

# HOW SHOPPERS SEE THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH SALES PERSONNEL

**A study conducted by ISRA Center Marketing Research, exclusively for Piața Magazine, identifies customers' perception on various aspects of sales personnel's activities in stores.**



Foto: dreamstime

Maria Vaschi



The research, conducted during 10 – 25 February 2011, had as main objective to investigate the relationship between buyers – in their perspective – and the sales personnel of traditional and modern retail.

A first conclusion of the survey is that most city residents (77%) visit certain traditional stores very often. Their preference is based on concrete reasons: proximity to home or work (94%), reasonable prices (35%), fresh and high quality products (28%). The criteria related to the relationship with sales personnel are not very important when choosing the proximity store. This way, only 18%

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Objectives:

- Investigation of the relationship buyers have with the personnel of traditional retail
- Importance buyers pay recommendations and advice given by sales persons in traditional retail
- Relationship with personnel in modern retail and satisfaction with various aspects of their activity

### Research pool:

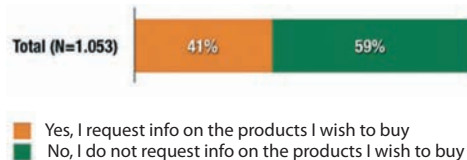
1,108 respondents in urban area, aged between 20 and 60, out of whom 1,053 visit traditional retail and 1,093 are visitors of modern retail

### Data collection:

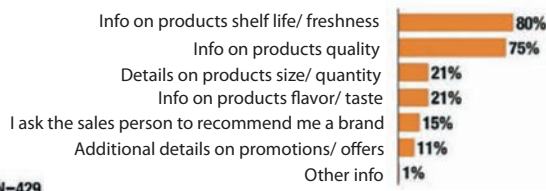
Face-to-face interview on the basis of a questionnaire designed by ISRA Center, in accordance with Piața Magazine's objectives and requests

## INFO REQUESTED ON PRODUCTS (TRADITIONAL RETAIL)

When you go to a traditional store, do you usually ask the sales person for information on the products you wish to buy?



Info requested...



Base: 1,053 respondents who shop in traditional retail

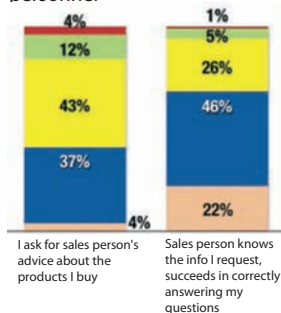
Shoppers who ask for info on the products they intend to purchase are mostly from Moldavia and Oltenia. Bucharest respondents are interested in products flavor/ taste (29% vs. 21%) and in promotions (17% vs. 11%) to a greater extent than the national mean.

of the respondents take into account the fact that sales persons are polite and nice and 11% that they help them choose the products they need.

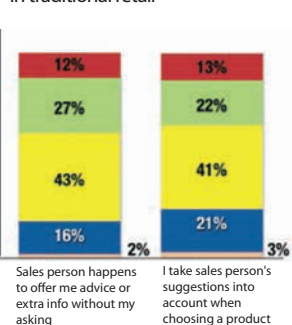
Only 4 in 10 customers usually ask for info on the products purchased – especially about the shelf life, quality, size, promotions. The most interested in these aspects are Moldavia (90%), Muntenia and Oltenia (89%) residents, persons with incomes between 1,201 and 2,100 lei (90%), as well as elder

## SHOPPERS' RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SALES PERSON (TRADITIONAL RETAIL)

Base: 429 respondents who request info from store personnel



Base: 1,053 respondents who shop in traditional retail

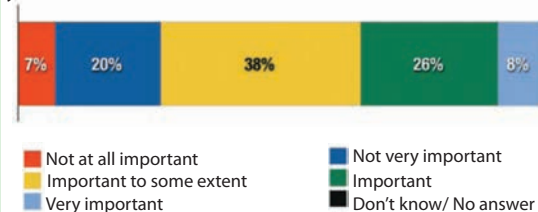


Source: ISRA CENTER

The quality of the information offered by the sales persons in traditional stores is considered to be quite high, respondents estimating that most of the sales persons succeed in correctly answering the questions they are asked.

## IMPORTANCE OF SALES PERSON'S ADVICE (TRADITIONAL RETAIL)

How important are to you the sales person's recommendations when you go to a traditional store?



Base: 1,053 respondents who shop in traditional retail

The mean of the answers regarding the appreciation of sales person's recommendations, on a 1 ("not at all important") to 5 ("very important") scale, is 3.08. It increases to 3.24 in the case of persons aged over 50 and drops to 2.9 in the case of young respondents aged between 20 and 34. Also, it increases to 3.44 in Oltenia and decreases to 2.92 in Transylvania.

respondents (49%). On the other hand, 76% of Ardeal respondents are less open to asking questions and requesting info.

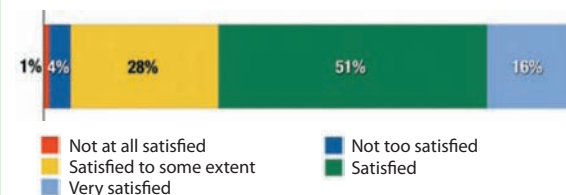
"Although, by comparison to modern retail, traditional retail is the place where the customer-seller interaction is stronger, we can identify shoppers' tendency to limit communication with sales personnel here as well", states Alice Mihai, Business Development Director, ISRA Center Marketing Research. "On the other hand, few sellers make the effort to initiate a conversation with the shopper by spontaneously offering advice", adds Alice Mihai.

