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CONSUMER PREFERENCES REGARDING PRODUCT REGISTRATION

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16. Abstract <p>This study explored the factors that influence the decision to register a product. A survey was developed to examine consumer preferences for various registration methods, the effects of various conditions on the likelihood of product registration, and the overall likelihood of registering eight different product types. The survey yielded completed responses from 522 adults in the U.S.</p> <p>The main findings are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respondents generally register products, though <i>always</i> was the least frequent response.• While most respondents indicated an increased likelihood of registering safety-related products, warranty activation and the cost of a product both had greater influence on the likelihood of registering a new product.• Respondents were more likely to say they would register major appliances and electronic devices (usually expensive items with a warranty to activate) than infant and toddler products or automobile tires (both safety-related products).• Many respondents were concerned about unwanted communication from the company after registering a product, and most said they would be more likely to register if such unwanted communication was legally prohibited.• Automatic registration at the time of purchase was preferred most, followed by email, website, and post card registration.					
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Introduction

Registration of new products by customers or end-users can help manufacturers communicate important information regarding product updates or recommendations, activate warranties, track usage and maintenance issues, and aid during notifications concerning safety warnings or product recalls. While product registration rates are customarily low (AMDEA, 2015; CFA, 2003; CPSC, 2001; Warranty Week, 2003), registration methods that are well designed and effectively implemented can result in significant improvements in these rates (CFA, 2003).

This study was designed to explore the factors that influence the decision to register a product (or not) following a purchase. A survey was developed to examine consumer preferences for various registration methods, the effects of various conditions on the likelihood of product registration, and the overall likelihood of registering different product types.

Method

Survey instrument

An online survey was conducted using SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com), a web-based survey company. A questionnaire was developed to examine several topics related to consumer preferences regarding registration of new products with the manufacturer. The text of the questionnaire is included in the appendix. The survey was performed in August 2015.

Respondents

SurveyMonkey's Audience tool was used to target and recruit respondents 18 years and older from SurveyMonkey's respondent database in the U.S. Fully completed surveys were received for 522 respondents. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level for the overall results is +/- 4.3%. Demographic breakdowns for the respondents are presented in Table 1. The age and gender breakdowns are similar to the latest U.S. Census age and gender demographics.

Table 1
Demographic breakdown for the 522 respondents.

Demographic aspect	Percent	
Age group	18 to 29	21.6
	30 to 44	26.2
	45 to 59	26.6
	60 or older	25.5
Gender	Female	52.7
	Male	47.3
Income	\$0 to \$24,999	18.2
	\$25,000 to \$49,999	20.3
	\$50,000 to \$74,999	15.9
	\$75,000 to \$99,999	10.3
	\$100,000 to \$124,999	7.1
	\$125,000 to \$149,999	4.6
	\$150,000 to \$174,999	2.9
	\$175,000 to \$199,999	2.9
	\$200,000 or more	5.0
	Prefer not to answer	12.8
U.S. region	New England	7.3
	Middle Atlantic	14.7
	North Central	20.0
	South Atlantic	17.9
	South Central	12.0
	Mountain	12.4
	Pacific	15.7

Results

General frequency of product registration

When respondents were asked how often they generally register products that they purchase, 6.1% indicated *always* and 15.7% said *never*. The most frequent response was *seldom* (29.1%). Figure 1 summarizes the results for all respondents, while Table 2 presents a complete summary of responses by gender and age.

Older respondents were more likely to report *always* or *usually* registering new products. Conversely, younger respondents were more likely to report *seldom* or *never* registering new products.

