TRENDSOURCE
TRUSTED INSIGHT

Case Study

Consumer Electronics Manufacturer Uses Mystery Shopping to Understand Customer Experience

PHASE 1

A consumer electronics manufacturer came to TrendSource with a specific research question: How could they better understand the increasing segmentation of their personal computer (PC) category and its impact on the in-store buying experience? Based on a consultative approach, we identified that the client's primary goal was to understand how (and how well) retailers presented form factor (i.e. laptop, tablet, convertible, etc.), operating system (Windows, Chrome, iOS, etc.), and brand options to customers through displays and sales rep interactions. Specifically, the client wanted to know:

1. How are products segmented and displayed?

    a. Where are PC products displayed in the store?
    b. How are products segmented within the department; by form, operating system, brand, processor, etc.?
    c. How do they differentiate between form and operating system?

1. What role does the associate play in selling PC products?

    a. Are features clearly communicated?
    b. What products do they recommend?
    c. Can they effectively communicate step-up, price and power?
    d. Can they close the sale?

PHASE 2

It was determined that the best approach to understanding the in-store buying experience was to conduct a mystery shopping program. Based on this, TrendSource deployed mystery shoppers to act as a typical consumer looking for a new product, with the following scenario-based attributes:
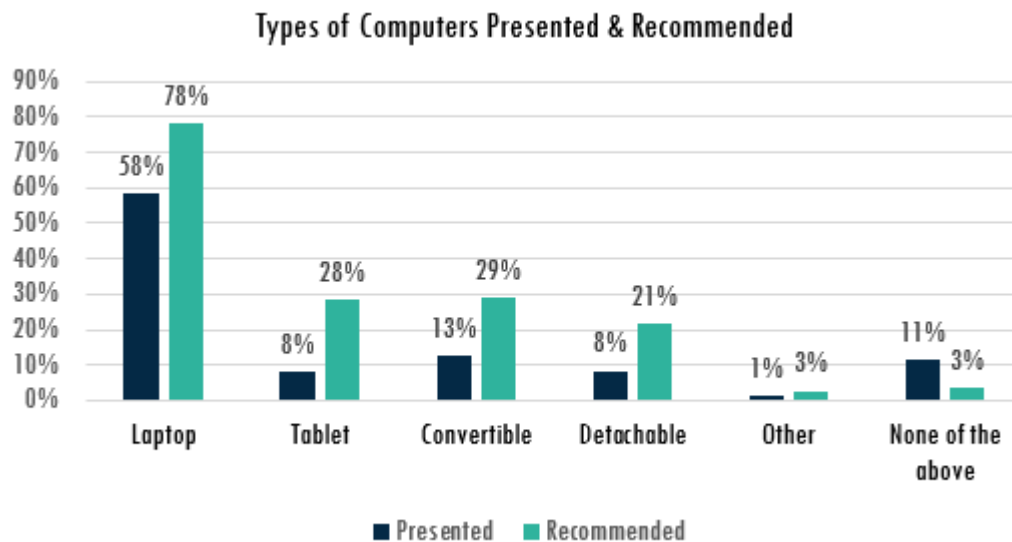
- Unsure which type of laptop to purchase
- Aware of new convertible type computers which can be both a laptop and a tablet
- Aware of the new products and were looking to understand the pros and cons of both form factors and operating systems

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PHASE 3

Approximately 1,400 mystery shops were conducted nationwide. Mystery shops were completed using a scenario that was written to provide sales associates the opportunity to present the various mobile PC form factors and operating systems available. Results revealed:

- **Despite the increasing fragmentation of the PC category, laptops and Windows are still a focus in the general use scenario.**
- **Available signage drives perceptions about how the computer department is organized. Without clear signage customers may not be able to easily discern product segmentation.**
- **Retailers have different preferences and tendencies for brand and form factor.**
- **To help customers easily understand and navigate the category, keep it simple or display clear signage and make educational materials available.**
- **Overall, reps were most likely to recommend a laptop as compared to tablets, convertibles, and detachables.**

Types of Computers Presented & Recommended

Bar chart showing percentages of computer types Presented (dark) and Recommended (teal):
- Laptop: Presented 58%, Recommended 78%
- Tablet: Presented 8%, Recommended 28%
- Convertible: Presented 13%, Recommended 29%
- Detachable: Presented 8%, Recommended 21%
- Other: Presented 1%, Recommended 3%
- None of the above: Presented 11%, Recommended 3%

■ Presented ■ Recommended

Detailed findings from this program allowed the client to effectively collaborate with their retail partners to:

- **Position their brand against competitors**
- **Display products appropriately in-store for optimal shopper awareness**
- **Train all store reps regarding brand and product messaging**