

Women's Fashion Lifestyles - UK - November 2009

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What is this report about?

The recession has impacted women's attitudes towards buying outerwear – primarily meaning that they have been reprioritising their spending, whether that is cutting back and buying cheaper items, or cutting back and investing in fewer but higher-quality garments.

All retailers are under intense pressure with margins squeezed due to higher sourcing costs and the weak Pound. The challenge is to find ways to add extra value into the products and enhance consumers' purchase motivations, but without increasing prices (too much).

What have we found out?

- The women's outerwear market is estimated to be worth £20.7bn in 2009, a 2% decline on 2008, as incomes are being squeezed and many consumers have started to cut back. However, a small recovery in the women's outerwear market is expected in 2010.
- Mintel's research shows that over 8 million women say they don't need any excuse to buy clothes. This indicates they are willing to buy at any time, including on impulse.
- A special occasion inspires more than half of women to shop for new clothes. Some sixty percent of the 35-44 year-olds are most likely to state this, with over half of the 16-24 year-olds and those aged over 65 least likely to say this. Younger women are most likely to enjoy shopping overall as part of their sociable lives, so shopping for a special occasion is more of a specific motivation for older women, who may have fewer special/social occasions than the 35-44 year-olds.
- Mintel's consumer data also found that 7.2 million women say that they enjoy shopping on their own, instead of with their family or friends. The largest proportion of these are the more affluent 35-54 year-olds, with families. Shopping alone can be a precious 'me time'. Most 16-24 year-olds shop with friends/family and see shopping as part of their social lives.
- Just under 7 million women love browsing around stores before buying, and this is fairly evenly spread across all the age groups. This means that 'window shopping' is alive and well despite the growth of the internet.
- The growth within women's outerwear will be driven by increasing numbers of affluent women, greater choice, the larger size and older age opportunity being more actively exploited and women wanting to look good whatever age they are - especially in an ongoing tough job market - with more of them interested in buying better quality.

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