

# Consumer Trends: Canadian Shopping Habits

TORONTO (PRNewswire) — For 10 years the BrandSpark Canadian Shopper Study has shone a spotlight on Canadian consumers' shopping habits; this year marks the biggest study to date with 102,980 Canadians surveyed about their everyday purchasing decisions. Shoppers revealed their attitudes towards topics including: the economy, the environment, food and nutrition, health and beauty habits, purchase decision influencers, media habits, and new technology.

The study's consumer trends were compiled in collaboration with academic partner Wilfrid Laurier School of Business & Economics. The study results are also used to compile winners for the tenth annual Best New Product Awards (BNPAs) - Canada's most credible consumer packaged goods (CPG) awards program. This year there were 216 products that made the final cut and were entered into the competition across a total of 70 CPG categories. For a complete list of winning products, please visit [www.BestNewProductAwards.ca](http://www.BestNewProductAwards.ca) [1].

"Now in its tenth year in Canada, the BrandSpark Canadian Shopper Study and the Best New Product Awards have provided an annual forum for the voices of Canadian consumers to be heard," said Robert Levy, President and CEO of BrandSpark International and Founder of the Best New Product Awards. "As the program continues to gain momentum in Canada and around the globe, we are able to reveal trending data about the opinions and habits of shoppers and insights that help marketers and manufacturers innovate and improve their products and offerings to better meet the needs of consumers."

### Canadian Consumer Trends from this Year's Study include:

- **Environment: Consumer Skepticism - 60% believe claims are exaggerated or misleading**

Seventy per cent of Canadians are concerned about global warming, same as in 2012 and 67% believe global warming is due to human activity. Environmental concern is becoming more entrenched after trending high for several years, and is expected to become a more important purchase driver in the coming years. Manufacturers need to ensure their environmental claims are valid as Canadians are increasingly skeptical with 60% believing that environmentally friendly claims are often exaggerated or misleading. Even though only 40% of Canadians are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products, more than 70% appreciate when manufacturers cover the costs of production and offer environmental benefits without increased costs.

- **Private Label versus Brand Names: No Picky Eaters Here — 50% regularly purchase store brand food**

More than 50% of Canadians typically identify product types on their

shopping list and decide on the brand once in store. More than 60% of Canadians believe store brands are good value for the money with 90% of Canadians purchasing store brands versus name brands in the past year. Canadians still see value in trusted brand names and more than 50% will buy brand name products on sale. Trust in private label is strongest in the food and beverage category with more than 50% of Canadians regularly purchasing store brand dry food, frozen vegetables and bottled water. Conversely health and beauty products have stronger brand name loyalty with over 30% of shoppers stating that they would never purchase private label deodorant or makeup.

- **Economy: Is the Recession Over? - 35% believe the country is in recession down from 61%**

There has been a major shift in the economic outlook of Canadians. Only 35% still believe the country is in recession, down from 61% in 2012. Despite the change in outlook only 18% feel their family is better off financially than six months earlier, while 24% believe they are worse off, and only 37% agreed that they have no fear of losing their job. Seventy-seven per cent of Canadians indicated they would continue to be careful with their money even if the economy improves. Value perception will continue to be central to the success of new CPG products with 80% of Canadians agreeing that they are always looking for ways to reduce spending on everyday items.

- **New Product Interest: Build a Better 'Mousetrap' - 67% will pay more for a new product**

With thousands of new products launched each year, the battle for relevance continues on supermarket shelves. While success is never guaranteed, Canadians continue to be interested in new products. In fact 67% of Canadians say they are willing to pay more for a new product that is better than what is currently available. Canadians believe that research and development is key for new product innovation with 64% believing that new really does mean improved for health products, 59% for household care, 57% for personal care and 57% for food products.

- **Shopping Habits: What's on the List? - 80% use hand written shopping lists**

Even though nearly 47% of Canadian shoppers own a smartphone, the majority, more than 80%, still use a hand written shopping list. However, 30% of shoppers aged 18-34 indicated storing their shopping list on their phone regularly or occasionally. Even with a shopping list in hand 69% of shoppers indicate that they will "walk all the aisles to be sure not to miss anything I need," while 28% are "mission-shoppers" who only grab the items on their list and aim to be finished as soon as possible. Interestingly, the study revealed 33% of consumers indicated they specify brands for some products on their written list.

- **Purchase Influencers: Flyers Still Fly - 90% read flyers regularly**

Even with the availability of the internet, smartphones and tablets, flyers

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are still the top source of ideas for shopping trips with more than 80% of Canadians reporting that flyers influence which items make it on their shopping lists. In fact more than 90% of Canadians read print flyers regularly or occasionally and 26% of Canadians regularly read digital grocery store flyers. Interestingly among those reading both print and digital formats, 71% still prefer the print flyer format.

- **Mobile Shopping Habits: Instant Information Access - 40% of smartphone owners use their device for on-site research**

Eighty per cent of Canadians own a mobile phone with nearly 47% owning a smartphone (up from 37% in 2012). The role of smartphones in retail is growing and Canadians are using them to influence their purchasing decisions. Thirty-seven per cent of shoppers with smartphones reported looking up product information on their smartphone while in store and 22% have searched for product reviews on the spot. Overall, 40% say they have made a different purchase decision because of information accessed on their smartphone while in store.

- **Food and Health: Nutritional Knowledge Gap - 36% of Canadians follow guidelines**

More than 80% of Canadians believe there is a lot they can do with food and nutrition to prevent illness with 73% reporting actively making changes in their lifestyle to be healthier. Seventy-six per cent of Canadians are paying increasing attention to food labels, yet with strong consumer desire for nutritional information there still remains a gap between intent, knowledge and follow-through when it comes to nutrition. For example, 49% of Canadians know their recommended daily caloric intake but only 22% feel that they succeed following the guidelines. More than 40% know their recommended daily intake of fat, protein, fibre and carbohydrates while 25% manage to follow their daily intake recommendations.

New for 2013, Walmart Canada joins the Best New Product Awards as its exclusive retail partner and joins leading Canadian media companies, including founding magazine partners Canadian Living and Coup de Pouce, Shaw Media, Global Television, Food Network, HGTV, History Channel and Slice, Metro News, Astral Media Outdoor, Newad Indoor Media, Play Taxi Media, Strategy Magazine and Grocery Business Magazine. Sample Source has also signed on as the exclusive BNPA sampling partner and Websaver.ca, Canada's leading coupon company has also joined.

### **About the 2013 BrandSpark Canadian Shopper Study**

The 2013 BrandSpark Canadian Shopper Study saw more than 100,000 respondents contribute opinions between November and December of 2012. The BrandSpark Shopper Study marks its fifth year in the United States. The Study is also conducted in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Columbia, France, Germany, Mexico, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

### **About BrandSpark International**

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BrandSpark International is a leading brand, marketing and product innovation research company. Its comprehensive and innovative research approach gets at the heart of how consumers think, why they act the way they do, and what clients need to do about it.

With expertise in retail and leisure categories and an exclusive relationship with the Best New Product Awards, BrandSpark International has a deep global perspective on the drivers of innovation unlike any other research company. For more information, visit [www.BrandSpark.com](http://www.BrandSpark.com) [2] .

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### **Links:**

[1] <http://www.BestNewProductAwards.ca/>

[2] <http://www.BrandSpark.com/>