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## SHOPPING POPS WITH CHOPPING BLOCKS

DITCHING THE "DUMB DAD" STEREOTYPE AND REACHING OUT TO THE 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY MAN



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by Liz Aviles and Erin Yazgan



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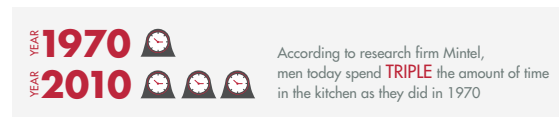
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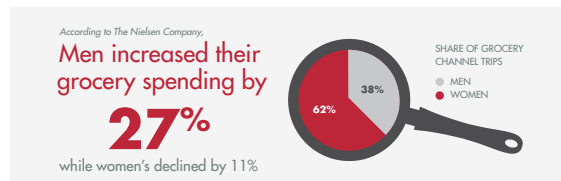
Research Analyst  
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**Men are shopping more, and marketers are starting to notice.** With the majority of men thinking of themselves as the primary grocery shoppers in their households<sup>1</sup> and simultaneously tripling their amount of time in the kitchen since 1970<sup>2</sup>, it's becoming more and more clear that we have something big on our hands. And with great marketing power comes great marketing responsibility. While traditional techniques of marketing to grocery shoppers have focused on reaching out to moms and playing up an ignorant or "dumb dad" stereotype, a shift in culture and gender roles in the home is making it essential for brands to keep up with a growing demographic of domestic men. Some brands have started testing the waters by using dads in their marketing with the hope that men watching will connect themselves to that brand. After all, acknowledging the trend is the first step toward tapping in to it. But is it enough?



Upshot has always been interested in exploring previously unobserved, untapped and emerging consumer behaviors, especially when they present important opportunities in marketing. So, it became necessary to understand the reasons behind this rising trend. Are men shopping only for themselves, or for their families, too? Are they only doing the grocery shopping, or also cooking? The bottom line is that times are changing, and it was time to dig deeper. To conduct an exploratory survey about men cooking and shopping for the household, Upshot searched for men who said they cook meals, shop for groceries at least once a month and have live-in children under 18 years of age. This led to gathering information from 270 men

who fit these criteria, and the findings really spoke from their hearts. With the results of this study, Upshot hopes brands will seize the opportunity not only to reach out to this new, epicurean dad in their marketing strategies, but also to facilitate his goal of caring for his family by embracing his dadly domesticity.



## FROM THE HEART

Sure, times are changing. There are more women in the workforce and more stay-at-home dads than ever before. People are waiting longer to get married, and when they do, chores aren't necessarily allocated to a specific gender anymore. And while these cultural changes are indications of a society becoming accustomed to a more domestic man, they don't explain the more personal reasons behind why dads have started to make the shift.

## PLAIN AND SIMPLE, THEY ENJOY IT.

The dads surveyed told Upshot that they're passionate about cooking and that it's a great stress-reliever for them. 58% said they cook because they want to provide their families with healthier meals, and 49% said they wanted to help out with the division of labor at home—a true sign of the passion behind the Kiss the Cook apron.





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That's not all Upshot wanted to know. The men were asked what they were cooking and how. Most dads said they prepare breakfast and dinner, and 57% said they cook simple, everyday stuff while 23% said they've got culinary expertise. In Food Network language, that means their style is more Rachael Ray, less Bobby Flay. Plus, almost all of the dads said they cook with their kids in order to spend more time with them and teach them skills in the kitchen.

## THEIR STYLE IS MORE RACHAEL RAY, LESS BOBBY FLAY

### WHO BEST REPRESENTS THEIR COOKING SKILLS?



**57%**  
**RACHAEL RAY**  
I'm good with the everyday stuff



**23%**  
**BOBBY FLAY**  
There isn't anything I can't handle

There's a pretty loud tell-tale heart under these numbers: dads aren't just helping out more because of cultural changes, or because they have to. They want to have an active role in the health and happiness of their families. And if their families are healthy and happy, they feel good about it. With 64% of dads saying that cooking for their families makes them feel like a good dad, and 61% saying it makes them feel like a good partner, it's obvious that dads get a lot of emotional satisfaction from providing the goods.

### COOKING MAKES ME FEEL...

**#1**  
**64%**  
like a **GOOD DAD**

**61%**  
ACCOMPLISHED

**61%**  
like a **GOOD PARTNER**

## CARPE HOMINEM!

There's little chance these dads will lose their momentum anytime soon. In fact, most are looking for new recipes and meal ideas, and 80% expressed an interest in taking proactive steps to enhance their cooking skills. So, marketers can count on this new type of epicurean dad to develop into a long-standing demographic that will only continue to grow.



**49%**  
want more  
**BREAKFAST** ideas



**49%**  
want more  
**LUNCH** ideas



**71%**  
want more  
**DINNER** ideas

## THEY WANT TO HAVE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE HEALTH AND HAPPINESS OF THEIR FAMILIES





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Think of all the opportunities to be seized, and not only when it comes to marketing! Yes, brands have the chance to gain long-term customers, but also to support dads in their mission to make purchasing decisions that benefit both their families and their buyer confidence.

## HERE ARE A FEW STEPS MARKETERS CAN TAKE TO FACILITATE THEIR SUCCESS:

1

**Examine the imagery and messaging in current marketing strategies.** Do they exclude dads or fall short in connecting with them? If so, let them know that you've got them in mind! Try ditching the "dumb dad" stereotype and including more caring, decision-making dads in advertising.

2

**Provide cooking solutions specially tailored toward dads.** Remember: Rachael Ray, not Bobby Flay. Keep it simple, yet delicious and nutritious!

3

**Pique their curiosity about new products.** If they think a product will benefit their families, chances are they'll try it. And if they like it, chances are they'll stick with it!

4

**Appeal to their emotional side.** Since dads care a lot about doing good for their families, try utilizing big, in-store messages that highlight performance, reliability and family-friendliness. The better the product he brings home, the more he feels like the awesome superdad he is.

While the men included in Upshot's survey were dads who cook for their families, it's important to remember that it's not only dads who are taking on culinary responsibilities. With bachelors fending for themselves longer in the real world and more male chefs and foodies becoming celebrity role models (think Guy Fieri, Jamie Oliver and Anthony Bourdain), Gen Y guys have become curious about the goings-on of the kitchen. And these Gen Y guys are just a few years away from being the next culinary-savvy dads, making it essential to keep an eye on this men-in-the-kitchen trend for the future. So, in our quest to provide kitchen-connoisseurs with the most helpful products, remember these Shopping Pops with Chopping Blocks—a vision of new, and true, manhood.

Upshot, a Chicago-based marketing agency, strives to engage consumers through simple ideas brilliantly activated with a focus on brand marketing, integrated promotion, retail marketing, regional marketing and interactive marketing. For more information on Upshot and other thought-provoking research from Upshot's Planning and Market Intelligence teams, please visit [upshot.net](http://upshot.net) or call **312.943.0900**.

<sup>1</sup>2010 Yahoo! Digital Dads: I'm Not a Subsegment Study <<http://yam-largefiles.com/DigitalDadsStudy.pdf>>

<sup>2</sup>2010 Mintel Study from "Caution: Men Cooking," by Cari Martens, FoodChannel.com. December 4, 2010. <<http://www.foodchannel.com/articles/article/caution-men-cooking/>>

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