

Urban Hustle - Where Hip Hop and Urban Culture Rules

Written by Robert ID3701

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Responsible for nearly one third of spending across critical influencer categories, including entertainment, fashion and technology, the new "Urban Hustle" is influenced by Hip Hop, Urban Culture and the drive to succeed at any cost.

Findings from a new study revealing data that defines spending power and influence of an emerging and powerful consumer market have been released by Alloy Access; the multicultural and urban marketing division of Alloy Media and Marketing.

Redefining themselves as positive, upwardly mobile "hustlers", the group is identified as the new "Urban Hustler". Alloy Access sought to provide a clear portrayal of this new brand of consumer, a segment representing a significant slice, 19.6 million, of the 12-34 year old demographic that is highly coveted by corporate America, yet a segment that remains ill defined in the marketplace. What emerged from the study are figures suggesting the tremendous weight and purchasing power of this trendsetting and influential group, who impact national consumer trends across many categories, particularly within the retail, technology and entertainment sectors.

The definition of today's urban consumer has clearly evolved. No longer confined to a demographic living in inner-city zip codes, the Urban Hustler has come to represent a specific mindset born out of the unique energy, creativity and diversity of America's urban centers - closely connected to hip-hop, ethnically diverse with aspirations to succeed and a shared set of passions. Current figures support this trend with a significant percentage of Urban Hustlers reporting from outside of the nation's city hubs. Nearly four in ten (39%) Urban Hustlers live in suburban areas and a similar amount (39%) of the group are white. What further distinguishes the consumers in this market is a shared belief in their own influence. The Urban Hustler is a self-proclaimed trendsetter, with almost three-quarters (73%) characterizing themselves as someone their friends seek out for advice on the latest trends. They spend a significant portion of their discretionary income hustling to define and keep up with what's hot.

"The Urban Hustler is driven by the need to succeed, they've got that "go-getter" mentality and they expect to achieve a certain status among their peers. The study suggests that there exists an enormous population of young people shaping current trends and placing a high premium on fashioning themselves in a way that reflects a lifestyle they feel they've achieved or aspire to be a part of. There is considerable opportunity for brands to become a part of that world" commented Tru Pettigrew, President of Alloy Access.

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Adding, "Although this group's importance has been evident for some time now, a quantitative picture of their influence has not been available. The study finally defines who these "hustlers" are, where they are, and what's motivating them. The data will be incredibly valuable to marketers looking to solidify a beneficial relationship with this influential consumer".

"Urban Hustler" and hip hop entrepreneur Damon Dash commented on the news, "We created our new site, BlockSavvy, with a single-minded focus on the urban consumer and lifestyle. The findings from this study substantiate how our core consumers make up an incredibly powerful segment, and that while BlockSavvy is a targeted community, it's one that will resonate across a wide and diverse group of consumers. The data also confirms the tremendous impact our consumers have on influencing trends. Brands can now be confident investing against these consumers through credible environments like BlockSavvy, simply means their dollars will stretch further."

Kwame Decuir, co-founder of Blocksavvy, concurred, "The Alloy Access research provides a clear picture of this consumer qualitatively, while quantifying their value to marketers. Our goal is to provide an organic community resource shaped by our consumers, thereby creating a natural environment for brands to interact with the new "urban hustler"."

On the whole, the Urban Hustler segment is wielding their influence across the consumer marketplace with tremendous spending in many key consumer areas and exceeding monthly spending of the non-urban 12-34 market. Heavy users of mobile technology, where brand "names" play a key factor, and placing a high priority on sporting the latest fashion trends, their strong brand influence appears evident.

"THIS IS WHY I'M HOT"

Twenty million strong, the report uncovered that the Urban Hustler consumer segment comprises just over one-fifth (21%) of consumers between the ages of 12-34. Adding to that hefty percentage, these consumers are responsible for a whopping \$90 Billion in annual discretionary spend across critical consumer categories including entertainment, technology, and fashion – that's nearly one-third of all discretionary spending across this age group.

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The numbers offer even more significance when broken down monthly. Urban Hustlers are spending, on average, over \$100 more than the non-urban population monthly, with overall discretionary spending reaching \$383 per month.

