

# Global study by Arc identifies the Parent-Shopper Paradox

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The internal fight between the parent and the shopper

A new global study into shopping behaviour has for the first time identified a paradox in the way parents shop for baby food and toys.

When it comes to shopping for baby food and toys, parents suffer from a range of highly conflicting psychological impulses: highly passionate, yet distinctly rational; driven by passion, limited by price; love for the child, hate for the shopping experience.

The findings emerged from the PeopleShop report - a global study into the shopping behaviour, attitudes and motivations of 13,000 consumers, carried out by leading shopper agency Arc (<http://www.arcww.co.uk>)

The emotional reward:

The PeopleShop study categorises baby food as a 'Passion' purchase - meaning it's considered to be emotionally rewarding and relatively risky. Brand decisions are made thoughtfully and there is a great desire to "go deep" with the brand. Other products that would be considered 'Passion' purchases include mobile phones and computer games.

Baby toys have been found to be the second most emotionally rewarding purchase with 50% of parents stating 'I don't just buy brands for functional reasons, I also get an emotional reward out of it'.

Whilst being highly rewarding, baby toys lacks the risk associated with baby food and are therefore deemed as 'Entertainment' purchases.

The complexity of the decision making process and the importance of making the right decision is highlighted by the fact that baby toys and baby foods are some of the most researched purchases. On average parents use 11.1 and 8.2 touchpoints before purchasing baby toys and baby food, respectively, making them the first and third most researched categories. Likewise, baby toys (78%) is comparable to only mobile phones (77%) and computer printers (75%) when it comes to consumers stating 'I like to compare brands' [before purchasing].

The Strategic Saver:

Laden with meaning, emotion and importance, however does not make shopping for baby food a pleasurable experience. The PeopleShop study reveals that 25% of parents hate shopping for baby food, making it the most hated category analysed, more so than even buying a computer printer (14%).

The most typical shopper archetype for baby toys and food is the Strategic Saver. Accounting for 58% and 50% of shoppers in these categories, Strategic Savers are highly price sensitive and use research and a variety of money saving techniques to find the best deals around.

What do parents want from brands?

The risk associated with buying baby food means that brand trust is absolutely vital. Arc's PeopleShop study reveals that 83% of people think that when it comes to buying baby food 'it's really important

to buy a brand you trust', coming second only to mobile phones, which tops the list with 84% agreeing.

However, trust seemingly doesn't correlate with the size of the company with a notable 30% of parents stating they prefer the smaller brands over the category leaders - indicating that there could be a perception among parents that fewer additives and preservatives are found in the smaller boutique-type brands.

Diana Cawley, Managing Director at Arc, said: "The Parent-Shopper Paradox reflects the complexity of today's shopping environment – every purchasing decision we make is shaped by a multitude of psychological, physiological and social influences."

She adds: "When buying for babies, mums and dads face a constant internal battle between being a good parent and being a good shopper. Purchasing decisions are highly emotional and rewarding, yet at the same time, the fear of making the wrong decision makes it's immensely stressful. The financial burden of having a baby means parents are highly price-sensitive and therefore often have to make the emotional compromise between perceived quality and price."

Arc's global PeopleShop study is based on a study of 13,000 consumers from the US, Canada and Europe. In the U.K., a nationally representative sample of 2,000 consumers was surveyed by Research Now between 20th August - 23rd August 2012.

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Notes to Editors

Table 1. Top Five products associated with 'Strategic Savers'

Video Games 58%  
Baby & Toddler Toys 58%  
Computer Printers 54%  
Baby Food 50%  
Video Games Systems 48%

Table 2. Top five most hated shopping categories

Baby food 25%  
Mobile phones 17%  
Video game systems 15%  
Computer printers 14%  
Video games 14%

Table 3. Top five average number of touchpoints used per category

Baby & toddler toys 11.1  
Video games 8.3  
Baby food 8.2  
Mobile phones 7.8  
Computer printers 7.6

Table 4. Top five most emotionally rewarding purchases

Video games 53%  
Baby & toddler toys 50%  
Chocolate 44%  
Mobile phones 39%  
Video game systems 34%

#### About Arc

Arc is a Brand Activation agency, created out of the merger of Arc, Lime and LeoSports and built on the three specialist disciplines of shopper, experiential and sponsorship. Simply stated, our goal is to change human behaviour, turning shoppers into buyers online, in store and on the move.

Our success is built on investment in research, industry leading strategic thinking and highly creative and effective campaigns.

Our key clients in the UK include Kraft, P&G, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Samsung, Tesco and Unicef.

We have 42 offices worldwide employing over 1500 people.

[www.arcww.co.uk](http://www.arcww.co.uk)

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