

## Consumer behaviour

There have been, and will continue to be, many studies of consumer behaviour. The questions surrounding customers' purchasing patterns have been asked since the first retailer set up shop thousands of years ago, and they continue to intrigue researchers and the retail industry.

Here are some fundamental facts about consumer behaviour and spending:

### Influences

Consumers' behaviour is influenced by the wide variety of groups to which they belong, or wish to belong. This may include family, friends, social clubs and athletic teams. Each group develops its own set of 'normal' behaviour and attitudes, which dictate their buying habits. For example, surfers tend to wear certain types and brands of clothing and younger children are interested in toys.

### When consumers buy

A retailer should be able to determine three periods when customers buy: the season, the day of the week and the time of day. For example, swimwear is most popular during the summer months, pensioners tend to shop late in the week, and children buy drinks and lollies before and after school. Knowing these buying trends enables you to stock the right product, have the staff levels when most needed and target the right people.

### Where consumers buy

Retailers must recognise that many purchase decisions are not simply made in the store. In fact, most customers decide to make their purchase before they go to a store, and then make their final decision once in the store.

### Mode of travel

This can also determine what a customer buys and where your store should be located. Some travel in their own car and shop where parking is convenient. Some are prepared to walk and others are not. You may need to consider trolleys for some or carry the goods to the car for others. Public transport travellers can't carry heavy or bulky goods and may need delivery services.

### Family decisions

Some purchase decisions are made by more than one family member, such as houses, holidays or furniture. The shopping times and days will vary depending on the family mix.



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## Prior contact

Some customers like to get information before they visit a business. They may telephone around for comparison of service, price, features and other purchase decisions and then travel to the store or stores with the best information. Preparing yourself for this person can impress the customer to consider you as one of the businesses to visit. Price is one of the deciding factors in purchase but usually not the main reason initially. If price is the only difference then customers will choose the lowest price.

## Further information

The following fact sheet provides further information on these issues:

- Marketing plan