

Sweet Potential

Understanding Consumers' Grape Purchase Decisions to Increase Sales



The ultimate in convenience, grapes require almost no effort to prepare and can be easily tucked into lunchboxes, enjoyed as an on-the-go snack, and added to a variety of recipes. They also deliver a healthy dose of nutrients and vitamins. So it's no surprise that shoppers love refreshingly crisp, sweet grapes.

To learn more about the factors that influence their decisions to buy—and not buy—grapes, Robinson Fresh® conducted a survey with U.S. consumers—all grape shoppers. The survey revealed insights about their preferences related to grape packaging, varieties, and promotions.

Who is buying grapes?

GRAPE SHOPPERS...

Plan to buy grapes

2/3 of shoppers plan to buy grapes before they even step foot in the store.

Frequently buy produce

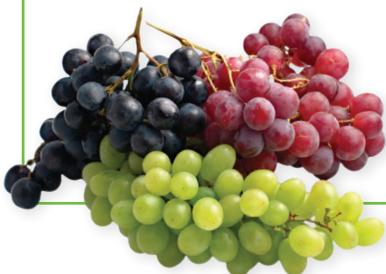
More than 70% of shoppers buy fresh fruits and vegetables weekly or more.

Only **1/3** purchase grapes on a weekly basis, and **2/3** purchase them at least twice a month.

Fall into all income brackets

Shoppers who purchase grapes weekly hold nearly the same share **across all income brackets**.

Over **65% of families** of four purchase grapes on a weekly basis—regardless of income level.





Which factors impact shoppers' decisions to purchase grapes?

QUALITY IS KEY

When shoppers are making their decisions to purchase grapes, quality and perceived freshness trumps all else. For these reasons, it's important to carry grapes that meet their standards.



Grape expectations

3 SIGNS OF QUALITY GRAPES

- Plump, consistently colored orbs with no sign of shriveling
- Green, pliable stems
- Fruit stays attached to the stem when the bunch is picked up

SUBSTITUTES AND SHOPPING HABITS

When shoppers make the decision to not purchase grapes, only 4% will go to another store to buy them. Many will simply find a substitute at the same store—typically berries, particularly strawberries—instead. Another substitute for conventional grapes is organic grapes, but shoppers are less likely to make the decision based on price—quality drives this swap.

It's important to note that 58% of shoppers buy grapes at traditional grocers, and 17% buy them at mass retailers. More than 65% of the time, they will shop for produce at multiple stores. This rate jumps to 80% for shoppers who typically buy their grapes at club stores or specialty grocers.

So, while it's unlikely that shoppers will head to another store when the grapes don't meet their quality standards, many are already going to multiple locations to meet their produce needs—meaning they won't be inconvenienced by waiting to purchase grapes during those trips.

50% of grape shoppers say the **quality of grapes is the most important factor**

35% of grape shoppers say **price is the most important factor**

PRICE MATTERS—BUT LESS SO

Pricing can be an important factor for impulse shoppers, but quality still ranks higher. And while shoppers who infrequently buy grapes are more price-sensitive, most say they have a fair amount of wiggle room in the price range they're willing to pay for grapes.

Across U.S. retail, the average base price for grapes is \$2.58 per pound. More than half of all purchases occur during promotions, which are split almost evenly between print ads and in-store temporary price reductions.

10% of grape shoppers say **price doesn't matter—they'll purchase grapes regardless**

Food for thought

Many grape varieties develop a bloom, which is a whitish coating on the skin. This natural, protective substance keeps grapes fresh by preventing moisture loss and decay. Educate shoppers to reduce any misconceptions about the quality of grapes with bloom.





How can retailers drive more grape sales?

While a majority of shoppers plan on purchasing grapes before they're even at the store, there are opportunities to increase the frequency of sales from both planned and impulse shoppers.

START A FRESH CAMPAIGN

Most shoppers (86%) look for a specific type of grape—likely red or green seedless, which, together, make up 90% of retail sales volume. Meanwhile, only 4% of shoppers say that grape variety is more important in their decision to purchase. In fact, shoppers were more likely to recognize fake varieties over real grape varieties.



Nearly 85% of shoppers say a “Grape of the Moment” campaign is appealing and would increase the likelihood of impulse purchases.

Throughout the year, whether monthly or weekly, showcase a specific grape variety. Display information about the featured variety’s flavor profile, firmness, shelf life and storage tips, recipe or snack ideas, and other interesting or relevant notes.

What’s in a name?

TYPE VS. VARIETY

Generally speaking, grape *type* refers to broad characteristics of the fruit (e.g., red seedless, green seedless, red globe, etc.).

Grape *variety* refers to specific subspecies of the grape family (e.g., Thompson, Flame, Cotton Candy). In California alone, there are more than 90 varieties of commercially harvested table grapes.

Time promotions right

On average, retailers promote grapes 24 out of the 52 weeks of the year. Peak promotional weeks occur during the Labor Day and back-to-school timeframe; nearly every retail banner promotes at some point in August and September, with most promoting at least six out of the nine-week stretch of time. This makes sense, being that grapes are a portable, convenient, healthy option for back-to-school shoppers.

Leverage highly seasonal periods by promoting what’s historically been known as a club store pack—a larger, 3-pound option.

The most commonly promoted price point throughout the year—including the back-to-school season—is \$1.99 per pound.





What kind of packaging do shoppers prefer?

Packaging matters, and when it comes to grapes, shoppers favor specific features. The right packaging can better highlight the quality of the fruit—which is a critical driver of purchase decisions.

GUSSETED BAGS ARE THE CLEAR WINNER

When asked which packaging options they liked best—including mesh bags, plastic clamshells, open-top cartons, and other innovative concepts—the gusseted bag was selected far and away as the most appealing.

Shoppers also ranked this style as the packaging that best maintains grapes' quality—and even most convenient. Gusseted bags make it easy for shoppers to see the quality of the grapes while shopping, as well as portioning out the fruit and storing the remaining fruit when at home.



78% of shoppers like this package style best

4 FRESH WAYS TO SWEETEN GRAPE SALES

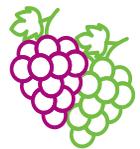


Remember that quality is key

Rather than focusing on carrying specific varieties, concentrate on quality. Shoppers rank this as the #1 purchase driver.

Give shoppers options

While it's critical to carry red and green seedless grapes year round, shoppers like options. In peak season, build a large, well-stocked, stunning display with several varieties of each.



Highlight a "Grape of the Moment"

Shoppers like innovative, interesting flavors, but most don't recognize specific grape varieties. Highlight the best quality, most flavorful grape varieties monthly or more frequently through peak seasons to create excitement.

Nail your promotional plan

Try new ideas as you build a promotional plan, like BOGO this week/next week and buy one/try one campaigns. Or, offer a 3-pound clam for the back-to-school season—they're not just for club stores!



About Robinson Fresh

Robinson Fresh brings you fresh food and smart logistics solutions. As a division of C.H. Robinson, a top global third party logistics provider, Robinson Fresh provides year round supply with global to local cold chain expertise and services, as well as world-class account management and impactful category insights. This all fuels our innovative supply chain solutions, from seed to shelf.

Let's talk fresh

To discuss Robinson Fresh's capabilities, please reach out to **855-350-0014**
For more information, visit robinsonfresh.com or blog.robinsonfresh.com

