New insights into the grocery shopper's mind

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Some of the key lifestyle changes that consumers are making to cope with the recession include eating out less, being more efficient with their shopping trips, buy less name-brand goods, buying in bulk, and turning down the thermostat, according to the first 'American Grocery Shopper Study' from BrandSpark International.

The study, which surveyed more than 50,000 US shoppers, identified several new trends in the areas of spending habits, brand preferences, attitudes toward organic goods, and environmental accountability. Among the survey's key findings:

- 52% of grocery shoppers said they plan to eat at home more often in 2009 than they did in 2008;
- 96% of shoppers considered it important that any new product should provide them value for money;
- Over 80% of consumers said they will spend the same or more on essential personal care products in 2009 as they did in 2008;
- 70% of consumers feel motivated to buy products that are better for the environment, but only 40% are willing to pay more for them;
- 75% of consumers believe that some companies are exploiting environmentally friendly claims for marketing purposes (a practice known as 'green-washing');
- 58% of shoppers consider it important for a new product they purchase to be "natural";
- 78% of shoppers believe that manufacturers have a long way to go to reduce the amount of packaging used;
- 68% expressed increased concern about chemicals in food products, compared to 63% for household products and 57% for skin-care products;
- 80% of shoppers who qualify as early adopters (i.e. among the first to try new products) are women;
- Early adopters spend 50% more time reading magazines, and 50% of them have downloaded coupons from the internet.

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