

EMERGE SMARTER

eBOOK INSIGHTS

Landing In Moms Shopping Cart

Exploring the decision-making processes of moms and kids, and how to strengthen brand loyalty in any category.

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IN 2006, CHILD ADVOCACY GROUPS BEGAN TO CALL INTO QUESTION WHAT WAS BEING DONE REGARDING ADVERTISING TO CHILDREN AND WHAT TYPES OF FOOD PRODUCTS, IN PARTICULAR, WERE BEING ADVERTISED TO THEM. SINCE THEN, LARGE FOOD PRODUCTION COMPANIES HAVE FOLLOWED SELF-REGULATORY GUIDELINES FOR WHAT TYPES OF PRODUCTS THEY WILL ADVERTISE TO KIDS, AND HOW TO DO SO.

At C+R Research, we're often surprised and delighted by the roles kids and moms play when it comes to food purchases for their families. As a trusted research partner, clients come to us with a long list of questions regarding these roles. For instance, how do purchase decisions get made? What is going on in the minds of kids and moms before, during and after a purchase? How does something get in the cart the first time, and how can a brand or product stay there?

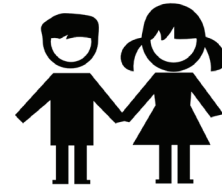
As a result of our years of industry contributions and some recent exploratory research, we've compiled a list of eight circus-based themes to get you thinking about these roles. We hope you find them helpful.

EIGHT PURCHASE DECISION THEMES AMONG MOMS AND THEIR KIDS

1. Acrobatic Team Shopping

Shopping for moms and their kids is kind of a push-pull experience. We've discovered that kids are a key player in really every category of products, not just food. For instance, when we asked kids, shoes (43%) and clothes (38%) are two of the Top 10 things they feel they have a say in when it comes to purchase decisions. This is interesting because we don't always think of young children as being fashion mavens. But if you think these numbers seem too high, we would encourage you to talk to seven-year-olds and try to convince them to wear something to school that they don't want to wear!

Among the food categories in which they say they have a lot of influence are cereal, fruit snacks and ice cream. And, some categories such as candy, juice, pastries, granola bars, and even chewing gum are often asked for by brand name specifically.



How YouthBeat categorizes kids.

At YouthBeat, we believe organizing kids by grade (first through fourth) is a more realistic representation of their mindstates. For example, a 10-year-old can be in either fourth or fifth grade. A fourth-grader might still be considered an elementary student with a homeroom teacher while a fifth-grader might be considered a middle-schooler with different classes for different subjects. Consequently, each 10-year-old has the potential to view the world he or she navigates through with a different lens.

Kids have this influence because they're present in the places where these products are being purchased. For example, we know that recent winters have been very rough and a lot of Americans have been forced inside their homes. However, we know that kids are still getting out to brick-and-mortar stores. We see that two-thirds of them have been going to mass merchandise stores (65%) like Target and Walmart. That's a lot of kids in the stores having a lot of influence! And, nearly half of them are going to traditional grocery stores with their parents.

2. Walking the Tightrope

There are some food categories in which moms and their kids undergo complex negotiations. Indeed, it's much more like a high-wire act! For instance, almost 50% of kids believe they influence the type of candy and cereal (Top 2) their moms purchase for them. This can be because they ask for a specific brand or because their moms ask them what they want.

But then there are other categories like cookies or toaster pastries where kids exert less influence in the final purchase. For example, when it comes to cookies, 46% of parents make the final decision themselves—they just keep their children's preferences in mind. Consequently, in this particular category, it's important to win over moms as well as their children.

So, which food category is doing a good job of negotiating this complex tightrope when it comes to winning over children but also having something to drive parents' loyalty? Our answer is cereal makers. What we've learned from both quantitative and qualitative research is that moms look for a variety of things in the cereals they purchase for their kids. While kids might be looking for yummy sweet flavors and other things, moms look for low sugar, lots of fiber and a very short list of ingredients. They want to be able to recognize words, know what constitutes their cereals, and understand descriptions. They want to feel good about putting something in their cart for their children over and over again.

3. Elephants Never Forget

Just as elephants have strong memories, so do moms! We asked moms to tell us what thoughts or feelings emerged 'before, during or after' shopping for a product that was specifically for their children. When it came to cereal and fast food, nearly half of them thought about feelings or connections to their own childhood while they were shopping. This is true among other categories of products as well.

