

Anna Petry

Dove

Dove Ethnography at Target

Purpose

The purpose of this ethnography was to see how people buy body wash and what their decision-making process looks like. My goal was to understand what factors seem to matter most when making these decisions and how that can be analyzed to help Dove reach a younger audience.

Observations

I conducted my ethnography on October 4th, from 12:45 PM to 1:45 PM at the Target on Franklin Street. The store had a decent number of people in it since it was the middle of the day. It wasn't too loud and everyone seemed to mind their own business as they grabbed what they needed and went to self-checkout. The lights in the store were bright and fluorescent and the floor was shiny and clean. It smelled clean inside like plastic. I stood by the body wash section which is small with only a few shelves stretching about 4 feet.

Since Target is so small and it's main demographic is college students only a few people came over to the body wash section. The first person to come by was a college-aged Asian male. He walked over and grabbed a bottle of Dial body wash, smelled it, saw me looking at him, and then set it back on the shelf and walked away shyly.

A few minutes later two college-aged caucasian female friends walked up to the section talking about how they both needed body wash because they ran out. The first girl reached for a big Dove bottle that has a pump on top and told her friend to get the same one because she loves it and it lasts forever. The other friend reached for Aveeno lavender-scented body wash and said that it smelled better than dove and she said she would just buy a few bottles at once. The other friend leaned over and grabbed the Aveeno to smell it. Then she put back her Dove and grabbed two bottles of the Aveeno.

After about 20 minutes of no one stopping by the body wash section, a college-aged caucasian female came by and stopped to stare at the shelf for a little while. She picked up a few different brands of body washes, including Dove, Dial, and Aveeno, and smelled each of them before setting them back on the shelf. She then looked at what appeared to be the price tags of the different soaps and pulled one out that was tucked under the shelf to read it. From there, she grabbed one of the Dial body washes she had smelled and placed it in her basket.

Reflection

The purpose of this ethnography was to see how college-aged kids purchase body wash and what factors go into it. The Target on Franklin Street was a great place to do this since almost everyone who goes in there is a college student. From my observations, I was able to

conclude that people want their body wash to have a nice scent and that it plays a large role in their purchasing decision. I also saw that price is also a big deciding factor when choosing between different scents and brands. My most interesting observation was the two female friends. I thought it was funny how the friend who typically bought Aveeno was able to convince her friend who always used Dove to switch just based on the smell of it. It taught me that shopping with other people's can affect your purchasing decisions.

This exercise was fun to do because it was interesting to see how different everyone's shopping habits are. I came in with a bias that most people would buy Dove since it's such a well-known brand that I use myself. I also thought most people would just grab a bottle and go or maybe smell a few so I was surprised when I saw people spending lots of time or looking at the price differences since those are things I normally do not do myself. If I were to do this ethnography again I would sit at Target for a whole day so I could observe more people and get a more conclusive result.