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## Grocery shoppers tracked by new study

By **Rebecca Chambers** | 2 December 2014

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We spend a lot of time contemplating which ice cream to buy and our eyes travel from advertising straight to the product, as if by reflex, according to a recent study by TorchMedia and Hoop Group. The two have partnered for a recent study on shopper behaviour. The objective: to understand how people engage with and respond to in-store advertising while shopping.



The study used state of the art eye-tracking software and followed 52 people, male and female, aged 24-65, while they completed their typical grocery shop. The shoppers were provided with a shopping list that directed them to certain categories. The study took place over four days, during regular shopping and two advertising periods.

Some of the campaigns tracked included Dolmio, Extra, Continental, Dairy Farmers, Bertolli, Streets, Oral-B and Connoisseur.

The study looked at advertising fins in aisles, those ads that are attached to shelves and stick out close to products. While the main purpose of using eye tracking was to measure the number and duration of aisle fin exposures seen by shoppers, the study also found that customers showed a natural visual matching instinct. The eye-tracking technology showed that the eye travelled from the advertising to the product subconsciously.

"This matching instinct was most evident when the colours and graphics of the advertising were in line with that of the product" said Liz Farquharson from Hoop Group. "The clear message here for advertisers is to ensure that there is visual synergy between their creative and the product being promoted.

"We noted that all fins averaged a similar number of views per person, regardless of which aisle they were in; however people tended to spend more time exploring their options in the fridge and freezer sections, resulting in a longer dwell and exposure time on the formats in these aisles," Farquharson said.

The study found that each individual aligned with one of three shopper segments: specials seeker— those who are alert to a bargain; mission shopper— they have a list and set product or explorer— those on the lookout for inspiration and what's new.

In terms of the advertising, 100% of the shoppers noticed the trolley advertising. The highest proportion of shoppers viewed aisle fins in the non-chilled aisles, but the viewing time was less, because people move through these aisles faster and spend less time making decisions. Fins in the chilled and freezer categories achieve longer viewing times than aisle fins. Bigger is certainly better— all larger fins performed better than standard-sized ones.

Readable text, clear product images and colour-blocking creative are all better to draw a shopper's attention and encourage the 'travelling eye' instinct.

The research will be available to agencies to enable a greater level of analytical feedback from agency to client.

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