

MVGA RESEARCH COLLABORATION WITH MSU – DR. BRIDGET BEHE

Generational Point-of-Purchase Observations

MVGA partnered with Dr. Bridget Behe https://www.canr.msu.edu/people/dr_bridget_behe from Michigan State University (MSU) as an advisor to build upon her pre-existing generational purchasing research in retail greenhouses. She will discuss those findings at MVGA's Retail Roundtable workshop at Creque's Greenhouse in February.

Four (4) retail stores (Black Diamond-Perrysburg, Bostdorff's Greenhouse, Klotz Greenhouse, Wardell's Greenhouse) participated in the study, with one store having two separate display locations.

Technical Information:

- A camera was mounted near each display area to record purchases. (5 cameras, total) Over 10,000, 7-15 second camera "events" were recorded, yielding 865 sales captured during the 8-week testing period in April and May of 2021.
- Several critical testing criteria were notated:
 - Age group (generation classification) of each purchase
 - Male/Female
 - Sales Sign/Environmental Sign/No Sign
 - # of Purchases
 - No Purchase (Item or tag picked up, examined, then set down)
 - Store Location
 - Date/Week #
 - Time in seconds needed to make a purchase, or not
- Two sets of signs were displayed during separate weekly data collection periods. Pricing signs alternated weekly, followed by environmental informational signs during May and June. The purpose was to determine if signage influences purchases based on actual cost/value or potential environmental benefits.
- Data was recorded only from observable purchases (or not). Items chosen off-screen were not included.
- The testing cycle was all open hours, seven days each week during the eight weeks (May/June).
- All data was streamed to the Cloud for easy access with a password to protect records. All observations were made by MVGA's Executive Director, Joe Perlaky.
- Data Collection Procedure:
 - Each "event clip" on the phone was viewed to determine if a purchase (or not) was made.
 - If a purchase or a rejection was made, it was emailed to an office computer with a larger screen to view and notate specific details.

Findings/Observations:

- Data was acquired by recording customer purchases in and around pre-designated floriculture displays of medium/high-value items. It was discovered that adding less expensive items and more colorful plant choices increased traffic and purchasing.
- If the customer picks up the plant or its care label to evaluate, it almost always results in a sale EXCEPT for the longer they hold it, which becomes more likely they will NOT buy.
- If a customer picked up a plant or care label and did not buy, I considered it a "No Purchase" Stopping and looking but not purchases were not recorded.
- If both a Male & Female shop together, it is almost always the female that is buying the plant, and the male is pushing it in a cart.
- The use of the face mask made it difficult sometimes in distinguishing age when the extremes of two generational groups were observed. At that point, it was a best guess.
- Sometimes having empty rack space near flower locations indicate scarcity and that others preselected, adding value to those particular flowers.
- Occasionally customers look to the back of the display and hunt to the "gem" that is hiding, thinking no one discovered it.
- The time in seconds for multiple purchases represents the TOTAL purchase transaction. E.g., two purchases at 7 seconds for one item and 3 seconds for another were recorded as 10 seconds, then placed in the cart.
- 99.9% of shoppers are Caucasian. Why? In large part, it is because these locations are suburban.
- Purchase time is mostly +/- 3-5 seconds, AVERAGE.
- Kids make a difference. If they are confined to a wagon, it seems to take longer for a decision. If not confined and free to walk around, definitely a quicker decision by maybe 1/2 the time.
- ONLY purchases or NO purchases were recorded that were observed on camera in its entirety
- There were many sales NOT recorded even though purchases were made because they were selected OFF-camera.
- As the season progressed into June, shoppers became more choosy because they looked for specific replacements that may have died or needed more of the same plants.

Podcast:

- A twenty-four-minute discussion between MSU's marketing research expert Dr. Bridget Behe and MVGA Executive Director Joe Perlaky addressing the data results of the Generational Purchasing program completed at the end of June was recorded on 08-10-21. They were edited into two segments on 09-30-21 and posted on the MVGA website on 11-16-21.