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GROCERY SHOPPER FACTS

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Introduction

There is some confusion as to who actually does the food shopping in America. Given the fact that more women are working outside the home and the number of dual income households has increased, one would think that the job of food shopping is equally split between males and females. Knowing the customer as well as the person responsible for shopping is important in marketing food products.

Who Shops

According to Key Industry Facts¹, female head of households still do the majority of food shopping. Interestingly, only about one in five shoppers is a male head of household. The members of a household may request products and help create the household shopping list, but they typically do not shop. Therefore, the female head of household is actually the grocery gate keeper. Unless a specific brand of product is asked for, it is up to the shopper to decide which of the many competing products to purchase. This makes branding even more important. Because males are less likely to shop than females, it is important that males are familiar with product names so they can request these products by name. Otherwise, the shopper will decide which products to buy. Table 1. provides a break-down of who in the household typically does the grocery shopping.

Typical Shopper	Percentage
Female Head of House	70%
Male Head of House	19%
Both	11%

¹ Key Industry Facts - Food Marketing Institute Informational Service, May 2001.

Per-Person Weekly Grocery Expenses²

The information in Table 2 provides a break-down of per-person weekly expenditures on grocery items. On average, men typically spend more money on grocery items per week than do women. Interestingly, households with children also spend significantly less money per person on groceries than do households with without children.

Gender	
Men	\$41
Women	\$37
Type of Household	
Children	\$30
No Children	\$44

When They Shop

Knowing when people shop can be very important. For example, in-store demonstrations have been shown to be a very effective marketing tool (Table 3). In order to maximize exposure to consumers, it is important to know what days of the week people shop. If a company plans to demonstrate to seniors they should be in the stores on Wednesday or Thursday where as middle aged people tend to shop on the weekend.

Overall, Saturday is the busiest grocery shopping day followed by Sunday. Interestingly, Friday is one of the least-busy shopping days. Breaking down shopping days by age group provides insight into who shops when. The shopping habits of people under 35 years of age tend to shop equally across the week. However, this age group is less likely to shop on Thursday than any other day of the week.

Day of Week	All Shoppers	Under 35 Years Old	35 - 54 Years Old	Over 55 Years Old
Sunday	16 %	15 %	22 %	8 %
Monday	11 %	16 %	7 %	13 %
Tuesday	11 %	12 %	7 %	14 %
Wednesday	15 %	15 %	12 %	21 %
Thursday	14 %	6 %	12 %	21 %
Friday	12 %	17 %	10 %	12 %
Saturday	21 %	19 %	30 %	11 %

²Food Marketing Institute, *Trends in the United States: Consumer Attitudes and the Supermarket*, 2001

How a Typical \$100 is Spent³

We know who and when people shop but what do they typically spend their grocery money on. Table 4 provides insight into how a typical family might spend \$100 in a grocery store.

The largest grocery expense is for perishable products. It is interesting to note that people spend less on main courses and entrees each week than they spend on snack food and beverages.

Product	Expenditure
Perishables	\$ 50.19
Beverages	\$ 9.84
Misc. Grocery	\$ 9.46
Non-Edible Grocery	\$ 9.38
Snack Foods	\$ 5.49
Main Courses & Entrees	\$ 4.92
Health & Beauty Care	\$ 4.09
General Merchandise	\$ 3.95
Pharmacy	\$ 2.05
Video	\$ 0.35
Miscellaneous	\$ 0.28
Total Expenditure	\$100.00

³

Source: Progressive Grocer, July 1999, pg. 30