

Game survey results point to shifting shopping habits

Game's Q3 consumer Price Perception Survey found that 86% of South African consumers still prioritise bargain hunting more than they did a year ago, with 66% confirming they are shopping less than they did at this time last year, despite fewer restrictions around movement. Only 11% of respondents say their shopping habits have not changed in the past year.

Statistics SA reported slowed retail sales growth in June when compared with the same time last year, with month-on-month sales growth showing a marginal increase of 0.6%. During the hardest lockdown in April last year, only essentials and groceries were available for purchase – which had a significant effect on retail sales for the period.

Katherine Madley, vice president of marketing at Game notes that this trend continues – despite the country now being in level three.



SA retail sales rise 10.4% in June

18 Aug 2021



Essentials remain king

The survey showed that more than half of respondents (60%) are only visiting between three and six stores a month. “Thirty-seven percent of respondents are only shopping for basic essential items – proving the long-standing effects of economic challenges on the consumer’s budget,” says Madley.

“This is an important insight for retailers like Game and informs our forward-looking merchandising strategies in terms of products and pricing. If retailers are to remain relevant beyond 2021, our strategies are going to have to shift to fit within the South African consumer budget and lifestyle – which sees bargain hunting becoming increasingly important for 86% of consumers.”

Madley explains that the retailer uses independent research, powered by Massmart, to ensure its promotional pricing on electronics, essentials and lifestyle goods remains competitive. “This kind of research has become indispensable to our business during these tough economic times,” she says.

Saving priorities

In Q3, the most popular categories for Game's customers to redeem savings on were electronics and small appliances respectively. Interestingly, the same percentage of shoppers looked to save on groceries and large appliances – further indicating the push for savings on essential items, despite smaller savings margins.

While 90% of consumers agree that they want to save wherever they can, the majority are using their savings on extra items they need for their homes. Thirty-one percent said they put the savings back into their debt – such as credit cards, bond and car repayments and student loans – but only 25% are putting these into a savings account.



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Bargain hunting habits

“Despite ever-evolving consumer needs – our customers remain the same in many ways,” says Madley. “More than half of respondents continue to use printed leaflets to track pricing on items they intend to buy, and 68% continue to keep track of items they have already bought. These are habits that have remained part of our customers' lifestyle for years. People don't change, but environments do.”

Madley notes that Game intends to run this price perception survey on a quarterly basis to keep abreast of changes and trends in consumer behaviour.

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