Convenience store shopper insights

Understanding attitudes, behaviors, and buying habits

We launched a 3-minute online survey to 1,000 Americans looking for insights into consumer attitudes and perceptions surrounding convenience stores and shopping behaviors. After collecting responses from convenience store shoppers in less than 24 hours using the aytm platform, here’s what we found:

**Our findings**

**What are the different types of shoppers?**

- **42%** LAST-MINUTE BUYERS
  - “I drop into the convenience store on my way home or to another destination for a specific, last-minute purchase. I just want to get in and get out.”

- **25.6%** TRANSACTIONAL SHOPPERS
  - “I routinely shop at convenience stores to fulfill immediate and habitual needs. I purchase the same brands consistently.”

- **17%** EMOTIONAL SHOPPERS
  - “I stop at a convenience store looking for products that satisfy my mood. I try pretty much any brand.”

- **16%** FRIENDLY REGULARS
  - “I look at the convenience store as part of the neighborhood and am on a first-name basis with the clerk. I stop in regularly.”

**When are they shopping?**

- **68.8%** visit once or more a week
  - **3.8%** shop multiple times a day
  - **9.4%** shop daily
  - **29.9%** shop multiple times a week
  - **25.7%** shop once a week

**How often are they shopping?**

- **67.6%** spend 10 minutes or less
  - **35.8%** spend 6-10 minutes
  - **5.8%** spend more than 25 minutes

**How much time do they spend?**

- **76%** have a specific item in mind before entering the store
  - **65%** leave with an item they did not initially intend to purchase

**What influences impulse purchases?**

- **65.5%** personal craving or desire
  - **51.3%** sale or discounted price
  - **46.8%** flavor or taste options
  - **35.4%** brand or product
  - **31.3%** limited time promotion or special offer

**What items are they buying?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beverages</td>
<td>Bottled water</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hot coffee</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Candy</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-packaged snacks or meals</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepared snacks or meals</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Lottery tickets</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tobacco products</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liquor or beer</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notable trends**

Candy, baked goods, pre-packaged snacks, protein/health bars, and prepared foods are most often unplanned purchases compared to other items.

Tobacco products, liquor, coffee, and milk are most often planned purchases compared to other items. Emotional shoppers are more likely than other shopper types to make unplanned tobacco product purchases (17.6%).

Consumers are most likely to try a new brand or product of bottled coffee, with 70% responding very likely or extremely likely to purchase.

More than 65% of respondents indicated that they are very or extremely likely to try a new brand/product of energy drink or pre-packaged meal or snack.

**Methodology**

**WHAT**

A 3-minute online survey using aytm’s proprietary panel

**WHO**

1,000 US adults ages 18+, 50% Male, 50% Female

**WHEN**

May 23, 2023
Those under 34 are most likely to be Emotional Shoppers, who look for products to satisfy their moods and will often try any brand.

Emotional Shoppers are most likely to make impulse purchases, with 1 in 4 making an impulse purchase every time they visit a convenience store.

While most c-store shoppers have explicit purchase intentions, a large portion are subject to impulse buys, motivated by personal cravings and discounts.

New products or brands in the bottled coffee space are particularly appealing.

Unplanned purchases are driven by cravings

- Those under 34 are most likely to be Emotional Shoppers, who look for products to satisfy their moods and will often try any brand.
- Emotional Shoppers are most likely to make impulse purchases, with 1 in 4 making an impulse purchase every time they visit a convenience store.
- While most c-store shoppers have explicit purchase intentions, a large portion are subject to impulse buys, motivated by personal cravings and discounts.
- New products or brands in the bottled coffee space are particularly appealing.

Turns out it’s not all about convenience

- 42% indicated they “drop into the convenience store on my way home or to another destination for a specific, last-minute purchase. I just want to get in and get out.”
- More than a quarter of respondents expressed they “routinely shop at convenience stores to fulfill immediate and habitual needs, saying “I purchase the same brands consistently.”
- 15.6% of consumers view the convenience store as a part of the neighborhood, visit more often, spend longer in store, and are more likely to purchase a variety of items.
- 77.6% of Friendly Regulars shop multiple times a week and are more likely than other shopper types to shop on weekdays.

Big spending begins with bottled beverages

- We found that shoppers gravitate towards bottled drinks when they walk into convenience stores.
- Two-thirds of respondents spend somewhere between $6 and $20 per visit to the convenience store—indicating that they’re fulfilling more immediate needs for a beverage, but that they’re also susceptible to auxiliary purchases, driving up their spend.
- Last-minute Buyers (the majority of shoppers) are more likely to spend $5 or less in convenience stores compared to other shopper types.
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- Build custom charts and stunning visualizations for better storytelling
- Share your findings with stakeholders and export your data in any format

LEARN MORE

We do panel differently

LESS LIKE A COMMODITY, MORE LIKE A COMMUNITY

We pay cash for quality responses, and have continued to organically grow our proprietary panel, PaidViewpoint solely through the recruiting power of happy respondents.

WE TREAT YOUR AUDIENCE WITH RESPECT

So in return they’ll give you high-quality data. It’s also the reason they continue to rank PaidViewpoint the #1 survey-taking site through organizations like SurveyPolice.
Partner with the experts from aytm
FROM TRAINING AND EMPOWERMENT TO FULL-SERVICE SOLUTIONS
We're here to partner and consult with you, not just serve you tech. Members of our service team have worked with other teams at Amazon as well as other brands just like yours—we understand and empathize with your needs.

Solve for every stage of research
A LIBRARY OF AGILE SOLUTIONS
We have A LOT of really powerful pre-built solutions, and our Solutions Center puts them right at your fingertips.

Product Development
Market Landscape
Consumer Experience
Advertising and Messaging
Brand Insights
Business Strategy

FULL SERVICE
Service with a consultative mindset
From survey design to full analysis and reporting deliverables, we’ve got your back. Our market research experts are eager to understand your goals and challenges.

ASSISTED DIY
Empower more agile insights
When your survey needs are a bit more complex or your bandwidth may not allow for a DIY approach, we are here to lend support and instill confidence.

TRAINING & ENABLEMENT
A trusted guide for your agile journey
Online courses to boost your knowledge, on-call support to ensure surveys are launched with accuracy, and end-to-end consulting to scale your success.

Let’s talk
We get it: There’s a lot on your plate! But if you’re interested in learning more about how aytm can help empower your curiosity, reach out! We’d love to walk you through the platform.

GET IN TOUCH