

## No Frills But a Lot of Chills!

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It was a cold, snowy day of winter. Charlie and Helen Brady, the parents a 13-year-old boy and a 15-year-old girl and a 5-year-old girl, and the owners of two cats, Sparkles and Slim, and one dog, Cookie, decided to go grocery shopping. They had a choice between two discount grocery stores, which were directly across the road from each other. They chose the one that was on the right hand side of the road in the direction they were driving, even though the external appearance of the store was not as nice as that of the other store. They had shopped at both stores before.

After they entered the store, they began the task of shopping. Soon they realized that it was very cold in the store; there was no heat. They learned from the store personnel that the heating system had been out for a few days. Since the Brady's were well into acquiring the items they wanted, they decided to stay in the store and finish their shopping.

When they arrived at the checkout counter, they suggested to the cashier that the store should offer customers a hot drink while they were shopping. In fact, Charlie suggested that they offer the store brand of hot chocolate – a comfort food. Not only would this warm up the customers and reduce the likelihood that they would cut their shopping journey short, it would also promote the store brand of the product, increasing the likelihood of impulse buying, or at least leading to possible future purchases. After the Brady's left the store, they saw a “lack of heat” notice on the door. Had they seen the sign before entering the store, they might have decided to patronize the local competitor.

**Focus:** Family life-cycle, store choice decision, store atmosphere, attribute importance, beliefs, attitude and attitude change, comfort food, impulse shopping, evoked set, adoption process, evoked set, horizontal (intra-type) competition, management decision making, customer relations, dealer brand.

### Questions

1. Discuss each of the concepts listed in the Focus section above in terms of its relevance to this case.
2. What other products can you think of that are often considered comfort food? What is meant by a comfort food?
3. Is store atmosphere, a component of the retailing mix, an important choice attribute used by consumers when selecting a store? Explain.
4. Should the management of this store done something to make the atmosphere of the store more pleasant for the customers, given the circumstances? Explain.

5. What is the difference between a dealer brand and a manufacturer's brand? If consumers normally do not include a particular dealer brand within the evoked set, how can a marketer get it placed there? How is the adoption process relevant in such a situation?

For all questions, use the appropriate theories and concepts, when necessary. Do not just present case facts.