

# COMPARATIVE SHOPPING

## How to do it: Special tips

### *The benefits and the pitfalls*

It is always important to choose carefully when shopping. With a wide variety of goods to choose from, consumers will be tempted to purchase items that they may not need. The flashy advertisements and “sales” that all claim to offer the consumer something often serve the purpose of manipulating the consumer to buy sometimes useless, expensive and unnecessary items.

The wise shopper compares prices and the quality of goods and services before making a decision. A wise shopper is one who is also aware of the malpractices in the marketplace namely: -

- **shoddy goods**
- **food adulteration**
- **fake drugs**
- **false weights and measures**
- **unsafe/defective appliances**
- **misleading advertising**
- **overpricing**

Comparative shopping or ‘shopping around’ is beneficial to the consumer, but in order to spend wisely some general shopping tips should be considered -

- ◆ Do your own special personal survey and see what prices are like in a wide variety of stores. This does not necessarily mean that you have to spend half a day walking or driving around town just to make a purchase. The telephone offers the convenience of saving time. You may call different stores or your friends/family to find out where the best bargain can be had. In the final analysis, you should be able to examine your purchases.
- ◆ Visit those quaint looking stores tucked away on side streets where you thought you would never go. You may just find a bargain. It never hurts to ask the store clerk about the availability of some items, specials and of course if there are any discounts.
- ◆ When shopping for clothing, household appliances and personal effects, etc., make sure you can afford the item and that you are not depriving yourself of something you need more urgently.

- ◆ Do not pay more than what in your estimation is the worth of the item. Do not be fooled by the beauty of the item. Make sure that items you purchase are in good working order. Test all small electrical appliances before you leave the store.
- ◆ For clothing, make sure you can care the fabric yourself rather than having to take the article to the dry cleaners every time it needs to be cleaned. In addition, in these hard times, it may be worthwhile to purchase durable pieces of clothing which match other pieces in our wardrobe.
- ◆ For appliances - ask for a guarantee/warranty, check for servicing and the availability of spare parts. Where applicable, find out if the item is energy efficient. It is important that we ask questions.
- ◆ Compare the cost of food in its different forms e.g. canned, frozen, dried as well as the cost, based on the kind of packaging provided e.g. plastic wrapped, brown paper bag, box, tin, styro-foam. At some shopping outlets it costs the consumer less to take their own bags to package meat and dry goods.

### **BENEFITS OF COMPARATIVE SHOPPING**

- ◆ The consumer gets a better deal - in price, quality, quantity, and service
- ◆ New products or substitutes, and new stores are discovered.

### **PITFALLS OF COMPARATIVE SHOPPING**

- ◆ Demands careful planning – is time consuming, can waste time in fuel in terms of the distance traveled.
- ◆ Beware of impulse buying i.e. spending money on goods or those “specials” you did not plan to purchase.
- ◆ When shopping around one may have to take excess cash so beware of thieves and pickpockets.
- ◆ It takes patience but it sometimes can pay off.

## **How to Contact us**

Head Office

Tel: (876) 926-1650-2

Montego Bay Office

Tel: (876) 940-6154