

Assignment #1 – The Science of Shopping

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Why do shoppers do what they do?

Shoppers are motivated by myriad unconscious influences, including personal qualities, product involvement, and situational factors. Envirosell reports that:

- 65% of men who take jeans into a fitting room will buy them, versus 25 % of women
- 4% of browsers buy a computer on Saturday before noon versus 21% after 5 PM, and
- 75% of shoppers who take baskets buy something (The Science of Shopping, n.d, p. 2).

Why might women reject jeans in the fitting room more often? NPR quotes Envirosell to say that women, “try things on as only part of the consideration process, and garments that fit just fine may still be rejected on other grounds;” fit is a man’s main concern (NPR, 2008, 7). Social conditioning and genders role expectations, may play a part. Jungian collective unconscious may also present, recalling the memories of ancestors which influence present decisions (Solomon, 2017, p. 154). In either case, traditional female roles are communal, nurturing, and consider a long-view. By contrast, men are agentic hunter-gatherers, with an impulse toward strike once and get a job done. Women eat more fruit, according to Solomon (2017, p. 129), which take patience and nurturing, while, “boy food doesn’t grow. It is hunted or killed.”

A more involved purchase than clothing, computers require technical understanding. This is both a highly cognitive and highly affective, invoking logic and emotion (Solomon, 2017, p. 105). Buyers must weigh several factors, such as functionality, weight, and size, and will often consult product reviews. (S)he may visit a showroom to compare feel and function. Much time is given to research and rumination. Even when setting out to purchase a selected device, the buyer will likely compare retailers for pricing, warranty, and other factors, potentially visiting each and interacting with sales staff. By 5pm, with enough information gathered, the buyer is reaching peak confidence, and is prepared to take the plunge.

Shopping for a computer likely does not require a basket. But carrying a basket may improve shopping outcomes in two ways: it may signal an intention to buy at the outset, and/or invite shoppers to collect and consider items that may not have been an intended purchase. It allows shoppers to explore a personal connection with more items than could be kept in hand. It stands to reason that the odds of making a purchase are greater when more items have been desired, handled, and identified with.

To improve their sales statistics, stores could keep baskets by the entry, and in other strategic locations in the store, where the shopper has seen enough product to take an interest in gathering options. Computer retailers can provide knowledgeable product information in writing and in person, building a trust relationship with the customer and building his/her confidence in the purchase through multiple touchpoints. Finally, dressing rooms could ensure that the experience within them is as favourable as possible, with good lighting, three way mirrors, seating, and other comforts. This may be enough for men; for women, unobtrusive but helpful sales people can provide suggested alternatives where the jeans selected just don't work.

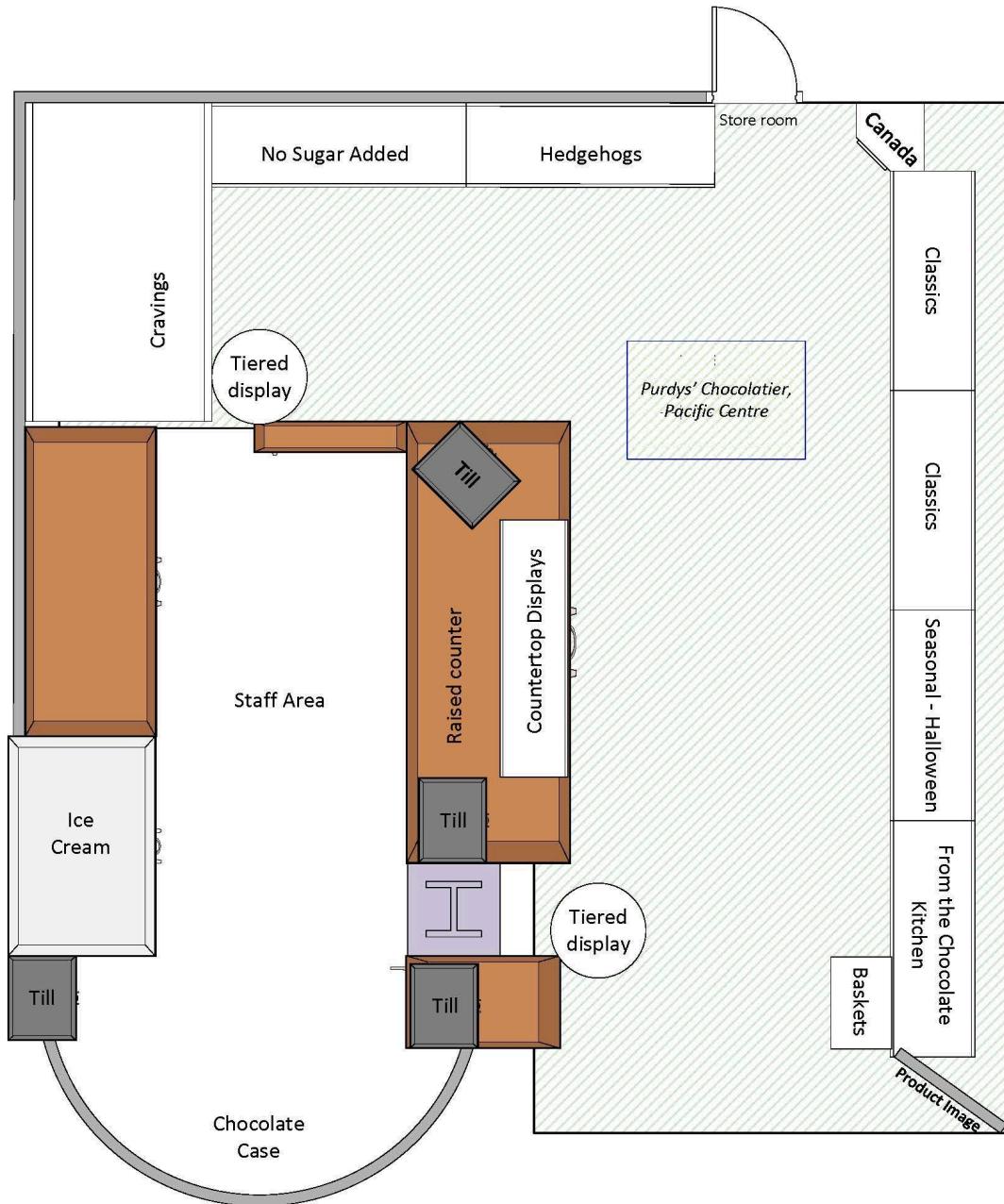
A fruitless visit to Bed, Bath and Beyond

