Consumer Trends: Online Grocery Shopping

WHITING, Ind. (PRNewswire) — As the popularity of online shopping grows, consumers are beginning to explore new digital shopping categories, including groceries. A new survey from CouponCabin.com finds that 15 percent of U.S. adults have shopped for groceries online. An additional 19 percent said they don't currently, but plan to in the future. This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of CouponCabin from January 29 th to 31st, 2013, among 2,109 U.S. adults ages 18 and older.

The high cost of food may prompt some shoppers to click their way through their grocery list. The majority, 91 percent, of U.S. adults indicate they are at least somewhat aware of rising food prices due to weather-related issues in 2012. In addition, 70 percent of U.S. adults who haven't shopped for groceries online said they would be at least somewhat likely to do so if online groceries were less expensive than buying them in the store. Eighteen percent said they would be very likely to do so.

"The combination of high food prices, busy families and easy Internet accessibility has led to an increased interest in online grocery shopping," said Jackie Warrick, senior savings advisor at CouponCabin.com. "Consumers have long bought items like apparel and electronics online. Now, they're seeking out ways to further take advantage of online shopping."

For some consumers, the desire for online groceries has yet to be met. In fact, nearly four-in-ten (39 percent) of U.S. adults wish their local grocery store offered a delivery service.

A variety of reasons were cited as plusses to hitting the virtual supermarket aisles. When asked what they believed to be the positive aspects of ordering groceries online, U.S. adults selected the following:

- Saves time – 65 percent
- Less likely to impulse buy because you're not tempted by the items in the store – 56 percent
- Saves money sometimes because there are better prices – 41 percent
- Makes it easier to plan menus because you can add items to your virtual "cart" throughout the week – 38 percent
- Can help you eat healthier because you're not tempted to buy junk food – 36 percent
- Other positive aspects – 13 percent
- There aren't any positive aspects to ordering groceries online – 13 percent

Not everything about ordering groceries online is peachy keen. When asked what they believed to be the negative aspects of ordering groceries online, U.S. adults

selected the following:

- It's difficult to select certain items you want without seeing them in person, such as produce or meat – 73 percent
- You have to wait at home during a specific time window for the items to be delivered – 58 percent
- Not every item you want is available – 49 percent
- Can't use paper coupons – 46 percent
- More expensive – 40 percent
- Other negative aspects – 9 percent
- There aren't any negative aspects to ordering groceries online – 5 percent

Regardless of the sentiment toward online grocery shopping, consumers should do their homework ahead of time to maximize the convenience and savings. Warrick offers the following tips for online grocery shopping:

- **Menu plan as you go**: One of the best perks of online grocery shopping is that you can add items to your cart over time as you think of them. Even better, planning like this prevents you from impulse buys if you were at the supermarket. Before you hit "buy," though, do a run-through of your meals for the week and make sure you see all the items you need.
- **Don't forget your coupons:** Some online grocery services offer discounts for first-time users or local specials, so search for those savings ahead of time. In addition, many will accept manufacturer coupons for items you purchase and then credit your account once they are processed. There can be a short lag time, but with patience you can save a few bucks. Make sure to check the grocery provider's terms and conditions ahead of time.
- **Factor in the fees:** Depending on whether you use a national online grocery provider or a local supermarket, there is going to be some type of flat fee, likely coupled with a tip. Make sure you take those costs into account before you part with your hard-earned cash.

Survey Methodology:
This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Coupon Cabin from January 29 th to 31st 2013, among 2,109 adults ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact Allison Kaplan, akaplan@couponcabin.com *[1].*

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