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Study: Workplace Peers Influences Shopping Habits

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Word-of-mouth is highly influential on purchases made by at-work consumers, with 95.6% advising peers on products and services, according to new study conducted by consumer intelligence firm BIGresearch.

What's more, the study on media and shopping behavior of consumers at work found that 92.9% seek such advice from peers before making purchases.

The BIGresearch study examines the shopping behavior of consumers during the workday, including the role of online search as a catalyst to retail purchase, grocery shopping, casual and fast-food dining preferences, new media consumption during the workday, word-of-mouth dynamics and its role in influencing purchase decisions in the workplace.

"As marketers are looking to maximize ROI, the importance of targeting gainfully employed, value-seeking consumers is essential," said Phil Rist, EVP-Strategy at BIGresearch.

At-work consumers research products online before purchasing, with almost half of them--47.2%--reporting having researched electronics online in the last 90 days during the workday before making an in-store purchase.

"The American workplace has become the most lucrative marketing channel for advertisers looking to connect with consumers where they eat, shop and socialize," said Stephanie Molnar, CEO of WorkPlace Media, a marketer to the at-work consumer. "Targeting consumers at work, where they make the majority of their spending decisions, is just smart business."

Since the workplace is full of conversation among peers, according to BIG, it presents an ideal environment to create buzz for product introductions and new store openings.

A full 67.8% of at-work consumers report socializing with co-workers while on break, while 42.2% indicate they communicate with friends and family during the workday.

Wal-Mart leads the grocery category, with 14.5% of at-work consumers reporting that they shop at the discounter most often for groceries. Kroger and Publix round out the top three grocery destinations among at-work consumers, with 8.4% and 8.2%, respectively, shopping the stores most often.

At-work consumers still report getting the bulk of their fast food from McDonald's--23.3%--followed by Wendy's--16.2%--and Taco Bell--8.0%. When it comes to casual dining restaurants, Applebee's, Chili's and Olive Garden appear to be the top destinations of choice among at-work consumers.

The At-Work Consumer Media & Shopping Behavior survey was conducted by BIGresearch in December 2007 from a national sample of 3,989 U.S. employees across a variety of industries.