NICE KICKS

Trendsetters, always with an eye on fashion, the numbers confirm: Urban Hustlers are spending 45% more on clothing, accessories and shoes than non-urban consumers each month. In fact, one-fifth of \$90 billion spent by urban youth is towards clothing, shoes and accessories, with annual numbers totaling \$17.4 Billion.

Additionally, this population spends 2.5 times more each month on sneakers than non-urban consumers, with Urban Hustlers spending close to \$6 Billion per year on the latest “kicks”.

In fact, two-thirds of Urban Hustlers spend at least some money on fashion items like clothing and accessories monthly and almost 40% of urban consumers vs. only 17% of non-urban consumer spend money on sneakers each month.

THE GAME

Connectivity and entertainment are key elements in young Urban Hustler lives and their spending reflects these passion and lifestyle links. These consumers are fit with all the trappings to keep themselves perpetually connected and entertained.

More than half (54%) own a laptop, higher than the overall market. In addition, Urban Hustlers are more likely than non-urban consumer to use their cell phones frequently.

When it comes to leisure pursuits, there appears to be no limit. These consumers go all out when it comes to attending movies, concerts and hitting the clubs. Overall, they're splurging close to \$9 Billion yearly, or one-tenth of their total annual spending on recreational activities.

BILL'S GOT SKILLS

Though personalities like Jennifer Lopez, Oprah Winfrey and Jay Z top their lists as those they'd most likely want to be like, surprisingly, it's a very non-urban figure they aspire to most - Bill Gates (22%) easily beat out hip hop entrepreneur P Diddy (6%) and ranks as their top choice. Over one-fifth of Urban Hustlers named this entrepreneur, philanthropist and the world's richest man as a role model.

Urban Hustler's job aspirations seem to fit their passions and lifestyles and the personalities permeating their media and entertainment choices appear to influence their career goals. To this group, a successful enterprise is the prize and life as a mogul earns the greatest respect. Urban consumers have set their goals on being entertainers (24%) or moguls (16%) first. Interestingly, these choices seem to garner far greater respect than traditionally revered position like doctors and lawyers.

Ali Muhammad, Founder of 21st Century Hustle and former Vibe Magazine executive, said, "Our brand was founded on the principals of Urban Hustle. What's really exciting about the study is the quantification of this consumer's clout in the marketplace and their motivations behind reinforcing their "self-brand". It will be increasingly necessary for marketers to position themselves across their spaces and seek ways to be invited to their exclusive world."

"Urban Hustlers' tremendous impact on national consumer trends has been reinforced by these findings. By forging an alliance with this consumer brands can reap the rewards, but first you have to capture their attention. Social, driven and always on the move, becoming a relevant player in their world requires that you understand their dreams, desires and what inspires them and that your message reflects their mindset ", says Pettigrew.

"By infusing your brand into their spaces in a way that further enhances their lifestyle, Urban Hustler's wide influence can have staggering effect on a marketer's bottom line".

Methodology

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This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Alloy Access between February 22nd and March 5th, 2007 among 1,386 children and adults (ages 12 to 34), of whom 478 were between the ages of 12 and 17 and 908 were between the ages of 18 and 34. Respondents were given an Urban Hustler score based on their responses to select attributes. A full methodology statement, including qualifications for "Urban Hustler", is available upon request. Region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

With a pure probability sample of 1,386 one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the overall results would have a sampling error of +/- 3 percentage points. Sampling error for data based on sub-samples would be higher and would vary. However, that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About Alloy Access

Alloy Access, a division of Alloy Media + Marketing (NASDAQ: ALOY), is the country's leader in connecting corporate brands with influential multicultural and urban consumer groups. With focus on Hispanic, African American and urban consumers, Alloy Access brings more than 15 years experience servicing Fortune 500 clients with custom media and marketing solutions. Alloy Access leverages its unique media assets and customer knowledge to provide consumer insights, strategic planning, media buying services and turnkey program execution. Balancing legacy and innovation, Alloy Access is dedicated to providing fresh ideas and delivering emerging platforms to create genuine brand connections that resonate with today's unique consumer mindset.

Please visit their website at www.alloy-access.com for more information.