The Food and Drink Shopping Experience - US - February 2013

Report Price: £2466.89 | $3995.00 | €3133.71

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"Securing longstanding patronage will come from creating a sense of investment in the food and drink retailer brand. This can come from developing a two-way relationship with consumers, allowing shoppers to feel as if stores are catering to their specific shopping lists and providing affordable products."

– Beth Bloom, Food and Drink Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- Where are consumers shopping for food and drink?
- How can retailers attract food and drink shoppers?
- How can retailers inspire loyalty in an ever-growing marketplace?
- How can nontraditional retailers grow food and drink sales?

Food and drink retail options are vast. Spurred by recession-driven consumer demand for product affordability at one end and enhanced product quality at the other, outlets for the purchase of food and drink have ballooned in recent years, and consumer behavior indicates that shoppers are taking advantage of the wider range of offerings.

Supermarkets and mass merchandisers top the list of channels at which consumers do any food/drink shopping, with 87% of consumers utilizing both of these channels. However, even the smallest channel measured in this report (internet retailers) claims the patronage of nearly one quarter of shoppers. Supermarkets are the primary food/drink purchase location among slightly more than half of consumers, while one quarter most often shop at Walmart for these items. Familiarity and access contribute to the success of these leading channels. Despite the increasing availability of products across retail outlets, supermarkets still offer the largest selection under one roof. This is especially important when considering the role convenience plays in consumer behavior here, with some 82% of respondents to Mintel's custom survey preferring to shop at stores that carry all the products they need.

However, supermarket dominance when it comes to consumer food and drink expenditures is waning. Whereas the channel represented 67.4% of expenditures on food and drink for off-premise consumption in 2002, it claimed a lower 62.7% in 2012. What's more, a slightly higher percentage of consumers indicate shopping less at supermarkets for food and drink in 2012 than indicated increasing their shopping at the channel. Dollar stores, mass merchandisers, and club stores grew patronage during this time, pointing to an interest in cost savings among food and drink shoppers.

Market trends should continue to challenge supermarket dominance as the availability of products continues to increase. Further, a changing U.S. population, with a growing percentage of Hispanic shoppers, as well as an expanding base of non-white consumers who exhibit a greater willingness to patronize nontraditional food outlets, also should contribute to this shift. Food and drink retailers will need to tap into consumer interest in convenience, affordability, health, and product quality to establish and maintain viability in the marketplace.

This report focuses on retail locations that sell food and drink for off-premise consumption and offers sales trend and profiles of major players in the U.S. market, as well as a detailed exploration of consumer attitudes, usage, and shopping behaviors in these categories.

DID YOU KNOW?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

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