

# What pester power can do for your business

There is a surge of freebie campaigns at three major grocery retailers, with Pick n Pay's animal card collection, Spar's Angry Bird 3D cards and Checkers' mini grocery items, leaving parents reeling as to where to shop. A clever move by these retailers who understand what pester power can do for their business.



Picture: [Twitter.com/CheckersSA](https://twitter.com/CheckersSA)

These collectibles are becoming a key differentiator for mass retailers, as there are only so many price cuts to be made before it negatively affects the bottom line.

Andrea Kraushaar, research director of Youth Dynamix, a specialist youth and family research and marketing agency operating in Africa, explains, "Kids love collectibles, they always have. The craze for collectibles was documented back in the 1900s when a cigarette company released a series of collectible cards. However, whether collectibles are a part of an expensive marketing strategy or not, children will always find something to collect, including, stones, seashells, stamps, marbles, sports cards, grey bottle top liners, etc.

## Why children love collectibles:

- They are fun.
- They encourage children to classify, differentiate, count, sort and group objects, which are important developmental milestones, incorporating basic maths skills.
- Collections drive the need for closure and completeness.
- They foster friendships, encourage engagement and improve communication skills.
- They are empowering because children love to display their collection.
- They teach responsibility and value, as the children meticulously keep their collections in check.
- They encourage trade, enabling children to develop entrepreneurial skills.

## What are the negatives?

- The age-old question stands – is it ethical to use collectibles that appeal to children to drive business? Children influence nearly 40% of their family's overall household purchases, without these kinds of incentivised collectibles.

They are also masterful negotiators and can use 'pester power' to influence their parent's choice of retailer and products further.

- Along with pester power, comes the pressure of buying things the family does not need or items that are unhealthy for children, as well as the associated monetary stress.
- If unhealthy products are incentivised, it exacerbates the weight gain and incorrect eating habit problem that is already a great challenge for families and the country alike.

However, what about the pros and cons of the current freebie campaigns in retail stores?

#### **Pros:**

- They are not just aimed at children. Adults are having fun too posting creative expressions using their freebies.
- They are not specifically linked to any kind of product – healthy or unhealthy – consumers have the option to choose what they want to spend R150 on. This also means they will be incentivised for buying the items they specifically need and not have to buy unnecessary items.
- Collectibles add an additional emotional link to a functional brand. For example, whether you go to Pick n Pay or Spar, your overall shopping experience is unlikely to be very different. However, when you add a collectible incentive into the equation, everything changes... You know you will get what you want when you go shopping, while the campaign is running – your next collectible item (or your child's)!
- Collectibles unite people. People can swap their doubles for the collectibles they are missing, sell their extras, meet up to compare their stocks... There is something very sociable about collectibles.

#### **Cons:**

- Some collectibles may be choking hazards for babies and toddlers.
- Not all situations are happy when collectibles are involved. Schools and households can experience unhappy incidents, including children feeling excluded, theft and unhappy endings to negotiation processes.
- Although you do not have to buy specific products, you only are incentivised for every R150 you spend. This may force families to buy more than they need to on a specific shopping trip to maximise their reward.

The reality is that retailers must be shaking in their boots because with the latest 'freebie battle' they have declared on

themselves, they must realise that there really is not much of a war after the collectibles are gone... The bar is set now and retailers will be judged on their next collectible campaign, in between that, shoppers will continue to buy their groceries based on price, convenience and (when miracles happen) customer service trumps.

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