**Don’t ignore the shoppers who ignore you**

Big data is a key focus for a lot of businesses these days, and such data can certainly present some significant opportunities. Yet there is a risk inherent in data that focuses on buyers or doers – it gives a one dimensional perspective to your business picture. To get a more rounded view we believe you need to also look at those who don’t buy or don’t do – those who may not be represented in your big data analysis.

We all know that shoppers unconsciously smooth their purchase journey by eliminating what they don’t want in order to focus on what they do want. Yet all too often research is about what goes into the basket and not what falls out of the basket and why. Typical reasons for elimination relate to core marketing issues not just shopper marketing, so the learning and implications can reach across your business: from brand perception to fixture layout.

To turn the situation around you need to re-wire the ‘rejectors’ thinking in order to get them to be more open to your product, which can only be achieved by a clear understanding of their current thinking:

* What beliefs do they bring to store – and where do these come from?
* At what point is your brand eliminated – is it just your brand or a sector issue?
* What have your competitors got that you haven’t – how does this manifest itself at fixture?

Let’s look at an example: a whole chicken on sale in Tesco for £2. Buyers talked about the incredible value, and how Tesco were helping hard pressed families cope with tight household spending. An apparent success story… until you talked to non-buyers. They were shocked to see a whole chicken at this price, because for them it was just too good to be true and called to question the quality of the product and therefore the credibility of Tesco.

By taking the time to consider the non-buyer perspective you are better placed to identify the opportunities because you will understand the problems. You may even find that you are not the only brand being eliminated and that the action required is broader than a simple fix from the marketing team. Re-wiring shoppers in order to reverse elimination can require action from retailers, category or brand and can stretch from in-store theatre to pack design.

Some might argue that what we are really talking about are barriers to purchase, but the key point is that you need to know in which part of the non-buyers journey these barriers present themselves in order to re-wire the shopper with the right message at the right time. Of course buyers can tell us about barriers too, but their barriers might be less fundamental as they have clearly found a way around them to make their purchase. Non-buyers barriers are a whole new ball game.

Next time you gather your shopper insights don’t ignore non-buyers just because they ignore you. Getting it right for them could deliver the incremental sales every brand is looking for.