



SPAR Shopper Survey: Consumers Focused on Product Availability, Tariffs and Tech

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AUBURN HILLS, Mich.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jul. 31, 2025-- A new consumer study conducted by [SPAR Group](#), Inc. reveals that product availability is the single most important factor for shoppers when choosing to shop in-store, with 74% of respondents citing it as their top priority. At the same time, 73% of shoppers identify out-of-stocks as a leading barrier to the in-store experience, underscoring the critical need for retailers to maintain well-stocked shelves.

"The first rule of retail is that empty is always wrong. After decades of investment, inventory in-stock, plan-o-gram compliance and optimal replenishment remains elusive. Retailers and brands pay for data based on point-of-sale transactions as a proxy to monitoring inventory velocity, but this information is too late to make a difference. It's like driving your car looking in the rear-view mirror," said Mike Matacunas, President and CEO of SPAR Group.

"This shopper study underscores the impact of distorted inventory – disappointed consumers, lost sales, lower margins. I am encouraged by the trend towards digital shelf innovation, but cautious based on the consumer's plans to navigate tariffs. We need to be bolder as an industry and embrace innovation. Great merchants test and learn."

Technology and Innovation

The 2025 SPAR Consumer Survey highlights a growing interest in technology that enhances the in-store experience but also reveals consumer hesitancy toward certain innovations. 71% of shoppers are uncomfortable or unsure with the idea of roaming robots in stores, with women expressing more discomfort than men. Younger shoppers (ages 18-54) are more open to roaming robots than older demographics.

"Digital shelf monitoring is a growing market. Retailers are testing roving robots, stationery cameras and on-shelf moving field cameras. These promise to capture inventory information to improve plan-o-gram compliance, in-stock integrity and velocity data. As ex-retailers, we have sorted through the competitive solutions as a retailer and the winner is obvious. Consumers don't want technology to interfere with the shopping experience. Retailers don't want cameras on sticks every few feet. Moving field gondola-based cameras are the 'best mousetrap' for retailers," continued Matacunas.

Economic Concerns and Shopper Behavior

Nearly half of shoppers are very concerned about tariffs, particularly regarding grocery prices. Many expect to seek out more coupons or sales, buy less overall or switch brands. Younger shoppers (ages 18–39) are especially likely to anticipate significant increases in expenses and express higher levels of concern.

"Consumers intend on reducing spend or switching brands as tariffs continue to roll out. The impact of tariffs further exacerbates consumer's frustration with inventory availability. Retailers and brands need to be more proactive investing in process and technology to improve availability and remain competitive," said Matacunas.

Retailer Rankings

Walmart continues to lead in in-store experience and app helpfulness, especially among lower-income households. Target remains a distant second, while higher-income shoppers (\$90K+) show a preference for Costco.

In-Store Shopping, Mobile Apps Remain Essential

Four of five shoppers prefer to purchase groceries in-store, driven by the ability to try products, discover new items and plan meals. Loyalty rewards and competitive prices are now equally valued as top benefits of retailer apps. Mobile apps are especially helpful for households earning \$100K–\$200K, while contactless checkout and buy-online-pickup-in-store options appeal to those in the \$40K–\$50K range.

Other Key Survey Findings

- **Positive In-Store Drivers:** Speedy checkout, in-store promotions, self-checkout options and coupons are top contributors to a positive experience.
- **Challenges:** Crowds and lack of staff remain significant pain points for shoppers.
- **Shopping Intentions:** 61% of respondents expect to shop more in stores over the next six months.
- **Technology Preferences:** Half of shoppers say downloadable coupons and self-checkout encourage them to shop in-store.
- **Data Sharing:** Most shoppers are willing to share data with retailers, but about one in four now share only specific data for specific reasons, a notable increase from last year.

SPAR Group's Commitment

SPAR Group continues to support retailers and brands with solutions that address the evolving needs of today's shoppers. By leveraging advanced image capture, on-shelf availability technology and strategic partnerships, SPAR helps ensure products are available, promotions are effective and the in-store experience is seamless.

"As the retail landscape evolves, our mission remains the same: to help retailers and brands keep their customers happy, engaged and coming back," said Matacunas. "We're proud to be at the forefront of innovation, delivering the insights and services that drive real results for our partners and the

shoppers they serve. If you want to learn more about our unique approach, please don't hesitate to reach out."

Note to Editors: The complete results of the 2025 SPAR Consumer Survey are available [HERE](#), or contact ron@rampr.com.

Methodology

During June 2025, SPAR Group fielded a survey through a third-party research firm with more than 1,000 consumers between the ages of 18 and 64. Respondents were screened to be the primary or secondary shopper in their households.

About SPAR Group, Inc.

SPAR Group is an innovative services company offering comprehensive merchandising, marketing and distribution solutions to retailers and brands. We provide the resources and analytics that improve brand experiences and transform retail spaces. We offer a unique combination of scale and flexibility with a passion for client results that separates us from the competition. For more information, please visit the SPAR Group's website at <http://www.sparinc.com>.

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Media Contact

Ronald Margulis
RAM Communications
908-272-3930
ron@rampr.com

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