For example, when it came to Crayola crayons, one parent shared this with us: *"I love Crayola even as an adult. As soon as I see the familiar Crayola brand and signature logo it takes me back to being a kid, and I want to share those great products with my children so they have wonderful memories of childhood."*

When it comes to LEGO, another parent told us: *"It's a brand that makes me nothing but happy. I loved playing with LEGOs as a child and all four of my sons love them. They're constantly changing to keep up with the times. As my sons outgrow their toys I only keep a select few, but we have never gotten rid of any LEGO and never will."*

These types of comments illustrate the passion or emotional connections moms have to certain products and brands that foster both brand loyalty and the desire to share those experiences with their children. Moms want to relive the enjoyment and excitement of their childhood brands with their own kids.

Easy-Bake Oven, The Avengers and the YMCA are three brands that have been contemporized to fit today's lifestyles. Easy-Bake Oven and The Avengers provide opportunities for moms—or dads—to participate with their children and really share in the excitement while either baking something or watching a movie. And, if mom can't go to camp with her kids, she can really still be part of the anticipation of going to camp as well as sharing in post-camp stories.

We're seeing that kids are not kicking their parents' shins when it comes to purchase decisions, which was the model 15 years ago. Back then, brands wanted to get children nagging their parents, and the 'nag factor' was something to encourage. Nowadays parents are soliciting their children's opinions increasingly for what brands to buy.

4. Creating the Funhouse

From our point of view, the most basic level of needs at retail really must be met before moms will strongly desire or focus on secondary or higher level needs. For example, a store needs to deliver on things like shopability, cleanliness, and safety to meet the most fundamental needs.

One mom we spoke to had this to say regarding a particular store: *“It’s probably the cheapest, but I avoided going there unless absolutely necessary. I prefer Target and Kroger— they’re cleaner and nicer stores.”* The key thing here is that price takes a backseat to the core needs of cleanliness and safety.

As another example, one mom offered this quote regarding her experiences at Publix: *“[It’s] so clean. They always have what I need in stock. The shelves are always full. If for some chance they don’t have something, they’re always willing to work with me. They’re coupon friendly and they have all of these BOGO deals.”*

Or, regarding Chick-fil-A: *“What really catches my eye is the kids being silly and really having a good time together. In fact, there’s a Monday night family night, and the place usually has lots of kids running around and no one really minds the noise or chaos.”* Chick-fil-A has a very limited menu which aids in decision-making. By simplifying selections, the Chick-fil-A experience allows mom and the family to have fun and spend quality time together.

Our last example of creating the funhouse is a recent double campaign between EuropCar and Mattel, the creator of Hot Wheels. When parents went to a EuropCar rental center to rent a car, their children could also rent Hot Wheels cars and were subject to rental contracts like their parents—and even subject to late charges! Essentially, parents and kids were having the same type of shared rental experience in an engaging and fun way.

So what does this mean? Brands need to meet the basic needs of the shopper first, and then elevate the experience to a positive emotional one to differentiate themselves from competitors.



5. The Emotional Roller Coaster

Moms admit to us that they tend to experience a range of emotions in store. Some moms feel very confident, relaxed and prepared having researched what they are looking for. They might even have a list! Some make their purchases based on their children's previous experiences with a product.

Other moms admit to feeling overwhelmed, stressed, frustrated. Sometimes there can be too many choices at shelf for them, or the brands they want are out of stock. Disorganization at shelf can also cause feelings of frustration. They may even feel tensions regarding what their children want, and what they want for their children—usually something healthy.

Some moms feel like they're conquerors, empowered to make savvy decisions in store. They can get something the kids like and that they feel is good for them and at the right price.

Other moms can feel worried and unappreciated. This tends to be triggered by them not feeling confident about their choices. Will their children like it? Will their children be disappointed if they go against the children's wishes?

And, lastly, some moms might feel their family is in a rut so they want to try something different. This is more of an exploratory approach to purchases. They want to get their children and family to try something new and to experience the world in a new way.

So what does this mean for marketers? It means marketers need to find ways to ride the emotional peaks and minimize the lows of this emotional roller coaster. For instance, if a mom feels confident, relaxed and prepared, a marketer might want to find ways to reinforce this confidence. Addressing the needs of consumers is paramount, whether it be making them feel good about the purchases for their kids from a nutritional angle, or finding ways to make a product more appealing and worth a spontaneous purchase.

6. Send in the Clowns

Not all moms have the same DNA when it comes to making purchase decisions. We have discovered three different orientations:

The good mom. This is a mom who really wants to make the best decisions for her children. She feels it's her job to really guide them through

life, provide the nurturing they need, and be the nutritional gatekeeper.