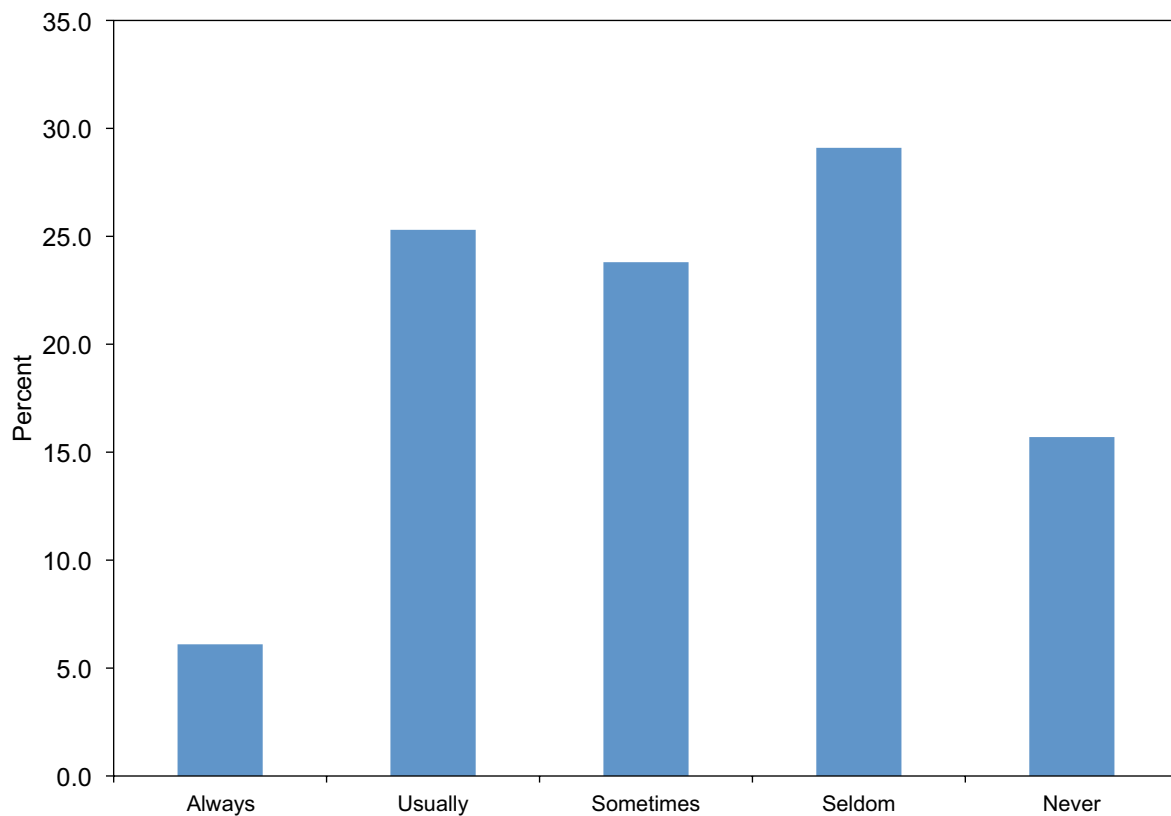


Figure 1. Summary of responses to Q1: “How often do you generally register products that you purchase?”

Table 2
 Percentage of responses, by gender and age, to Q1: “How often do you generally register products that you purchase?”

Response	Gender		Age				Total
	Female	Male	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	
Always	5.8	6.5	4.4	4.4	7.2	8.3	6.1
Usually	25.1	25.5	15.0	25.5	26.6	32.3	25.3
Sometimes	22.2	25.5	18.6	24.8	25.2	25.6	23.8
Seldom	32.4	25.5	38.1	29.2	27.3	23.3	29.1
Never	14.5	17.0	23.9	16.1	13.7	10.5	15.7

Reason for specific frequency of product registration

As a follow-up to Q1, respondents were asked the main reason that they register products with the specific frequency they stated in Q1. Those who were more likely to register products do so to activate warranties or to receive recall notices. Respondents who were less likely to register products find the process to be inconvenient, of no benefit to them, or generally are forgetful about completing the process. Table 3 summarizes the results for all respondents. (Due to the resultant small number of respondents for many cells, responses by gender and age are not included in this analysis.)

Table 3

Reasons for registering products with the frequency stated in Q1. (Blank cells in the table indicate that no respondent said that reason combined with the frequency stated in Q1; each column may not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.)

Reason	Frequency of product registration (as stated in Q1)				
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Warranty activation	68.8	59.1	47.6	1.3	
Recall notices	21.9	18.2	3.2		
Receive rebates/incentives		2.3	1.6		
Get product information or details		3.0	1.6		
I only register expensive products		0.8	12.9	1.3	
Forgetful or lazy		0.8	4.0	19.7	12.2
I just feel like I should		0.8	3.2		
Too much time or inconvenient			4.8	23.7	19.5
Not worth registering or no benefit		0.8	3.2	25.0	8.5
I do not buy products that require registration			1.6	5.3	18.3
To avoid unwanted communication				9.2	6.1
I do not understand the benefits of registering		0.8		4.6	18.3
Other reason not listed here	9.4	13.6	16.1	9.9	17.1

Factors influencing product registration

Product cost

Respondents were asked if they would be more likely to register a product if it were expensive. Most respondents (77.6%) said they would be more likely to register expensive products. Figure 2 summarizes the results for all respondents, while Table 4 presents a complete summary of responses by gender and age.

