

Sustainability vs price in retail 2023

# Inside the minds of the Nordic FMCG-consumers





In a post pandemic world where new crises and changes have replaced the global agenda, DS Smith have set out to find out what this means to the Nordic consumers and their view on sustainability in retail in 2023. Is this still important or has it been replaced with a growing concern for e.g. rapid price increases?

Together with online community platform Toluna, we asked more than 1.500 consumers\* from Denmark, Sweden, and Finland a number of questions on retail. We are happy to share the results and learnings with our customers in this report.



\*1577 total respondents from Denmark, Sweden, Finland over the age of 18 that are fully or partly responsible for their household's grocery shopping.

Excluded are answers from respondents that work in the following sectors: Advertising, Marketing or PR, Market Research, Journalism, Online Retail, Supermarkets.

**Q1****When buying groceries, how important is it to you that packaging is sustainable?**

**70%** of Nordic consumers say that it is quite or very important for them that packaging is sustainable

**Q2****To what extent do you agree or disagree that sustainable packaging influences your shopping choices?**

**37%** of **Nordic** consumers agree that sustainable packaging influences their choice of **RETAILER** when shopping

**42%** of **Finnish** consumers agree that sustainable packaging influences their choice of **RETAILER** when shopping

**49%** of **Nordic** consumers agree that sustainable packaging influences their choice of **PRODUCT** when shopping

**54%** of **Finnish** consumers agree that sustainable packaging influences their choice of **PRODUCT** when shopping

**48%** of **Nordic** consumers agree that sustainable packaging influences their choice of **BRAND** when shopping

**54%** of **Finnish** consumers agree that sustainable packaging influences their choice of **BRAND** when shopping

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Approximately half of consumers are clearly expecting brands and retailers to take action on sustainable packaging

Q3

When going shopping, which aspect of packaging are you most concerned about?

**47%** of **Nordic** consumers say excessive packaging on products they buy is the aspect they are most concerned about when shopping

**Every second consumer** in **Denmark** and **Sweden** says excessive packaging on products they buy is the aspect they are most concerned about when shopping

**22%** of **Nordic** consumers say the difficulty to recycle the packaging of the products they buy is the aspect they are most concerned about when shopping

Q4

Which of the following would you say is most important in eliminating packaging waste?

**38%** of **Nordic** consumers say that **PACKAGING RECYCLABILITY** is the most important factor to eliminate packaging waste

**47%** of **Finnish** consumers say that **PACKAGING RECYCLABILITY** is the most important factor to eliminate packaging waste

Almost **1 in 3** consumers in the Nordics believe that **PACKAGING REDUCTION** is the most important factor to eliminate packaging waste

**25%** of **Nordic** consumers believe that packaging **COMPOSTABILITY** is the most important factor to eliminate packaging waste

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Focusing on circular packaging solutions, allows you to address Nordic concerns for recyclability and end of life



Q5

How good a job are retailers and manufacturers doing to educate consumers on recyclable packaging?

**37%** of **Nordic** consumers feel that **retailers** are doing a poor job in educating consumers on recyclable packaging

**43%** of **Danish** consumers feel that **retailers** are doing a poor job in educating consumers on recyclable packaging

Only **1 in 5** consumers believes **retailers** are doing a good job in educating consumers on recyclable packaging

**37%** of **Nordic** consumers feel that **manufacturers** are doing a poor job in educating consumers on recyclable packaging

**45%** of **Danish** consumers feel that **manufacturers** are doing a poor job in educating consumers on recyclable packaging

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Danes generally feel more pessimistic about the job retailers and manufacturers are doing in educating consumers



Q6

What practical steps would you prefer to see retailers and manufacturers take to reduce packaging waste, if any?

**57%** of **Nordic** consumers would prefer to see retailers and manufacturers increase the use of **recyclable, reusable or compostable packaging**

**50%** of **Nordic** consumers would prefer to see retailers and manufacturers increase the use of **packaging made from recycled content**

**58%** of **Finnish** consumers would prefer to see retailers and manufacturers increase the use of **packaging made from recycled content**

**Every second Nordic** consumer would prefer to see retailers and manufacturers **eliminate single-use plastic**

**55%** of **Nordic** consumers would prefer to see retailers and manufacturers **reduce the overall amount of packaging used**

**30%** of **Nordic** consumers would prefer to see retailers and manufacturers **eliminate non-detectable black and dark plastic**

**35%** of **Finnish** consumers would prefer to see retailers and manufacturers **eliminate non-detectable black and dark plastic**

Q7

What type of information would you like to see in the packaging of the food products you normally buy?

