Consumer Trends: Top Trends in the Grocery Aisle

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (Business Wire) — Acosta Sales & Marketing [1], a leading full-service sales and marketing agency in the consumer packaged goods (CPG) industry, has released its bi-annual The Why? Behind The Buy™ [2] report. Identifying the top trends affecting the grocery industry, the ninth edition of The Why? Behind The Buy — compiled by AMG Strategic Advisors [3], Acosta's growth strategy consultancy — provides valuable insights into the behavior and buying patterns of today's shoppers and offers strategies on how CPG brands and retailers can drive sales amidst an evolving shopping landscape.

"We're seeing the shopping landscape evolving at an accelerated pace," said Marianne Quinlan-Sacksteder, Director of Insights at AMG Strategic Advisors. "As various factors converge — namely shifts in shopping and spending as generations mature and embrace different values and lifestyles intersecting with the exploding digital landscape — manufacturers and retailers need to ensure they truly understand the implications of these changes and how to capitalize on these trends."

The Why? Behind The Buy study highlights that the intersection of eating in and eating out is giving way to the rise of the concept of the grocery store as restaurant, or "grocerant." Specifically, the report found that:

- Shoppers are increasing eating out by actually eating in as they take advantage of ready-to-eat foods and meal solution offerings from grocery stores, quick-serve restaurants, food delivery and take away.
- Millennials are most likely to use prepared food for meal solutions, but overall:
    - Seventy-seven percent of total U.S. shoppers reported eating out in the past month.
    - Sixty-six percent brought home prepared foods.
    - Sixty-five percent bought food at a restaurant drive through.
    - Sixty-four percent ordered food from a restaurant for pick-up/carryout.
- Breakfast and snacking has seen the most growth in away from home eating.

"Retailers and CPG companies have the opportunity to increase prepared foods sales by capitalizing on shoppers' increasing desire for convenient, healthy and economical prepared meal solutions," said Mark Hayden, President of Acosta Foodservice [4]. "Unique, innovative dining options and services can help drive traffic, enhance the customer shopping experience and increase impulse purchases creating a win-win for all parties."

Additionally, the report reveals that technology use for grocery shopping is catching up to other retail shopping as more consumers, across generations, incorporate digital along their path to purchase. Among the top digital tactics are printing coupons online before shopping (30 percent of shoppers), loading coupons onto shopper cards from a website (26 percent of shoppers) and viewing a store's digital circular (26 percent of shoppers). It also provides valuable data on the continued growth of the Millennial influence, as this group is projected to outspend the Boomer generation by 2020 with $65 billion in grocery spending shifting from Boomers to Millennials.

"Guiding brands and retailers through the changing shopping landscape is just one example of how Acosta's strategic insights and marketing expertise helps clients and customers support business growth across all channels every day," concluded Quinlan-Sacksteder.

The Why? Behind The Buy report, available at www.acosta.com/why, [5] provides actionable solutions for companies and retailers to help shoppers determine what's for dinner. It was produced with research using a nationally representative random sample of U.S. shoppers via Acosta's proprietary ShopperF1rst™ online survey in the fall of 2013.

About Acosta Sales & Marketing

Acosta *[6] is the sales and marketing powerhouse behind most of the trusted brands seen in stores every day. The company provides a range of outsourced sales, marketing and retail merchandising services throughout the U.S. and Canada. For more than 85 years, Acosta has led the industry in helping consumer packaged goods companies move products off shelves and into shoppers' baskets. Visit* www.acosta.com *[7].*

About AMG Strategic Advisors

AMG Strategic Advisors *[8] is the strategy and insights consulting unit of* Acosta Sales & Marketing *[9], providing world-class integrated marketing and sales solutions for CPG companies and retailers. AMG Strategic Advisors leverages its retailer and industry experience to provide best-in-class consulting, brand positioning, shopper and marketing insights, and data analysis to increase sale momentum and drive ROI. Visit* www.amgstrategicadvisors.com *[10].*

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