Almost half of the shoppers who receive additional info from the traditional retail personnel always take into account their suggestions when choosing a product.

The sales person knows the info requested and succeeds in correctly answering the questions "quite often" or "always", state 68% of the interviewees.

## SHOPPERS' SATISFACTION WITH SALES PERSONNEL'S ATTITUDE (TRADITIONAL RETAIL)

Overall, how satisfied are you with the sales persons at the traditional store you usually go to?

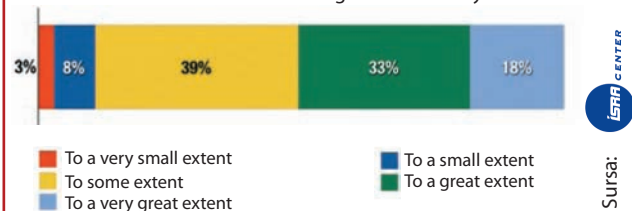


Base: 1,053 respondents who shop in traditional retail

The national mean of the answers regarding customers' satisfaction with sales personnel's, on a scale from 1 "not at all satisfied" to 5 "very satisfied", is 3.77. In this case as well, Oltenia residents are more generous (4.05), and Ardeal participants are harder to please (3.64).

## ATTENTION SALES PERSONNEL GIVE TO BUYERS (MODERN RETAIL)

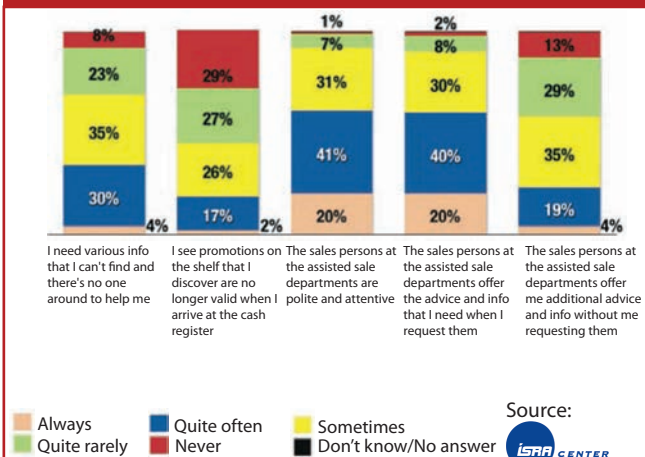
To what extent do you think the personnel in modern stores are paying attention to customers and are taking care of the buyer?



Base: 1,093 respondents who shop in modern retail

The attention sales persons pay to buyers gathered, on a scale from 1 ("to a very small extent") to 5 ("to a very great extent"), a national mean of 3.55 – a bit higher in Oltenia (3.8) and a bit lower in Bucharest (3.49).

## SHOPPERS' RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SALES PERSONS (MODERN RETAIL)



Base: 1,093 respondents who shop in modern retail

Shoppers who visit modern retail have a better opinion about the sales persons at the assisted sale departments than about the rest of the personnel in the store.

In modern retail, the relationship with the customer is much more impersonal. Many shoppers state that the sales personnel in these stores are nowhere to be found when you need them. Other dissatisfactions are related to the fact that employees do not pay enough attention to shoppers or that they are not well enough informed about the products in the store. However, opinions are not completely shared: half of the visitors state that retail sales personnel are attentive with them "mainly" or "to a very great extent", and the other half state that care for the shopper is present "to a small and very small extent" or "to some extent". The most lenient from this point of view are Oltenia residents, and the most critical – Bucharest interviewees.

"Most shoppers do not ask questions and do not ask for additional info from the sales personnel in traditional retail. On the other hand, few sellers make the effort to initiate a conversation with the shopper by spontaneously offering advice."



Alice Mihai, Business Development Director,  
ISRA Center Marketing Research

A different situation is encountered in the case of assisted sale departments, which preserve some of the characteristics of traditional retail. However, here also, communication is most of the times initiated by the customer and less by the sales person. Nevertheless, shoppers consider these employees to be attentive and very polite when asked for help.

## SHOPPERS' DISSATISFACTIONS WITH SALES PERSONNEL (MODERN RETAIL)

Lack of personnel at the department	12%
Not informed/ They do not know the products	10%
Are not attentive with the client/ Are indifferent	6%
Are not nice/ polite enough	6%
Small number of employees	5%
Crowded cash registers/ long waiting time	3%
Sales personnel's lack of involvement/ in a hurry	2%
Lack of communication/ organization	2%
Irritable/ recalcitrant/ impertinent	2%
Personnel's behavior/ attitude	2%
Lack of promptness in the store as well as at the cash registers	1%
Personnel's insistence	1%
They difficultly respond to clients' requests	1%
Closed cash registers	1%
Wrong/ unlabeled prices	1%
Lack of professionalism	1%
Lack of products/ promotions on the shelves	1%
Other dissatisfactions	3%
No dissatisfaction	39%
I don't interact with the personnel	0,3%
Don't know/ No answer	7%

Source: ISRA CENTER

Base: 1,093 respondents who shop in modern retail

The most dissatisfied with the fact that sales persons are not found when needed are Bucharest and Moldavia residents (15%, vs. 11% the national mean). Ardeal respondents most often complain about sales personnel's indifference (10%, vs. 12% the mean).

The entire study can be viewed on the website [www.revista-piata.ro](http://www.revista-piata.ro)