

Shopping for fashion: Money too tight to mention

The recession has impacted on consumers in a big way - so how has it affected SA consumers' shopping habits?

We all know that the recession - coupled with the ever increasing pressures we face as consumers on a day-to-day basis such as fuel increases and e-tolls - has had an obvious and adverse effect on how consumers approach the art of shopping.



The advent of the smart shopper has resulted in changing shopping behaviours across every segment of our population and these days people are thinking a lot harder about what they buy and how they buy their preferred brands and products.

In an attempt to see how financial influences have affected the shopping behaviour of women in the fashion category, Geometry Global, in conjunction with [WhyFive Strategic Insights](#), conducted a ground-breaking study into the shopping habits of fashion-conscious South Africans comprising a substantial sample of 2,600 women

across LSMs 5-10. The results of this survey not only serve to reaffirm what we already know about this category, but also provide valuable insights into the degrees of behavioural change that can be observed in the marketplace today.

The Top Five reasons consumers shop where they do

#1. Money's too tight to mention

40% of respondents selected the 'Having the best prices' box and a further 23% ticked 'fair prices'. So it's more than reasonable to conclude that price is the primary driver for choosing where to shop for clothes. And, also not particularly surprising, this price sensitivity is especially acute among younger shoppers (49%) and less among the older, more affluent ones (29%).

#2. Variety is the spice of life

The next important driver in shop selection is a wide variety of styles and options (39%). This is across the board for all segments of consumers. You can't have too much money, nor, it seems, can you have too much choice when it comes to shopping for women's clothing. Stores seen to offer a wider range will do better than those that do not.



#3. Location, location, location

Next, rather surprisingly, is convenient store location (34%). Never mind things like great brands or service - being in the right place is extremely important. Consumers simply don't want to 'waste' too much money driving across town to shop for clothes. Once again we see the hardest pressed 16-24-year-olds (48%) are the most likely to give convenient location as a reason for choosing one store over another - in this case, limited mobility is clearly a factor.

#4. Good quality

Next is good quality (29%). If you buy clothes less often, by logical deduction, you're wearing the ones you do have for longer. So if clothes have become (a bit) less disposable than they were a few years ago, it stands to reason they need to be of better quality. The research found that 82% of the respondents agree with the suggestion that 'these days clothes are not made to last long' and 91% say 'clothes have to last longer these days because I cannot afford to shop as often as I used to.'

#5. Fashion

At last, fashion gets a mention (22%)! Not surprisingly the younger segment (35% of the sample) are far more likely to choose a store they perceive stocks fashionable clothes, but that means 65% of them didn't mention fashion as a reason for shopping at a specific store. Keeping up with fashion is an expensive pastime and for 70% of respondents, fashion rolls over too fast.

There's no doubt whatsoever that the 'great recession' has caused everyday shoppers to change the way they shop. They have become thriftier, and when thrifty, they are far more likely to make considered rather than impulsive purchases. What the research successfully highlights is the fact that shoppers are far more selective in where they shop and are far more in studious in the way that they shop.



With shoppers being more in control of their shopping behaviour, retailers and brands are turning more to developing behavioural based shopper-marketing strategies - built off solid insights and a clear understanding of who is buying their products. Retailers who have made the investment in clearly defining the *Purchase Decision Journeys* of the shoppers have gone a long way to being more appealing and relevant to shoppers - and positively influencing their behaviour in terms of how they actively engage and shop for brands in their retail environments.

About Geometry Global

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