Females were more likely than males to say that they would register expensive products (81.1% and 73.7%, respectively).

Respondents reported registering expensive products more frequently as age increased (ranging from 72.6% for the youngest group to 84.2% for the oldest group).

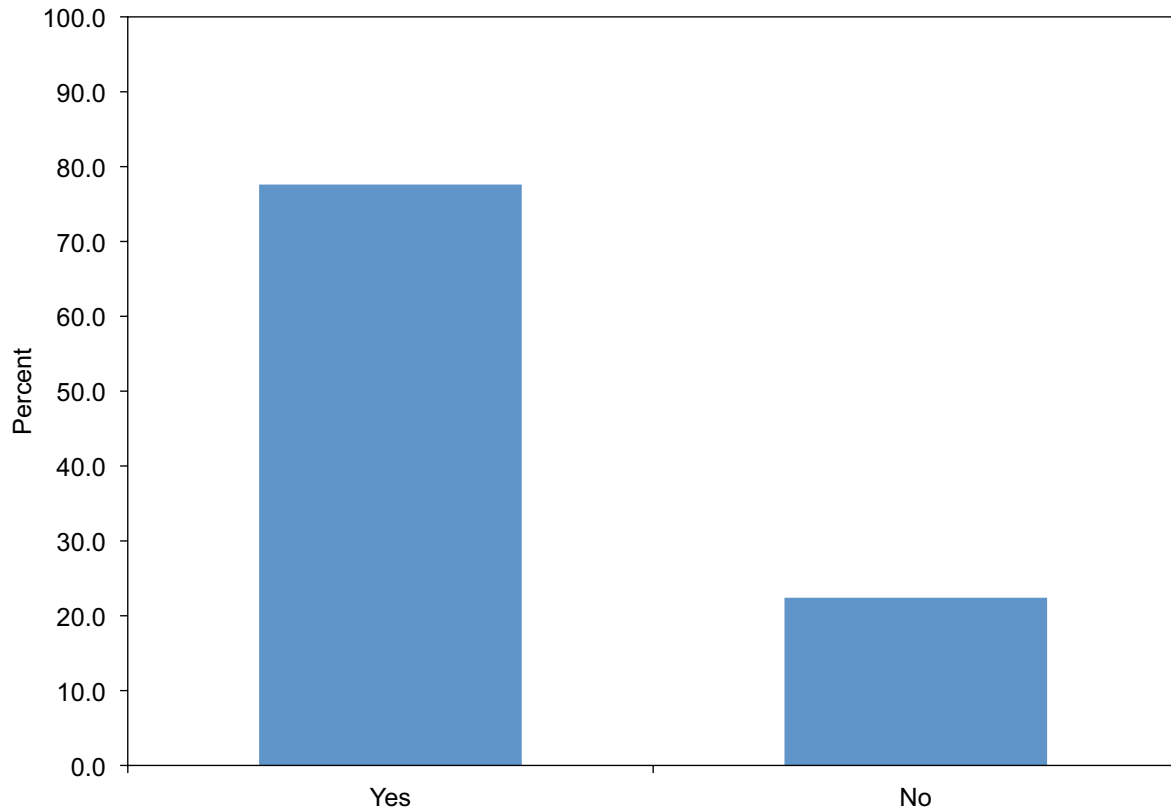


Figure 2. Summary of responses to Q3: “Are you more likely to register an expensive product?”

Table 4
Percentage of responses, by gender and age, to Q3: “Are you more likely to register an expensive product?”

Response	Gender		Age				Total
	Female	Male	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	
Yes	81.1	73.7	72.6	75.2	77.7	84.2	77.6
No	18.9	26.3	27.4	24.8	22.3	15.8	22.4

Safety-related products

When asked if they would be more likely to register safety-related products, the majority of respondents (62.5%) said that they would. Figure 3 summarizes the results for all respondents, while Table 5 presents a complete summary of responses by gender and age.

