

## *When Stockpiling Makes You Eat More?*

### **Background**

If you have 24 cans of soup, will you eat it faster than if you only had 8 cans? It has long been suggested that stockpiling products caused by promotion increases how often people use a product, but recent findings suggest this is not always the case.

Researchers have found that stockpiled products are used more frequently when they are visible and have many uses. When people with stockpiled levels of soup were asked to recall the last time they ate soup, then asked how much soup they intended to use in the next two weeks, their answers were double that of the normal group.

In addition, when a product has many uses, it gets used more, and stockpiling is effective. People in the study who believed soup to be more versatile used nearly twice as much soup as those with lower feelings on versatility.

For example, if you utilize soup for not only a quick meal but also for packing in a thermos for lunch or a side dish for dinner or an ingredient in a meal, stockpiling will increase usage frequency. When a person can use a product in many situations around the house, it gets used more, and therefore promotion-induced stockpiling increases product usage.

### **Key Teaching Point**

Researchers conclude that stockpiling will increase usage when:

- The product is frequently consumed
- The product is visible (on the table, counter, front of cupboard)
- There are frequent reminders about the product and its uses.

### **Student Demonstration**

In this session before reviewing the background information provided, break the students into two groups. Ask each group to think of the family next door and consider the following scenario:

Group one:

*Your neighbors just bought 24-pack of soda because they were on sale at the grocery store. How many sodas will your neighbors drink in the next two days?*

Group two:

*Write down three situations where you can use soda.*

*After writing these three situations down, consider that your neighbor just bought a 24-pack of soda because they were on sale at the grocery store. How many sodas will your neighbors drink in the next two days?*

On the blackboard make two columns. Title the columns group one and group two. Ask the students to report the number of cans they thought the neighbors would consume and tally them on the blackboard. Group one should have reported their neighbors drinking less soda than group two.

Now ask the students the following questions:

- *What are the different situations in which you can use soda?*
- *Why do you think group one said the neighbor would consume less soda?*
- *Would it make a difference where your neighbors stored the soda?*

Discuss with the students the background information provided to the left. It is important for the students to understand that stockpiling of a product will increase usage if the product is seen as having many uses (versatile), stored in a more noticeable location (table, counter, front of the cupboard) and if they are frequently exposed to product-related marketing. This will help the students become informed consumers.

Wansink, Brian and Rohit, Deshpande (1994), "Out of Sight, Out of Mind": The Impact of Household Stockpiling on Usage Rates," *Marketing Letters*, 5:1 (January), 91-100.

