SURVEY: IN PANDEMIC, IT’S ALL ABOUT SAVINGS

When it comes to brand choice, most U.S. grocery shoppers are opting for value during the coronavirus crisis, a new survey from Inmar Intelligence shows.

Of 1,000 consumers surveyed in November, 61% reported switching purchase loyalty to less-expensive brands since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Inmar said.

Shoppers polled were clear that they won’t hesitate to try new products to save money, Inmar found. Over 70% said they have actively searched for new types of grocery products or brands during the pandemic, and 83% aim to buy these new products again. Grocery customers said cost (cited by 67%) and sales/coupons (51%) were the chief reasons they purchased the new items and brands.

Meanwhile, 39% said they shop for groceries more frequently and 43% have used a grocery store’s mobile app to place orders since the outbreak began.

“COVID-19 continues to impact today’s shoppers, who are searching for new ways to save money, especially in terms of groceries,” according to David Mounts, chairman and CEO of Inmar, a provider of data-driven technology services for retailers and manufacturers. “The survey findings suggest that shoppers expect retailers to provide more promotions and have expressed their willingness to try new brands because of it. So it is crucial for retailers and CPG brands to provide cost-savings opportunities, whether this be coupons or other promotional activities to maintain store traffic and protect customer loyalty.”

Indeed, 80% of shoppers surveyed indicated they’re actively seeking grocery deals — including via coupons and promotions — while 92% think grocery brands should be doing more to bring savings to consumers. And their shopping behavior bears that out, as 59% shop more frequently at stores that provide coupons or promotions, which Inmar noted are more likely to earn repeat business.

“With additional stimulus still a question mark, and likely a ‘2021 thing,’ the economic pressure consumers are already feeling is growing, alongside increased consumer demand for brands and retailers to help them stretch their grocery budgets,” said Holly Pavlika, SVP of corporate marketing at Inmar. “Promotions have not been a priority for many trading partners during these past months, but data from our latest shopper survey shows that needs to change.”

Currently, it behooves retailers and brands to engage with customers to provide “personalized and consistent” promotions, and to some extent they’re falling short, Inmar said. Forty percent of shoppers polled report fewer coupons being available, even though 36% said sales and specials influence which stores they shop.

ADVERTISER NEWS

Holiday shoppers are expected to fuel a crush in online sales and delivery demand, spurring Amazon to encourage customers to choose alternatives, including in-store pickup and no-rush shipping. Traditional retailers including Macy’s and Target are also incentivizing no-rush delivery, and Timberland has vowed to plant a tree each time a customer chooses a slower option… About 150 General Motors dealers have decided to part ways with Cadillac, rather than invest in costly upgrades required to sell electric cars, indicating some retailers are skeptical about making the pivot to battery-powered vehicles. The Wall Street Journal reports. GM recently gave Cadillac dealers a choice: Accept a buyout offer to exit the brand or spend roughly $200,000 on dealership upgrades — including charging stations and repair tools — to get their stores ready to sell electric vehicles... Hyundai Motor is recalling 129,000 U.S. vehicles for an engine issue that can increase the risk of a fire, U.S. regulators said last week. The recall covers some 2015-2016 Veloster, 2012 Santa Fe, 2011-2013 Sonata Hybrid, and 2016 Sonata Hybrid vehicles because connecting rod bearings inside the engine may wear prematurely, which over time can result in engine damage. Dealers will conduct inspections and if bearing damage is found, the engine will be replaced, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said... Francesca’s Holdings Corp. has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Francesca’s filed with an intention to sell its business. The investment firm TerraMar Capital or an affiliate has agreed to become the stalking-horse bidder in a bankruptcy auction, according to a statement by Francesca’s. Francesca’s existing lender, Tiger Finance, has committed to provide $25 million in debtor-in-possession financing. In November, Francesca’s said it was considering its options, including bankruptcy, and revealed plans to close some 140 of its approximate 700 stores... FedEx will acquire e-commerce company ShopRunner, whose purchase and shipping platform is used by over 100 brands, and operate it as (Continued on Page 3)
AMAZON FIRE TV ADDING LOCAL NEWS CONTENT

Major market local TV stations and their newscasts will be getting a boost with TV news content distribution deals on Amazon Fire TV, the streaming OTT and app service with 40 million monthly active users.

Newscasts from 12 local U.S. TV stations, including New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Chicago, Dallas, Atlanta, Houston, Miami, Tampa, Boston, San Francisco and Seattle, will be added to Amazon’s news app. Another 90 will join in 2021.

Amazon Fire TV deals have been made with Walt Disney’s ABC owned-and-operated stations, Altice USA, ViacomCBS’ CBSN, the E.W. Scripps Company and Cox.

