

The fun of shopping



By Charu Harish*

Australians are lagging behind the rest of Asia Pacific when it comes to their enjoyment of shopping. Here's how to fix it.

Shopping is a buzz word for any woman who wants to have some fun or to beat the blues. Retail therapy is on an upswing, with one in two shoppers in Asia associating their time in shopping centres or supermarkets with fun.

It's all about shopping for smiles more than shopping for products, but the moment we shift our focus to Australia, this smile transforms into a frown with the figure dropping to just 14 per cent satisfaction.

Australians generally do not feel happy, relaxed or adventurous when they are shopping. Not only are they least positive, they are also most negative. For them, shopping is a monotonous chore that needs to be done, and one in 10 feel rushed to complete this mundane task.

So how can brands turn these shopping frowns upside down? What is it that will help Australian shoppers feel connected with brands instore and convert this rushed and monotonous chore into a pleasant experience?

Unlike the rest of Asia where it is all about delivering experiences and variety that heightens the adventure and happiness quotient, the challenge facing Australian brands presents the other extreme.

It is about diminishing the negatives and delving into the minds of Aussie shoppers to identify the nature of engagement and experience that will drive a dramatic shift from these negative moods.

Grey and G2 Asia Pacific's Eye



on Asia retail study highlights three ways to wipe the frowns and transform the Australian shopper experience.

Keep it simple and efficient

Of all markets in Asia, Australians spend the least amount of time shopping. The average Asian shopper spends 52 minutes in a store (hypermarket/supermarket) but Australians spend only 35 minutes. They like to get in, and get out. They are also least likely to look for information instore and are not keen to get staff advice.

Given this attitude, product demonstrations and trials, which have been proven influential for Asian shoppers, are noticed by less than six per cent of Australian shoppers in

hypermarkets or supermarkets.

Authentic brands and simple store layouts make the experience more efficient for them. This, coupled with instore communications that assist navigation and drive simplicity, help target the shopping frowns effectively.

Window shopping from the comforts of home

With the multitude of choices available instore, only 33 per cent of Koreans and 34 per cent of Japanese plan their category purchase prior to entering a store. However, 59 per cent of Australians spend considerable time pre-planning their category purchase, with 40 per cent of them knowing exactly what brands they want. They go by the phrase "I

have a template on the computer that I just edit and print out before shopping.”

Along with a thorough pantry check, the list is a result of a keen study of store catalogues and internet browsing. For example, when buying a beauty product, 21 per cent of Australians refer to store catalogues before going to the shops.

Store catalogues help them check availability, information, and compare prices of brands and products. Another factor contributing to their purchase is word of mouth influence as Australians tend to consider brands that are trusted by their family and friends.

The need for window shopping indicates that it would be effective to focus on increasing brand preference and loyalty via information-rich mediums so that

shoppers know exactly what they want before they hit the store.

Ideas that transform everyday chores into experiences

For the unhappy Australian shopper, supermarkets are now a place of discovery. They can discover new products and ideas to transform their mundane chores into fresh experiences. In particular, when it comes to food, supermarkets are getting Australians in the mood to cook and encouraging them to look at food and cooking as an inspiring part of life.

For example, Coles is leveraging his by offering consumers practical and affordable food inspiration in the form of recipe cards which help them discover more instore. Part of the discovery experience includes smelling fresh produce and looking

for ingredients that complement them.

According to Grey and G2's Eye on Asia, the shopper purchase decision journey is not linear anymore and brands have an opportunity to influence decision-making not only instore but also outside.

This is increasingly important, as brands need to get into their consumers' minds and get them connected through relevant experiences for them to enjoy their shopping experience. In this scenario, it is increasingly important to identify the mindsets and connect consumers through relevant experiences that will turn those shopping frowns upside down.

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