**20%** of **Nordic** consumers rank **RECYCLING INFORMATION** as first priority they would like to see on the food products they normally buy

**45%** of **Nordic** consumers rank **RECYCLING INFORMATION** in their top 3 of information they would like to see on food products they normally buy

**19%** of **Swedish** consumers rank **RECIPIES** in their top 3 of information they would like to see on the food products they normally buy

**45%** of **Swedish** consumers rank **SOURCE OF THE INGREDIENTS** in their top 3 of information they would like to see on the food products they normally buy

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Recycling information on food product is important to a significant number of Nordic consumers



Q8

## How clear or unclear do you typically find recycling information on products?

**18%** of Nordic consumers find recycling information on **BEVERAGES** unclear

**23%** of Danish and 21% of Swedish consumers find recycling information on **BEVERAGES** unclear

**18%** of Nordic consumers find recycling information on **DAIRY PRODUCTS** unclear

**23%** of Danish consumers find recycling information on **DAIRY PRODUCTS** unclear

**30%** of Nordic consumers find recycling information on **FISH & MEAT PRODUCTS** unclear

**32%** of Nordic consumers find recycling information on **HOME CARE PRODUCTS** unclear

**32%** of Nordic consumers find recycling information on **BAKED GOODS PRODUCTS** unclear

**29%** of Nordic consumers find recycling information on **FROZEN PRODUCTS** unclear

**28%** of Nordic consumers find recycling information on **CANNED PRODUCTS** unclear

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Nordic consumers generally perceive the recycling information on beverages and dairy products as clear. The information on meat & fish, home care products and baked goods could be improved.



**Q9**

**To what extent are you willing to pay more for products if the packaging is recycled material?**

**30%** of **Nordic** consumers would be willing to **PAY MORE** for supermarket products if the packaging is recycled material.

	Total 100% - (1577)		Denmark 100% - (519)		Finland 100% - (525)		Sweden 100% - (533)	
Very unwilling - <b>1</b>	21.69%	342	21.39%	111	23.24%	122	20.45%	109
Somewhat unwilling - <b>2</b>	18.45%	291	17.92%	93	22.1%	116	15.38%	82
Neither willing nor unwilling - <b>3</b>	30.31%	478	28.52%	148	32.38%	170	30.02%	160
Somewhat willing - <b>4</b>	24.54%	387	26.78%	139	18.86%	99	27.95%	149
Very willing - <b>5</b>	5.01%	79	5.39%	28	3.43%	18	6.19%	33



In partnership, we must work on more cost-neutral solutions which make circular packaging affordable and accessible to more consumers





**Q10**

How much more would you be willing to pay for supermarket products who use eco-friendly packaging such as recycled material, over those who use virgin plastic?

**70%** of **Nordic** consumers would be willing to pay more for supermarket products who use eco-friendly packaging such as recycled material, over those who use virgin plastic.

**25%** of **Nordic** consumers would be willing to pay **10%** more for supermarket products who use eco-friendly packaging such as recycled material, over those who use virgin plastic.

**46%** of **Nordic** consumers would be willing to pay **5%** more for supermarket products who use eco-friendly packaging such as recycled material, over those who use virgin plastic.

**Q11**

To what extent do you agree with this statement:

**“The energy crisis and rising cost of living is impacting my spending plans”**

**72%** of **Nordic** consumers agree that the energy crisis and rising cost of living is impacting their spending plans.





Q12

Which of the following describes how your grocery shopping might change over the next 3 months?

**19%** of **Nordic** consumers say they might **buy more in bulk** when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months

(Only) **15%** of **Swedish** consumers say they might **buy more in bulk** when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months

**44%** of **Nordic** consumers say they might switch more often to cheaper brands than they normally buy when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months

**52%** of **Finnish** consumers say they might switch to cheaper brands more often than they normally buy, when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months

**28%** of **Nordic** consumers say they might shop more often to **avoid waste and get the best deals** when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months

**34%** of **Danish** and **Finnish** consumers say they might shop more often to **avoid waste and get the best deals** when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months

**17%** of **Swedish** consumers say they might shop more often to **avoid waste and get the best deals** when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months

[Read more on next page](#)

## Question 12 continued

**44%** of **Nordic** consumers say they might **switch more often to cheaper brands than they normally buy** when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months

**52%** of **Finnish** consumers say they might **switch more often to cheaper brands than they normally buy** when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months