The app already offers free live and on-demand news from ABC News Live, CBS News, Reuters, Entertainment Weekly, Black News Channel and Cheddar.

Amazon sees growth in news viewership, pointing to 48% higher news consumption this year, according to Nielsen.

Pressure from the shrinking traditional pay-TV marketplace — in addition to regular difficult, ongoing retransmission negotiation deals between pay-TV providers and TV stations — are focusing more TV station groups to find ways to extend scale and increased monetization.

DONE DEAL

Mission Broadcasting said that following its November acquisition of KWBQ-TV and KASY-TV in Albuquerque, N.M., from Tamer Media, it was promoting Taunya Tourville-Bennett to station manager and general sales manager at the duopoly. Tourville-Bennett joined the station when KWBQ signed on in 1999. The station was owned by Acme, which added KASY later that year.

As an account executive, she was the top salesperson at the stations, rising to local sales manager when Acme sold them to Tamer. With her new promotion, Tourville-Bennett succeeds John Viai, who owned Tamer Media.

THIS AND THAT

The share of Americans who say they plan to get vaccinated against the coronavirus has increased as the public has grown more confident that the development process will deliver a safe and effective vaccine. Overall, according to the Pew Research Center, 60% of Americans say they would definitely or probably get a vaccine if one were available today, up from 51% who said this in September. Yet 21% of U.S. adults don’t intend to get vaccinated and are “pretty certain” more information will not change their mind. Based on its most recent trending data, including the month of March, the U.S. ad market is pacing to end on a positive note heading into Q4, according to a year-end 2020 analysis published by Standard Media Index. The report shows October ad spending growing 1% over October 2019, and follows three consecutive quarters of year-over-year declines, though Q3 included some momentum for August and September, indicating a U.S. ad recovery is fully underway.

AVAILS

Bahakel Communications seeks a General Manager for WFXB/FOX in Myrtle Beach, S.C. The GM is responsible for the strategic and operational leadership of WFXB, with emphasis on local advertising sales and national advertising sales. The GM handles national sales through WFXB’s national rep. The GM will establish strategy to grow profitability of station assets, online and on-air, and is responsible for the success and profitability of the station. To apply, send your resume via e-mail to: wfxbcareers@wfxb.com, EOE.

WSCC-TV (CBS) Account Executive: Do you have a strong competitive drive and determination to win? Are you a natural relationship builder and collaborator? If so, a fantastic opportunity awaits at the top media outlet in the “No. 1 City in the World,” Charleston, S.C. You will have the opportunity to sell across all WCSC’s television and digital platforms, providing advertising solutions to new customers that will help them generate sales and increase profitability. Previous broadcast sales experience preferred. Please apply HERE. EOE.

WSLS-TV, the Graham Media/NBC affiliate in Roanoke/Lynchburg, Va., is seeking a dynamic, enthusiastic and results-oriented Account Executive. The AE will sell WSLS-TV, Me TV Roanoke, WSLS.com and their advanced Omne digital solutions. Primary focus is on developing and growing a new client base. Candidate must be able to learn, understand and pitch the vast array of multimedia advertising opportunities available. To apply, please attach cover letter and resume via email to: amower@wsls.com. No calls, please. EOE.

See your ad here tomorrow! CLICK HERE for details.

TOYOTA PLANNING ANOTHER SUPER BOWL SPOT

Toyota is returning to the Super Bowl with its fourth consecutive commercial, making it the first automaker to confirm its commitment to the game.

Jack Hollis, senior VP of automotive operations at the company, confirmed Toyota’s presence in the game last week, Ad Age reports. In 2020, the automaker used the Big Game to kick off a campaign for its Highlander.

Toyota will once again work with creative agency of record Saatchi & Saatchi on the campaign. The company did not provide details on how many ads it will run in the game, or the tone of the creative. In 2019, Toyota plugged the RAV4 and Supra with two separate ads.

While Toyota is the first automaker to confirm it will run an ad in the game, it is also likely that General Motors will return to plug its new Hummer EV. GM is expected to air one ad featuring its new Hummer electric vehicle and one ad for another one of its brands, Ad Age says.

The auto category is expected to be lighter in Super Bowl LV as the industry grapples with the fallout of the pandemic. Other brands confirmed to air ads in Super Bowl LV, which is slated to air on Feb. 7 on CBS, include Mars Wrigley and WeatherTech.
SAVVY HIGHER-INCOME ADULTS WATCH TV
Higher-income adults protect their wealth by being smart consumers, such as using coupons or grocery store flyers.

