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Better Homes and Gardens Best New Product Awards Winners Unveiled

Jan 26, 2010

The Homes and Gardens Best New Product Awards (BNPA) program has revealed its top winners for 2010, in tandem with research and insights from its companion second annual BrandSpark American Shopper Study.

Conducted by Toronto-based independent market research firm BrandSpark International, the study polled over 50,000 consumers to uncover insights in such areas as recessionary shopping behavior, healthy eating, future spending priorities, private labels vs. premium brands, organic and natural foods, environmental accountability, money-saving strategies. BrandSpark's research was used to compile the winners of the 2010 Best New Product Awards, for which consumers voted on 135 products, with 42 winners selected from 55 manufacturers.

Among the winners of the second annual awards lineup were Best in Health & Beauty Category and Best in Show: Olay Professional Pro-X Wrinkle Protocol; Best in Food & Beverage Category: Yoplait Smoothie; and Best in Household Care Category: Cascade Complete All-in-1 Action Pacs. A complete list of winning products is available at www.BestNewProductAwards.biz.

"Better Homes and Gardens and BrandSpark have teamed up once again to bring these survey results to marketers and help them understand how consumers are behaving in these unprecedented times," said James Carr, VP, group publisher of New York-based consumer lifestyle magazine, which boasts a circulation of 7.6 million and a readership of almost 40 million. "We expect these insights to help them make informed decisions on how to reach and influence today's principal shoppers."

At a New York breakfast presented today by the consumer publication, BrandSpark president and CEO Robert Levy, founder of the BNPA, will present key findings on the topic of "Recession Impact: More Americans Eating at Home, Not Time Crunched as in Previous Years."

"We can see the impact of the recession on attitudes towards the environment and health — with both losing ground in terms of importance," observed Levy. "[E]ven so, the vast majority of Americans (69 percent) still like trying new products. People have made a big shift to eat at home more, and as a result are spending more time and money in the grocery store. Finding new products that really deliver is more important than ever, especially with shoppers demanding greater value for money."

In addition to the 69 percent of Americans who said they like trying new products, 66 percent agreed that they "enjoy cooking for myself and my family," while only 23 percent said that they "often don't have time to cook," and just 23 percent of Americans agree that they "would be happy to never have to cook."

When it comes to the brands U.S. consumers are buying, "[u]nderstandably, Americans want more value for their dollar," noted Levy, "and many are turning to private label or in-store brands to deliver. Although consumer perception of private label quality has decreased slightly, more Americans are still buying private label brands vs. premium brands as they perceive they offer extremely good value for money."

In fact, 59 percent of Americans think that private label or in-store brand products are just as good as brand-name products, and 66 percent believe that private label offers usually extremely good value for money. Additionally, 56 percent of Americans have bought more private label products in the past 12 months.

The study also showed that green consciousness continues to rise among consumers. "Over the past number of years, we have seen environmental accountability grow to be a major concern for American consumers," said Levy. "However, we have also seen the impact of the economy on environmental attitudes."

While 77 percent of those polled still feel that companies are exploiting environmentally friendly claims for marketing purposes, 52 percent of Americans believe it's important for a new product to be better for the environment, a decline from 63 percent in last year's study. Packaging was singled out as a top concern, with 75 percent saying manufacturers still have a long way to go to reduce the amount of packaging they use.

"Healthy living is still an important concern for Americans," says Levy. "Consumers want products with added health



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Progressive Grocer's 2009

benefits, and they are willing to pay more for products that will help to prevent illness. One of the most interesting things we're seeing is a rising consumer confidence in food safety." The study found that 71 percent of Americans want products that offer healthier options, but that 61 percent of consumers said they were concerned about food safety, down from 71 percent last year

Regarding the ongoing debate on whether to buy natural or organic products, 50 percent of American consumers think "it is important that a new product is made from all-natural ingredients," and 37 percent believe that "it is more important to me that a product is natural than organic." "Part of this can be explained by consumer skepticism," explained Levy. Among consumers who didn't buy organic products, 39 percent said they "don't trust that all products labeled as organic are actually organic," and that they "are confused by what the term 'organic' actually guarantees."

"It appears that further consumer education is required in the natural-vs.-organic debate," recommended Levy.

Conducted Oct. 12 through Dec. 8, 2009, the BrandSpark American Shopper Study asked key questions about individual product appeal, intent to repurchase, consumer confidence level and expected future spending habits, among other insight-provoking queries. This year, winners came from such categories as cereal, juice, ice cream, anti-aging skin care, oral care, shampoo and household cleaners. Each category had a minimum of three products from at least two separate manufacturers. To win, the product had to have the highest combined score on repurchase intent among those who had previously bought the item, and product appeal.

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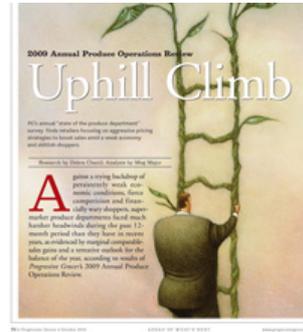
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Total supermarket sales were \$430.3 billion, up \$13.2 billion from the \$417.2 billion recorded in 2007 -- continuing the trend of slightly higher percentage increases in each of the past five years, according to Progressive Grocer's 62nd Annual Consumer Expenditures Study (CES), now greatly expanded from the eight-page print edition to 35 pages of research.

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