

Low-Income Consumers Do Not See Themselves as Eating as Well as the Average American – New Report

Hartman Group report finds that what lower-income consumers want — healthy, tasty, fresh, and affordable food — is not that different from other consumers, but their budgets do not allow for much beyond the essentials.

Bellevue, WA — Economic recession, recovery, and realignment have been major drivers of change in the U.S. food and beverage industry and consumer values and purchasing behaviors, according to findings in The Hartman Group's [The Business of Thrift: Understanding Low-Income and Value-Oriented Consumers](#) report.

"As the U.S. economy continues to shift, understanding and meeting the needs of these various types of value-seeking consumers in the U.S. has never been more critical," says Laurie Demeritt, CEO of The Hartman Group. "Most consumers engage in thrifty behaviors — especially in their household shopping — because this type of frugality is culturally valued. However, for mid/high-income consumers, frugality is more of a choice, whereas for low-income consumers, it is a necessary way of life."

The report finds that despite this wealth gap, quality attributes like organic and less processed cues are still growing in importance culturally. Similarly, as fewer households are able to call themselves "middle class," the traditional consumer base of many brands and grocery stores is gradually eroding. At the same time, even those who are doing OK financially often can find themselves prioritizing thrift when it comes to food.

Consumers across all income levels share similar social and political attitudes as well as similar general attitudes around eating, cooking, and health and wellness. However, low-income consumers are more likely to view their diet and health as diminished relative to other consumers.

"Low-income shoppers are as likely to cook as higher-income folks, but their tight budgets preclude risk taking," says Demeritt. "They opt more often for whatever is easiest and cheapest and are less likely to prioritize nutrition."

About The Business of Thrift: Understanding Low-Income and Value-Oriented Consumers Report

The Hartman Group's [The Business of Thrift: Understanding Low-Income and Value-Oriented Consumers](#) report focuses on understanding low-income and value-oriented consumers' needs, desires, and limitations, with an eye toward opportunity in how companies can meet them where they are in their busy, and often stressful, lives.

About The Hartman Group

Since 1989, The Hartman Group has been translating consumer behavior and food culture into strategic growth opportunities for our clients. We are 100 percent focused on the food and beverage marketplace and our clients' interests. We deliver smart, strategic and tactical advice, engaging collaborative experiences and comprehensive research and analysis that lead to positive outcomes for our clients. For more information, visit www.hartman-group.com

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