

Study: Moms cut spending but not for their kids

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CHICAGO: A significant discrepancy exists between how moms shop for their kids versus themselves, according to an annual study by the Marketing to Moms Coalition.

"We've been doing this study for three years, and that was what really stood out this year: Moms have a more critical eye when they are buying for their children than they do for themselves," said Amy Colton, SVP, Current Marketing (which is part of the Interpublic Group), and one of the five founders of the nonprofit organization. "That is why you have to be really smart about how you're talking to moms, because the communication should be different depending if you're talking to her about herself or her children."

"The State of the American Mom Report"—which surveyed 1,225 moms with kids under the age of 18 living in the home—found that 72% of respondents said they gave up on the quality of new clothes they buy, while 51% cut back on the quality of the health and beauty products they buy. In terms of household spending, more than three-quarters of moms (78%) have cut back, and more than half are making special trips to retailers that offer the best price.

Yet, the majority of mothers said they are not sacrificing quality when it comes to buying food, medical needs and clothing for their children. "When shopping for foods for their children, moms do pay more attention to products that are all-natural and organic, for instance," Colton said.

The study also revealed that 61% of moms are more focused on the environment. And that 39% of moms are on Facebook, and 11% of them on Twitter. "This study shows that social media campaigns are integral to any kind of marketing initiative, but especially if you're talking to moms," said Colton. "We've seen moms use it not just to connect with their friends, but also the various online communities and e-newsletters they may sign up for related to raising their kids."

The report, conducted in the second quarter of this year, covers mothers' media habits (both traditional and online); computer usage; consumption habits and priorities; attitudes towards shopping and marketing; and the influence of their children in product purchases. The research is also segmented by income, ethnicity, age of children, and working mothers versus stay-at-home mothers. The study surveyed both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking mothers.