Press Releases

Shop Early, Shop At Different Retailers Say Americans About Their 2021 Holiday Food Buying According To NCSolutions Survey

- Americans find holiday advertising both enjoyable and useful: 31% say ads help them discover new products, 27% say they inspire them to cook more
- 25% plan to do their grocery shopping earlier this holiday season
- 19% plan to increase their shopping at different retailers
- 48% plan to substitute their preferred brands for less expensive or more available alternatives

NEW YORK, Dec. 8, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- One in four (25%) Americans plan to do their holiday grocery shopping early, while 19% plan to increase shopping at different retailers. Holiday advertising will play a key role in inspiring 27% of consumers to cook more and 31% indicate it will help them to discover new products.

The findings are from the latest holiday-focused consumer sentiment survey, fielded in November 2021, from NCSolutions (NCS), the leading company for improving advertising effectiveness for the consumer packaged goods (CPG) industry.

Many holiday tables will be decked with brand favorites, as 38% of Americans plan to purchase their preferred consumer packaged goods brands. However, nearly half of consumers (48%) plan to substitute their preferred brands for less expensive or more available alternatives. For instance, 31% plan to substitute their preferred brands for less expensive brands and 17% plan to buy another brand if their preferred brand is not available at the store.

"Inflation and price competitiveness are creating a unique dynamic in the marketplace right now. Shoppers want their dollars to go as far as possible, but they also highly value their favorite brands and lean towards being loyal," said Linda Dupree, CEO, NCS. "Holiday advertising is a smart lever to pull in this environment. It has the power to inspire cooking ideas, help us grow by learning new recipes, and enable us to discover new products. CPG brands really have the power to help put us in the right mood for the season."

The holiday season is consistently the top period of the calendar year for overall CPG spending. NCSolutions' Consumer Purchase Data shows that in 2020 CPG spending for the last three weeks of the year was 21% higher than it was during the average week in 2020 and 12% higher for the 2019 holiday season.

"From our survey, we know that nearly half of Americans enjoy holiday food advertising," Dupree said. "This is quite significant given the impact of the holiday season on overall CPG spending throughout the year."

Top Media for Holiday Cooking Inspiration

Among the 47% of Americans who say they enjoy watching holiday advertising, almost half (47%) say they will turn to culinary websites for cooking inspiration, while 39% say they will turn to social media, 35% how-to videos and 31% television.

Cooking websites are also a popular choice for more than half (56%) of consumers who find it helpful to see ads from brands they've purchased before. These respondents also look to social media (48%), how-to videos (43%) and television (35%) for inspiration.

Podcasts will be a source of cooking inspiration for health-conscious consumers this season. Shoppers who say organic, sustainable, plant-based or vegan food items are important to them are more likely to tune into a podcast for ideas.

Americans who say meat substitutes are important for the holidays are more likely to find inspiration from cooking websites, social media, how-to videos and TV.

Meanwhile, shoppers who prefer unprocessed foods (54%) are the most likely to turn to cooking websites for inspiration. Vegan shoppers also are likely to turn to cooking websites for their holiday inspiration.

Holiday Advertising Appeals to Wholesale Club Shoppers

Wholesale club enthusiasts are more likely to seek out plant-based and healthier options for their table this holiday, with 50% searching for healthy foods, 33% organic food and 28% sustainable foods for their holiday recipes. As consumers prepare to buy holiday-related food items, those who shop at wholesale clubs are even more likely to enjoy holiday ads (58%).

Americans who say they're going to do their holiday food shopping online or in wholesale clubs are more likely to turn to cooking websites, social media and how-to videos for inspiration.

What Happened Last Year?

In 2020, prior to vaccines becoming widely available, most Americans planned a more cautious approach to the holiday season. As they shopped for their at-home and virtual celebrations, many also indicated a willingness to experiment and try new meal ideas. According to NCSolutions' Consumer Purchase Data, some of the top-growing categories of holiday food spending were pre-mixed cocktails, fresh/frozen meat and frozen seafood.

Actual consumer spending data for the 2021 holiday CPG buying will be available in mid-January. Contact us for more information.

About the Consumer Sentiment Survey

The holiday 2021 online survey was fielded between November 5-8, 2021. It has 1,130 respondents, ages 18+, with the results weighted to be representative of the overall U.S. population (variables available upon request).

About NCS
NCSolutions (NCS) makes advertising work better. Our unrivaled data resources powered by leading providers combine with scientific rigor and leading-edge technology to empower the CPG ecosystem to create and deliver more effective advertising. With NCS's proven approach, brands are achieving continuous optimization everywhere ads appear, through purchase-based audience targeting and sales measurement solutions that have impacted over $25 billion in media spend for our customers. NCS has offices in NYC, Chicago, Tampa, and Cincinnati. Visit us at ncsolutions.com to learn more.

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