

Luring Asian Shoppers

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"Being aware of shoppers' attitudes and mindsets at play allows for more focused and effective shopper targeting. Eye on Asia gives insights into how shoppers relate to brands and what is influencing their behaviour in-store."

Looking for shoppers in these tough economic times? They are in hiding! Not from marketers, but from themselves first and foremost. Guilt, uncertainty and fear make shoppers guard their urges and this leads to purchases being delayed or even avoided. This is why the retail arena is becoming critical now more than ever. Here, shoppers inevitably come face to face with choices and are compelled to make those ultimate decisions. It is the "First Moment of Truth" (FMOT) for any brand, the moment when consumers finally place their money behind the brand.

So what is it that can help brands convert or engage shoppers more effectively at the FMOT? Is in-store just a reminder medium or does it offer a distinct opportunity for brands to win the hearts of shoppers? Based on their mindsets and attitudes towards brands, shoppers' reactions are either enhanced or diminished by communications or any kind of initiative in retail. Being aware of attitudes and mindsets at play allows for more focused and effective shopper targeting.

Grey Group's Eye on Asia research, which covers 16 countries across the Asia Pacific region, gives insights into how shoppers relate to brands and what is influencing their behaviour in-store. In particular, the five Asian Brand Tribes identified in the study help brands look at shoppers beyond a consolidated whole and help engage shoppers based on mindsets rather than demographics. In addition to classifying Asian shoppers based on how they think, feel and react to brands, it determines how they select their retail channels and how different channels affect them.

Here is how the five segments respond in retail:

- Perceived Value Seekers
The predominant share of shoppers in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Malaysia and Vietnam falls in this brand tribe. They are attentive to brands that make them feel they are smart shoppers getting the most value out of their money. They want to feel that brands have a good understanding of their needs and be assured of quality, reliability and longevity.
- Function Firsts
They form the biggest chunk in New Zealand and Australia. They take a no nonsense approach to shopping and are not attracted to emotional messages or fancy promises. They are drawn to brands that best achieve their purpose at the best price.
- "New" Brand Enjoyers
They are the biggest brand tribe for China, India, Vietnam and Bangladesh. They see shopping as an adventure, and love to be excited and delighted by what they can see, touch, feel and hear. They choose brands that go beyond function and enrich them emotionally.
- Individualistic Believers
This segment is predominant among shoppers in Japan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore and South Korea. They are not lured by popularity or status when choosing brands. When shopping, they do not care about what other people think or say and so do not want to be bothered needlessly. They want to be able to determine for themselves which brands suit them best.
- Status Seekers
They are predominant among shoppers in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and to some extent, South Korea and Japan. They are looking for validation that their choices reflect the lifestyle and image they want to project.

These five Asian Brand Tribes offer distinct clues to marketers on how brands can formulate their in-store messages to effectively target and engage shoppers across channels. Each mindset is looking for a very distinct retail experience and has different expectations when it comes to ambience, sales staff and the nature of messages.

Here are some key highlights on how we can enhance our messaging for retail:

In-store ambience: one size does not fit all

For "New" Brand Enjoyers, shopping is like entering a wonderful world of novelty, variety and surprise. For them, shopping is not a process but a journey to be enjoyed. That is why 67% of "New" Brand Enjoyers say a pleasant shopping atmosphere is important in selecting a place to shop, and this is especially true for Bangladeshis, 87% of whom find a pleasant atmosphere valuable. Attractive displays, stimulating designs and an inspiring ambience are highly important for brands that are targeting shoppers with this mindset.

Interestingly, "New" Brand Enjoyers do not distinguish between leisure shopping versus necessity shopping, and they need the experience to cut across channels, be it the mall or the department store. Meanwhile, Function Firsts and Perceived Value Seekers look mainly for ease and convenience while selecting a shop. They tend to select supermarkets and grocers when shopping for necessities. In these channels, they prefer stores with good layout and ventilation, ample parking and access to public transport. For them, it is all about convenience rather than the journey. For example, 80% of Filipinos say they prefer a place that makes it quick and easy for them to shop, while 83%

say they want a place where they can always find what they want.

Online versus tactile experiences

Individualistic Believers and Function Firsts want to assess information and make their choices independently. They do not want to be distracted by gimmicks or sales people. They find sales people intrusive and believe that sales people would "trick" them into buying things they do not need. No wonder online shopping appeals most to Individualistic Believers, especially in Japan and Korea where a whopping 92% are hitting the web to shop. Brands who are addressing this mindset can optimise their resources and deliver a stronger impact by refocusing their energies online. Often, online is driven by an ability to compare prices, especially in Japan.

Conversely, for "New" Brand Enjoyers, rich visual cues, provocative messages and knowledgeable sales people heighten the experience and help them find their way into shopping wonderland, hence tactile experiences are more rewarding.

Messaging: Just saying "SALE" is not enough

Messaging for every brand needs to take into account the mindset of shoppers when they are entering a channel. For example, "New" Brand Enjoyers seek unique finds at the best prices, hence sales for them should be all about stumbling upon a treasure chest! The messages should be directed at the experience rather than low prices. The feeling of being able to treat themselves to life's little luxuries is key for "New" Brand Enjoyers. For 89% of them, doing enjoyable things and going to interesting places are more important than having prized possessions. 90% of them also feel that with the stress of modern life, it is important to indulge and treat oneself with life's pleasures.

Meanwhile, Perceived Value Seekers, want to maximise every cent they spend. They want to squeeze the most out of their buys. They are drawn to discounts but it is more than just low prices - it is the fact that they are getting high quality brands they trust for less. Perceived Value Seekers would be lured with messages that reframe value for them in a new way - extras delivered from intrinsic product features or bundled freebies, while for Functions Firsts, messages of sale should simply be about showcasing a pragmatic buy.

For "New" Brand Enjoyers, shopping is all about the adventure and pleasure of the hunt, and seeking unique finds at the best prices.

But these three areas are just the tip of the iceberg! With Eye on Asia's Asian Brand Tribes, marketers can get definite clues about how they can maximise impact at retail. Depending on what mindset is being targeted, reassurance of quality, emotional validation and tactile experiences can be the key to shaping shopper behaviour. And these clues can make all the difference between finding a place in the shopping basket and getting shunted out of it.

About the author



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