



Understanding UK healthy living consumers online research strategies

The healthy living consumer:

Respondents were selected using a proprietary sampling process to ensure they were representative of the UK internet population. The study showed healthy living consumers are young; 1/3 of all diet/slimming researchers are under 30. They are also predominantly female and further educated, with over 1/3 having entered higher education. The majority of researchers were full time middle income earners. Thus, the study presented a picture of the discerning, affluent healthy living consumer.

Online activities supporting a healthy lifestyle:

- Healthy food and drinks
- Vitamins and supplements
- Dieting and slimming products/programs

Google and Media Screen LLC worked together to gain some compelling insights into the online behaviour of UK healthy living consumers. The study's findings will help the Fast Moving Consumer Goods industry improve its online and search marketing strategies, by delivering a complete, user-focused picture of online activity.

The online market is rapidly becoming the number one source of information for the healthy living consumer. According to our results 70% of the UK adult internet population have researched healthy living information online; with 35% of all healthy living purchases in the last three months made online

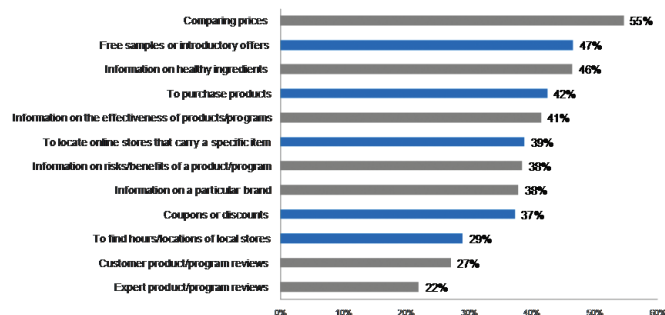
Online activity and spend

72% of respondents spend over £20 online on healthy living products per month

The activities online are varied and consumers use the internet at all points along the purchase path-from research to purchase. Research activities were the most common uses of the internet. Those interested in healthy living go online to compare prices (55%), look for special promotions or free samples (47%) and learn about product ingredients (46%).

The internet is also used by consumers further down the purchase funnel; 42% have used the internet to purchase products, and 29% have gone on line to locate stores. The internet now also acts as a place to get a second opinion – be that an experts opinion, or a fellow consumer. The variety of online activity shows that the internet can be used to reach the consumer at every point in their purchase path, from consideration, to decision, to purchase.

Online Activities Related to Healthy Living



Convenience and better deals are the top reasons to shop online for all category purchasers. The reasons consumers visit stores are to see the products in person (cited as a motivating factor by 82% of respondents) and to avoid paying delivery costs (81%).

The activities of users, and their purchase patterns shows the role that the internet can play for both online and offline sales.

The aims of the study were to understand:

- Online activities supporting a healthy lifestyle
- The influence of information sources in researching and purchasing behaviours
- Awareness and use of sponsored links on search engines
- Effectiveness of various website features
- Purchase channels, including the benefits of online retail purchasing

METHODOLOGY NOTES

Sample: 804 UK residents over the age of 18 who researched healthy living information online in the last three months participated in this research

Categories: Respondents used the Internet to research information on healthy meals or recipes, ideas for improving health, tips on exercise or other healthy living topics. Respondents were assigned to one of the three target categories based on their researching and purchasing history and questions referred to that category. If a respondent qualified for more than one category, preference was given to the category with the lowest incidence

Healthy food and drinks N=294
Vitamins and supplements N=265
Dieting and slimming products/programs N=245

Search in the research process

95% of respondents use search engines when researching/purchasing healthy living products

Search engines are used by the majority of healthy living researchers to access all sites. Healthy living consumers also have a high propensity to click on ads. Top sponsored links are clicked on “always” or “often” by our respondents. Similarly, 20% “always” or “often” click through from side sponsored ads. This demonstrates the high traffic search advertising can generate in this market.

Other types of advertising also influence consumers, with respondents citing TV ads, magazine ads, promotional displays and newspapers ads as sources for healthy living information.

Websites

The most popular websites are retail stores’ (49%) and sites that provide tips on health and diet (48%). Important website features include providing detailed descriptions or instructions for products (60%), offering expert advice (55%) and giving users the ability to compare similar products (44%). Also 62% of respondents prefer sites without a log in or registration. This shows how having a wide offering on your website and incorporating tips and extra features is a good way to attract users and build customer loyalty.

Turning Insights into action

- Online is the most common starting point of the consumer journey and is critical throughout the funnel; healthy living companies should ensure they can always be found online.
- Search engines provide a gateway to healthy living sites; use search intelligently to build brand strength and obtain new consumers.
- Online research leads to both online and offline purchase; ensure that your website engages consumers and provides them with the information they need to make buying decisions.

