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Falling Out of Love with Wholesale Warehouse Discount Club Stores

By C.S. Deam

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by: **C.S. Deam**

I used to love the thought of going to the local wholesale warehouse club, where the products are stacked up to the warehouse ceiling and the shopping carts are brimming with rolls of toilet paper and cases of cheese snacks. Where else could you pay a membership fee of a thirty or forty dollars per year and have access to products by the caseload at a discount?

After joining such a club I realized that not all the prices were cheaper than the non-membership store just across the street. So we decided to shop carefully and only buy those items that were cheaper. Of course, we also ended up buying in quantities that we didn't need. So, when we did find bargains, we ended up with a supply that would last us a couple years.

After adjusting our shopping strategy at the warehouse club to take into account our need to be aware of the higher prices and inconvenient packaging, we realized another thing. It's not convenient to stand in line with three items, when everyone else ahead of you has their carts overflowing with merchandise. It's clear that not everyone cares about actual value and some folks only want perceived value (you know, a case of maple syrup at a 3 cent discount). So, we soon tired of standing in lines for our handful of items.

We decided that if we were going to get only the best value items in the quantities that suited our lifestyle, that we would only need to make a few trips every couple of months so that we could get everything we wanted without spending all that time standing in line several times per month. But guess what happened? We noticed that each time we'd go in for items on our list that the items sometimes wouldn't be carried anymore. We're not talking about items being out with an empty space on a shelf. We're talking about something else is placed where that item was and the store employees telling us they don't carry it right now, and that we should fill out a comment card if we want to get the items back in stock.

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With items on our list not being in stock, we still found ourselves standing in line with a handful of items – instead of the cartful we'd planned on.

It's frustrating enough realizing our membership wasn't buying us much more a few well-packaged, well discounted products – combined with long lines and a parking lot that would make most race car pit crews shudder in fear.

Wholesale warehouse shopping clubs almost seem designed for those who don't discriminate on price, who love inconvenience and inconsistency in product availability, and who want to build their afternoon or evening around a shopping trip to a single store.

Why would people build their shopping lifestyle around that type of shopping experience? Perceived value?

It doesn't make sense for my household to change our shopping style (as we had attempted) to fit the

wholesale warehouse club retail format if it turns out to not work for us. It may make sense for yours.

We were at dinner with some friends of ours when they told us about an online discount club with a huge variety of products and a very modest membership fee. I was expecting more caseloads of cheese snacks and a hundred dollar membership fee – but that's not what they showed us.

What we saw was a membership fee less than the local warehouse club, and products that was need and use every month – orderable online and delivered to our door – without putting shopping cart dents in our car.

We checked it out. We signed up. We tried it out for several months. And every since our shopping life gets easier.

Now every month I make my shopping list online through our online membership. For the first thirty days of the month I build my online shopping list whenever it's convenient for me, and shortly after the first of the next month we find packages at our door. The next month it's the same.

It's the opposite of the old bricks and mortar warehouse club – it takes me less time to make it work for me. It works around my shopping style, rather than forcing me to change my lifestyle to find the right bargains and most convenient time to go to the store.

Yes, I can still get a case of rolls of toilet paper and cheese snacks – but I never stand in line, I never have to lug my purchases through the parking lot in the rain or snow, and I never have to worry about finding new door-dings on my car.

The biggest benefit of membership in this club is convenience. And with life being as busy as it is for us – I have fallen in love with having my shopping list only a few mouse clicks away from completion.

C.S. Deam is a small business owner. His eBook *Leverage Yourself Out of the Rat Race* is available

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BJ's Wholesale: The Club That Helps To Save Money

By John Rivers

BJ's is a wholesale club situated in Natick, Massachusetts, started in 1980s and functions as a warehouse club in the eastern part of the United States. Since the 3rd of November, 2005, BJ's managed almost 161 warehouse clubs and a majority of it operates gasoline stations and only 2 belong to operating restaurant supplies.

They sell over 7,500 products. Most of the products of BJ's include processed foods, meat and dairy products. Beverages, dry good, fresh flowers and household supplies are also included in the operations of the club. Not only that, they also have other varieties such as electronics, appliances, jewelries, health and beauty products, computer supplies, books, toys and other seasonal products.

BJ's also provides other lines of services like optical shops, food court, and specialized areas for Internet access, cell phones, and photo services. BJ's wholesale club operates in most states of the U.S namely, New York, Florida, Connecticut, Virginia, Ohio, Massachusetts Georgia, North and South Carolina, etc.

Can you become a member of the BJ's Wholesale Club?

The term limited membership is not common to everyone at the BJ's Wholesale Club, thus everyone including you is free to join. The BJ's is the country's third membership warehouse club. It is actually the number one in New England, with over eight million members and more than 160 branches in 16 states.

Compare to its top competitors, BJ's focuses mainly on their individual retail consumers. They actually have 75 percent of individual retail consumer members. In addition, a part of the BJ's stores sell discounted gas to most of its members.

What are the benefits that a member can get from the BJ's?

This is the only wholesale club in the U.S. that offers no membership requirements and limitations.

Besides from the special in-Club savings, BJ's membership will give you added discounts outside the wholesale clubs with their other lines of services. Some wholesale clubs will ask for over 100 dollars for such additional services.

What are the options given to those who want to become a member of the club?

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There are two options available in becoming a member, they are:

- One Year Inner Circle

This membership is good for 12 months. The benefits that a member can get in this option includes 30 percent discounts on fresh meat and gourmet. Members will also save when buying major brands of electronics, health and beauty products and a discount on most special services of the BJ's.

A member will also get a second membership card which can be used by other members of the family who live in the same place with the principal member. The card is given at no extra cost.

- One Year Business

This is a membership that offers the members the same benefits given to the members of the Inner Circle. What makes this one different from the first one is that it gives members tax exemptions and resale rights.

Also, a second card is also provided to the principal member, which can be used by their co-workers and family members. The principal members can actually acquire six second membership cards, by simply paying 20 dollars each.

Just think of the benefits given, are they not very cost effective? So, if you want to save money for yourself but still want to buy so many things, try being a member of the BJ's. Simply choose which membership you like and go to the nearest BJ's near you.

BJ's is also accessible on the internet, so feel free to visit their website online and contact them in case you have questions.

John Rivers is the editor of Wholesale Distribution Guard. Browse our huge catalog of wholesale distributors worldwide.

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