

Consumer shopping patterns determined by geographics

The [Newspaper Advertising Bureau \(NAB\)](#), in a recent presentation of key market intelligence to leading national retailer, revealed that consumer shopping patterns and retailers target markets are determined by geographics, not demographics.



A focus area of the presentation was the effect that a store's physical location has on shopper awareness and the resulting patronage of a particular outlet. NAB joint MD, Gill Randall, commented, "What's clear is that the concept of proximity has a large role to play in shopper behaviour because unlike previous generations, modern day shoppers are not loyal to a single store."

She went on to explain that against this backdrop, the beauty of community media is that it minimises wastage in two ways. "Firstly, it allows advertisers to avoid coverage of areas where there are no stores as it provides a cost effective, mass market channel that avoids duplication, massive wastage and ineffective (low) penetration."

"One of the biggest challenges"

One of the biggest challenges in this regard is a new set of consumer behavioural patterns, which can be described in one word, "flirtation." The study stressed that South African shoppers are not unique in this regard because it is clear that consumers around the globe enjoy shopping around.

The research also cited trend guru Myra Stark, who has made a career of researching and decoding cultural movements. "If I were asked in a survey if I like to shop I'd say no, but when I look at my behaviour, I see that I'm actually shopping more than my grandmother ever did. In fact I lead 'a shopping life'," says Randa. "In effect, this trend has created loyalty to the activity of shopping, not to a particular store."

She goes on to say that there are so many stores and so many different types of stores, that the loyalty our grandmothers felt to one or two of them, has given way to the freedom to peruse department stores and outlet stores, boutiques and mass merchandisers, category killers and speciality shops - all by the same person.

"Knowing how to navigate the system"

"Today I can be a smart shopper, I can take advantage of the world of choices and I take pride in knowing how to navigate the system. The key insight here is that it's all about; 'look what I found!' not 'look what I bought!' That's the new reality."

The NAB presentation stressed that it is important that retailers understand that when they decide on the location of a store, they are predetermining the profile of their shoppers.

"Geography not demography is reflected in your store traffic and that of every other retailer and shopper profiles closely match the area profile and not some idealised description of a 'brand' shopper. Efficient media selection aims to create mass mental availability of a brand; something we like to call brand salience i.e. the propensity of the brand to come to mind in a buying situation.

"Mass reach is key but so is continuity, because every week, for different reasons, different people are in market for different things. However, we do not know who they are or where or when they will shop. So ideally, you need to maintain continuous mass-market advertising presence," concludes Randall.

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