

UK retailers not living up to consumer expectations

Submitted by: Velvet Integrated PR Limited

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Some retail brands are failing to deliver on the image they present in their advertising and marketing, according to a survey of British shoppers released today by shopper marketing agency Live & Breathe.

Half of people polled said they looked forward to going to a store because of the image it portrayed, only to find it didn't always have publicised products available. Another 38 per cent said staff didn't live up to the store image, and 44 per cent found the quality of products disappointing.

The research comes from Live & Breathe's Going Shopping: Are You Being Served? survey of 3,000 British shoppers. It found there was a big difference between retailers' marketing promises and the reality of the shopping experience.

In addition, more than 35 per cent of people have at some point refused to go into a store at all because they did not want to be seen as a customer of that brand.

The survey polled a nationally representative sample of male and female British shoppers from across the UK. A lack of product availability was cited by 55 per cent of women as the main problem with stores not living up to their image, with a further 50 per cent disappointed by product quality. A total of 38 per cent of women said store staff didn't live up to the retailer's image.

Similarly, 45 per cent of men said a lack of availability was a problem, with 38 per cent disappointed by product quality. Nearly a third (31 per cent) of men said staff didn't live up to a store's image.

The most common problem shoppers encounter regularly in stores is long queues. A total of 48 per cent said queuing to pay for items is a problem. Crowded shop floors (36 per cent), shop floor temperature (33 per cent), not being able to find staff and unhelpful staff (25 per cent) make up the top five problems shoppers regularly encounter.

Queues were slightly less of a problem for men (45 per cent) than for women (50 per cent), though women were slightly better equipped to deal with crowded shop floors – 33 per cent of women said this was a regular issue, compared to 40 per cent of men.

A lack of crowds and queues is the best thing about online shopping crowds, according to 45 per cent of people. More men (28 per cent) are likely to go online to see if a product is cheaper after they have seen it in a shop than women (22 per cent).

Nick Gray, managing director of Live & Breathe, says: "With so much emphasis on advertising and marketing a brand, it can be easy for retailers to forget that the work really begins once you get people to enter your store. Shopper experience is reliant on them not being let down anywhere along their path to purchase from sofa to store. This research shows just how important it is to ensure stores live up to the brand image – if shoppers are not satisfied with what they find, they will move on somewhere else, either to a competitor's high street offer or online. It is a far harder task to persuade them to return.

“Given the right thought and store investment, retailers can be well positioned to deliver over and above their marketing promises. The winners are the retailers that balance brand with store performance and don't take the UK's savvy and fickle shoppers for granted!”

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For more information please visit: www.liveandbreathe.co.uk

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Notes to editors:

Live & Breathe -Inspiring the shopper

We've been shopper marketing specialists for over 20 years. We work with leading brands including Comet, Argos, Bluewater, Peacocks, Sainsbury's, Chester Barrie, Morrisons, Palmer and Harvey, WH Smith, Zizzis, Haagen-Dazs, Veet and Airwick to create campaigns that truly inspire the shopper.

We deliver our work online, on street, in store or wherever we can convert consumers into shoppers with inspiring and effective brand communications.

Because we understand how retail works, we balance the right amount of planning and intuition to get to answers fast. We are structured to deliver work quickly and efficiently so as to support our retail clients in the face of the demanding schedules they face, day in day out.

We marry the most ground-breaking creative ideas with efficient, detailed delivery and do this by splitting skill sets across our London and Leeds offices. Our proprietary retail planning model puts shoppers at the heart of every brief to arrive at the most relevant and commercial creative response, whilst maintaining the right amount of art in the science.

Live & Breathe is lead by MD Nick Gray, CEO Stuart Mitchell and Chairman Adrian Watts.

For more information visit www.liveandbreathe.co.uk