According to The Media Audit’s 60-market 2020 Aggregate Survey, 37.5% of adults 18+ with incomes of $75,000 or more and 22.2% of adults 18+ with incomes of $100,000 or more did so during the past month – and more than 90% are engaged with TV during the average day.

“Because discounts and coupons are important to these higher-income adults, they are also prime targets for luxury brands and retailers that promote special prices and packages with a strong TV presence,” said Nick Miller, VP, The Media Audit.

Separating all adults into the two primary age groups, 18–49 and 50+, reveals those with incomes of $75,000 or more and use coupons or grocery store flyers are almost equal in their daily television viewing, or 92.8% and 94.7%, respectively.

The “upscale/luxury” connection is also found in The Media Audit data from its 60-market 2020 Aggregate Survey, as 11.7% of adults 18-49 who use coupons or grocery store flyers own a luxury vehicle: BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Lexus, Infinity, Jaguar or Porsche. Of those 50+, 19% have liquid assets of $250,000+

Seeking bargains, discounts and special prices is a common consumer habit for Americans of every age and income level. It’s those with higher incomes, however, who have more money to spend and TV is the ad medium to engage with these moneyside adults.

U.S. TELEMEDICINE USERS TO TOP 40M IN 2020
This year, 41.7 million adults in the U.S. will use telemedicine, representing 98.8% growth from a year prior, according to the latest estimates from eMarketer.

The research firm expects this behavior to stick and for growth to continue through the end of its forecast period in 2023, when the number of users is expected to be more than triple that of 2019. By the end of 2023, eMarketer says, there will be 64 million telemedicine users.

Data from CivicScience published in July also signals a change in telemedicine adoption. For example, in January, just 11% of U.S. adults said they had used telemedicine. That figure more than tripled by July. During that same time period, the percentage of respondents who reported having no plans to use telemedicine — or simply no awareness of it — decreased by 25 percentage points.

In the same survey, CivicScience looked to gauge the quality of telemedicine visits relative to in-person visits. While more than half of U.S. adults who had tried telemedicine said the quality was lower, 42% said it was about the same.

“Telemedicine adoption has grown exponentially since the advent of COVID-19,” said Rini Mukhopadhyay, eMarketer forecasting analyst at Insider Intelligence. “Historically, U.S. consumers have been a little slow to adopt telemedicine due to their lack of insurance and concerns over the quality of telemedicine visits. However, slowly, more consumers are willing to adapt to the unique characteristics of seeing a health professional digitally.”

245,000 JOBS ADDED IN NOV. AS HIRING SLOWS
U.S. job growth slowed sharply in November, suggesting the labor-market recovery is losing steam amid a surge in coronavirus cases and new business restrictions, The Wall Street Journal reports.

Employers added 245,000 jobs last month, down from 610,000 jobs in October, the Labor Department reported Friday. The unemployment rate edged down slightly to 6.7% in November from 6.9% a month earlier, but that was partly because fewer Americans were seeking work.

November marked the seventh consecutive month of job gains at a steadily cooling pace. The labor market has now regained 12 million of the 22 million jobs lost at the onset of the pandemic.

Employers boosted jobs in transportation and warehousing last month, likely reflecting holiday hiring for e-commerce roles. Government payrolls declined by nearly 100,000, largely reflecting the roll-off of temporary workers hired for the 2020 census. Employment also fell in the retail category that includes bricks-and-mortar stores.

ADVERTISER NEWS
(Continued from Page 1)
a subsidiary... Walgreens Boots Alliance, in partnership with VillageMD, will open another 40 full-service physician-staffed Village Medical clinics by the end of next summer. The partnership launched in July when Walgreens invested $1 billion in VillageMD and announced plans to open up to 700 of the clinics over the next five years... Several Costco stores have started selling plant-based meatballs from Beyond Meat — news that came on the heels of the retailer’s new animal welfare policy, which bans the use of cages in Costco’s global egg supply chain. The retailer reported a 14.2% increase in same-store sales in November and a 70.9% increase in online sales... Credit card purchases at sporting goods retailers were up 28% in stores and 210% online for the week ending Nov. 27, according to Facteus. Other verticals seeing gains in digital and physical sales were discounters, electronics and men’s and women’s clothing... Food and drug chain Hy-Vee plans to hire 1,000 pharmacy technicians as it works to expand coronavirus testing and prepare for the distribution of COVID-19 vaccinations. Iowa-based Hy-Vee said it aims to add both full- and part-time licensed pharmacy techs at its 270-plus pharmacies to bolster support for its pharmacists. The company noted that a resurgence in the incidence of COVID-19 in the U.S. is hiking the demands on health care professionals nationwide.

SATURDAY NIELSEN RATINGS - LIVE + SAME DAY

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