

White Goods - UK - April 2010

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What is this report about?

The white goods sector has been hit hard by the dual impact of the recession and a slump in the housing market, with sales declining sharply in both 2008 and 2009. However, following two very tough years, a return to a positive growth cycle is long overdue and there were signs towards the end of 2009 of a partial recovery in sales. The big question is, will this recovery be able to be sustained into 2010, particularly given the uncertain economic outlook following the general election?

What have we found out?

- When replacing white goods, the key concern for consumers is reducing future household bills: more than two-thirds of adults look for higher energy-efficiency rating when choosing white goods, with 45% looking for appliances that run on less water.
- More 'intelligent' technology that makes cooking and household chores easier and produces better results is being incorporated into appliances. One in four adults (12 million) would like technology that selects the best settings/times for cooking, washing, etc, while self-cleaning ovens (48%) and quicker wash cycles (44%) are also in demand.
- The multichannel combination of website and stores needs to be developed so both inject more excitement and put more emphasis on 'showcasing' products. Four in ten use the internet to compare prices and then buy in store, one in five make comparisons online and buy on the internet, and one in eight look around the shops first and then buy online.
- Thirty percent of adults wait for the sales to get a better product for their budget. Retailers should communicate with those consumers who wait for the sales by sending them information about the best upcoming deals or inviting them to preview events.
- Building and retaining brand trust is crucial in the white goods market. Half the adult population stick to well-known brands that they trust, but only one in eight stick to the same brand for most of their large kitchen appliances.
- Stores need staff to engage more with customers through better knowledge of the products backed up by in-store working appliances that bring the Apple store experience to the white goods market. More than a quarter of adults prefer to talk to staff about products before buying.

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