The smart mom. She's similar to the good mom, but for her it's really defining herself first and foremost as a bargain hunter. She takes pride in finding quality products at a good price.

The fun mom. This mom is very close to her children. In fact, she almost wants to be like friends with them, and she wants her children to have fun and be happy all of the time. She relishes surprising and delighting her children and exposing them to new things.

So what does it mean for you? Be relevant for the type of mom you're addressing. For example, think about the good mom. This mom wants reassurance that what she is buying is something both healthy and appealing for her kids. Annie's is a good example of serving this mom. Healthy food is part of the Annie's ethos, and kids enjoy the colorful packaging and fun shapes.

7. Getting on the Right Ride

The core to understanding your category is knowing who is driving your category's purchase decisions, and deciding how you're going to target them through your advertising communications.

For instance, when it comes to kids, we know that almost half of all parents ask their kids about the specific types of clothes and shoes they would like. In contrast, when it comes to personal hygiene products like soap and deodorant, we know that kids have lower involvement when it comes to purchase decisions; so targeting parents is key. Thus, on-package and media messaging in personal hygiene categories often highlights benefits around hypoallergenic ingredients or smells that are not offensive to sensitive and young noses.

8. Winning the Big Prize

How do you know if moms will be loyal to your brand? Developing this loyalty is about providing products and services that result in meaningful payoffs for moms. At C+R, we have identified four core drivers. To really grab a hold of moms' loyalty, you may need to tap into more than one of these.

Survival. What's most basic for parents is to have a safe shopping environment for their kids as well as products that will help their children grow and thrive.

An example of a successful brand that aligns with the survival driver is Wild Oats. This is the Walmart private label brand of organics. Parents understand that choosing organic foods is not just about the food products themselves. It's also about the way they're produced, and what that does to the groundwater, the environment that they're leaving for their kids, and how they're going to survive in their own adulthood.

Teaching. Parents' goals for their children have become more lofty than in previous generations. They want to show their kids how to be good people and how to put their money where their mouth is. Align your brand's messaging to help them with these aspirations.

In terms of giving moms a teaching benefit, we believe the TOMS brand is successful. TOMS has a one-for-one giving policy. So, a mom can buy a pair of shoes, and TOMS will give a pair to someone in a developing country who needs a pair. This is a way that parents can teach their children about a brand they support because it supports who they are as people. They can use the power of their dollars to teach the values they want their children to adopt.

Heroism. That's when a child actually says, "Gosh, mom, thank you." If you're a parent, you know that doesn't happen often, but that is the ultimate payoff. Sometimes it happens more subtly—when moms observe their kids relishing a product.

In the purest sense, moms feel heroism when they snag something for their kids that no one else on the block has yet. Maybe it's an Apple watch or movie tickets. Perhaps it's the limited edition of Count Chocula at Halloween.

Bonding. Some successful brands can create an experience that parents and children really want to share together. An example of a brand that delivers bonding is Jennifer Garner's partnership with Jo-Ann Fabrics which highlights things kids and parents can do together. Any brand that helps parents and kids have fun together will inspire moms' loyalty.

In conclusion, building trial and loyalty with moms is an art as much as a science. Know your category and explore its family decision dynamics. Then make sure you tap into the emotions that matter to moms, and they will come back to you again and again.

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Terrie Wendricks has over 25 years in consumer and shopper insights. She leads our ShopperEyes® division which leverages traditional and non-traditional methodologies to create solutions for both manufacturers and retailers to the challenges of today's rapidly changing retail marketplace. Under her leadership, the division provides a suite of flexible and customizable research approaches to address a range of business topics along the shopper journey.

Prior to joining C+R in 2014, Terrie worked for Hillshire Brands Co., Sara Lee, Kraft Foods, HJ Heinz and The BASES Group. Her passion is leveraging consumer, marketplace, and shopper understanding to build brand strategy and communication, innovation, shopper marketing, and category leadership programs.

Terrie is a recipient of two Advertising Research Foundation Ogilvy Awards and the Path to Purchase Institute's *Who's Who in Shopper Insights*. In addition, she was responsible for driving significant increases in category captaincy and Kantar PoweRankings on providing retailers most actionable shopper insights when at both Kraft and Sara Lee.

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YouthBeat's services are designed to deliver on our mission: To educate, empower, and inspire clients committed to helping make the world a better place for preschoolers, kids, tweens, teens, and their families.

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