investigations made by the market analysts, states that a huge portion of the supermarket volume comes as the result of impulse buying. Nearly 50 per cent of the shoppers walk out with at least one item they didn't intend to buy when they came into the store. Sales psychologists attribute this to the happy and well ingrained American habit of thinking, "Well, I can always use it." Surprisingly, men tend to outdo women when it comes to impulse buying.

Displays That Discourage

Beautiful displays, according to the investigators, discourage rather than encourage sales. Customers are unwilling to destroy the symmetry of a well contrived display design, preferring to put off buying rather than disturb it. The suggestion here is if you're particularly artistic in setting up a display, arrange it so that

your customers can break into it without feeling they have ruined a masterpiece.

There's even a feeling that "dump" displays move more merchandise than elaborate ones. The secret is to arrange the merchandise in them so that the labels are turned up. This, it is said, leads to reading of the fine print describing the products' ingredients and ultimate sales if the customer is sufficiently impressed.

Hand-Lettered Signs Best

Reaction to signs is approximately the same as to displays. A homely, hand-lettered sign, it is claimed, attracts more attention than one set in type or drawn by a professional sign painter. At one supermarket, sales are said to have increased when the sign painting chore was turned over to stock boys and the store junked its carefully lettered signs.

It has been fairly well established that an item priced at two for 29 cents often will outsell the same article at 14 cents apiece. The reasoning behind this is that many shoppers are somewhat inadequate when it comes to handling figures. For example, many people, according to surveys, have the irrational conviction that 19 cents amount to only one-half of 20



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cents. On top of this, there is thought to be some kind of magic in a price tag that carries a final figure, 9.

Tests show a higher priced article will outsell a lower priced one even if they are identical and placed side by side on a counter. For example, if you were to display two putters of identical brand and quality side by side, pricing one at \$5 and the other at \$3.95, odds are the higher priced club will sell first. What's more, market researchers say this will happen even if you, or an employee of your pro shop, stands behind the counter and explains there is absolutely no difference between the two putters.

Moving out of the supermarket, the market men have found that buyers largely seek their counterparts in the cigarettes and automobiles they purchase. Dynamic fellows, it is claimed, prefer stronger

brands of cigarettes and more powerful cars than Caspar Milquetoast types. Perhaps these are points the pro should keep in mind when he is fitting a member for a new set of clubs or selling him golf or wearing apparel.

The whole subject of buying psychology is one the pro can profitably indulge in.

College Tournaments

May will be a busy month for collegiate golfers. The Southern Conference tournament is scheduled for Danville, Va. on the 4th and 5th; the Atlantic Coast conference will hold its annual meet on the 11th and 12th while the Western Conference championship is carded for the 25th and 26th in Evanston, Ill. The NCAA tournament will be held on the Ohio State course, Columbus, June 24-30.

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