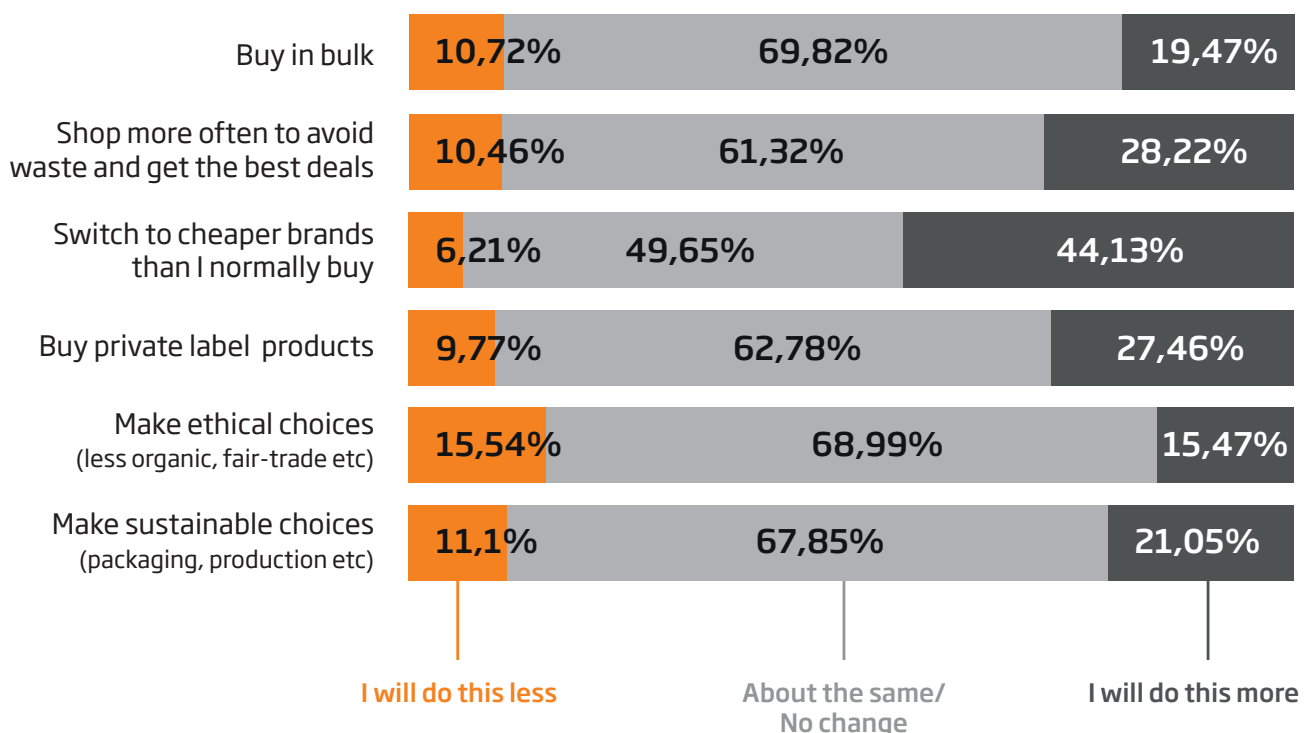
**21%** of **Nordic** consumers say they might **make more sustainable choices** (regarding packaging, production, etc.) when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months.

**27%** of **Nordic** consumers say they might more often **buy private label products** when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months

**27%** of **Danish** consumers say they might more often **buy private label products** when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months

**41%** of **Finnish** consumers say they might more often **buy private label products** when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months

**15%** of **Swedish** consumers say they might more often **buy private label products** when it comes to grocery shopping in the next 3 months



# Q13

Finally, what are the most important factors for you over the next 3 months, when choosing what grocery products to buy?

**30%** of **Nordic** consumers rank **SUSTAINABILITY** in their top 3 priorities over the next 3 months, when choosing what grocery products to buy.

**41%** of **Nordic** consumers rank **PRICE** as most important factor over the next 3 months, when choosing what grocery products to buy.

**50%** of **Finnish** consumers rank **PRICE** as most important factor over the next 3 months, when choosing what grocery products to buy.

**49%** of **Nordic** consumers rank **ON-PROMOTION** as most important factor over the next 3 months, when choosing what grocery products to buy.

**58%** of **Danish** consumers rank **ON-PROMOTION** as most important factor over the next 3 months, when choosing what grocery products to buy.

**50%** of **Finnish** consumers rank **ON-PROMOTION** as most important factor over the next 3 months, when choosing what grocery products to buy.

**16%** of **Nordic** consumers rank **MY FAVORITE BRAN** as most important factor over the next 3 months, when choosing what grocery products to buy.



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The Danish consumers are particularly interested in **ON-PROMOTION** compared to other Nordic countries.



# SUMMARY

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## Price is considered an important factor in the purchase decision:

1.

The unravelling of the pandemic, the Ukrainian crisis and high inflation has left consumers tired and concerned about rapid price increases. Brands and retailers need to make sure their packaging works harder for them to retain loyalty and clearly communicate messages which resonate most strongly with consumers.



## Sustainability is still relevant:

2.

Sustainability continues to be a relevant issue among Nordic consumers, despite the strong price focus. We see it increasingly impacting their buying behaviour in store, particularly when it comes to packaging. Do not take the risk of not acting on sustainable packaging innovation.



## Consumers rely on retailers and brands to enable their sustainable choices:

3.

Consumers want more information, and expect greater responsibility and accountability from brands, products and retailers, when it comes to sustainability. Partnerships are key, to addressing these topics and making sustainable choices available and affordable to consumers.