A recent visit to Bed, Bath and Beyond resulted in my leaving empty handed. The store is conveniently located for me to travel by foot, so parking was not a part of my experience.

I sought a specific curtain to finish the look of a room. Familiar with the store's layout, I headed directly to curtains and surveyed the options, which did not appeal. Regardless, I decided to walk through the rest of the store to see if anything else caught my eye. Ultimately, nothing did, though I did handle and consider some items. The store design did not influence my decision. I

know how the store is organized and find it logical. The space is large, but easy to navigate. I simply felt I could find better value elsewhere.

Purdys Chocolatier, Pacific Centre Mall



Purdys' Pacific Centre, Wednesday, September 25, 2:00 – 2:30 pm

No.	Age	M/F	Dress	Style	Time	Viewed	Actions	Help?
1	45	M	Business	Confident	<5 min	Cravings	Bought product	No
2	42	F	Stylish	Confident	<5 min	Cravings	Bought product	No
3	24	F	Trendy	Uncertain	15 min	Halloween, cravings, back wall displays	Picked up Halloween box, returned it, inspected product in every bay, returned to Halloween. Purchased five halloween boxes.	Yes
4	21	F	Trendy	Confident	<5 min	Cravings	Bought product	No
5	24	F	Trendy	Uncertain	<5 min	Canada display	Looked at one display, then turned around and left	No
6	58	M	Business	Confident	<5 min	Classics	Picked up Classics box; decisive	No

Observations

14 purchases were observed, or nearly one every two minutes. Considering this is after lunch in a non-peak period for the product, this seems like a steady rate. It is higher than I expected.

- Younger shoppers exhibited less confidence in the store, and less certainty with choices
- Greater confidence in those purchasing for self rather than selecting a gift
- Clear demographic familiar with cravings bunker – businesspeople and 40+
- A beeline straight to cravings is the most common route observed, with a process around

the store following the right-hand wall the second most common.

- Shoppers did not interact with many products – more of a sense of window shopping
- Shoppers did not ask for help, nor did staff offer same; staff did not come out on the floor from behind the counter

Signage, and other attractions

Its location in Pacific Centre mall affords this store no outside signage, including in the parking areas. The store is situated on a corner, across from the food court, The Bay, and Skytrain access, in addition to being on the well-trafficked main mall. (The western corridor is access to an adjoining property and receives little traffic). The store's prominent purple sign sits atop the shopfront. To the right of the entry, a full-length product image entices shoppers; this image is angled 45 degrees, visible to west- and north-bound shoppers, and creating a natural physical invitation for south-bound shoppers to flow into the store.

Inside the store, tantalizing images run the length of the bulkhead, right around the store. Product is displayed in branded, attractive packaging. The wall behind the service counter displays another large, glossy product image.

More powerful than signage, perhaps, is the delicious, tempting product on display on the east and south frontages. A U-shaped chocolate case protrudes from the store, typically staffed by someone ready to interact with the public. Along the other frontage, an ice-cream station, with scooped ice cream and custom-dipped bars are displayed through the glass. Shoppers may enjoy samples, to entice them further. This appears to be an advantage over surrounding stores, which have appealing visual displays, but no opportunity for interaction before crossing the lease line.

References

NPR. (2008). Understanding The Science Of Shopping.
<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=98184836>

Solomon, M., et al. (2017). *Consumer Behaviour*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

The Science of Shopping. (n.d.) Provided for MKTG 3325, British Columbia Institute of Technology.