Females were more likely than males to say that they would register safety-related products (67.6% and 56.7%, respectively).

No systematic age-related trends were observed.

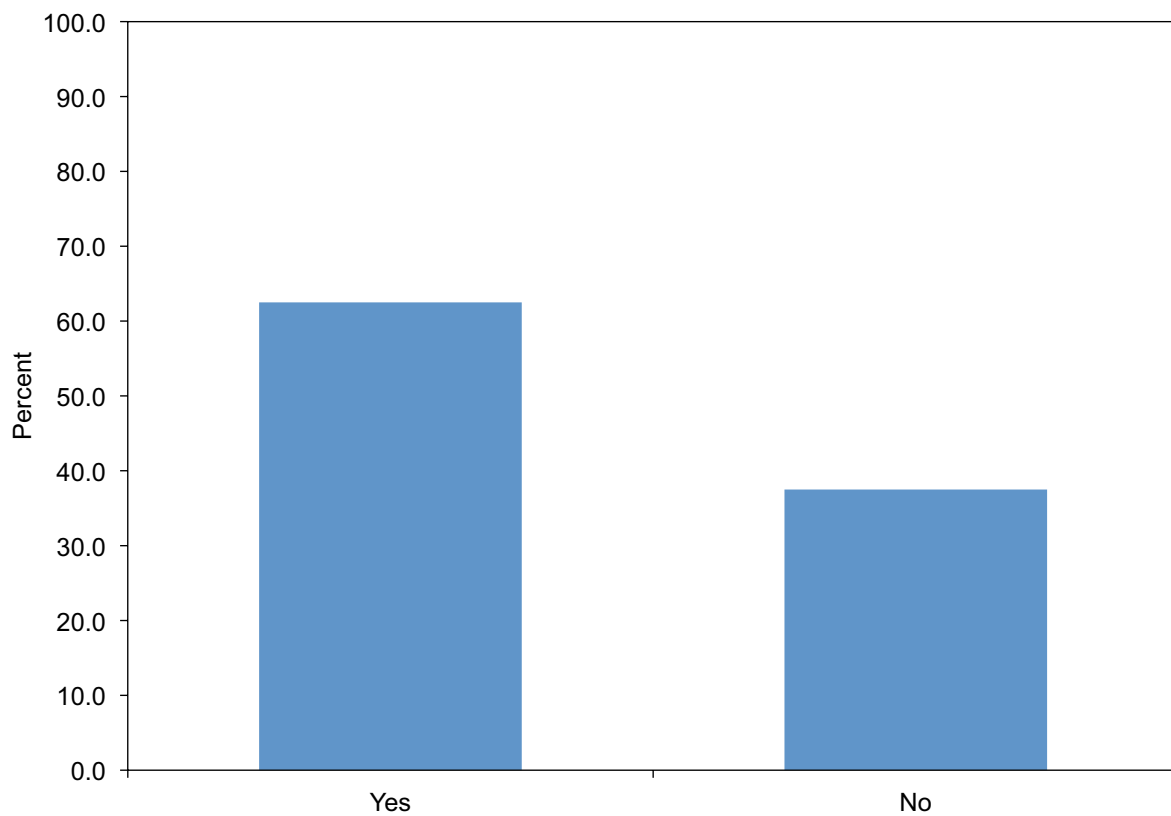


Figure 3. Summary of responses to Q4: “Are you more likely to register a product if it is safety related?”

Table 5
 Percentage of responses, by gender and age, to Q4: “Are you more likely to register a product if it is safety related?”

Response	Gender		Age				Total
	Female	Male	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	
Yes	67.6	56.7	62.8	59.9	68.3	58.6	62.5
No	32.4	43.3	37.2	40.1	31.7	41.4	37.5

Warranty activation

Nearly all (86.6%) of respondents said that they would be more likely to register a product if it were required to activate the warranty. Figure 4 summarizes the results for all respondents, while Table 6 presents a complete summary of responses by gender and age.

Similar percentages of females and males stated that they would register a product to activate the warranty (88.0% and 85.0%, respectively).

There was a general tendency to say they would register a product to activate the warranty as respondent age increased.

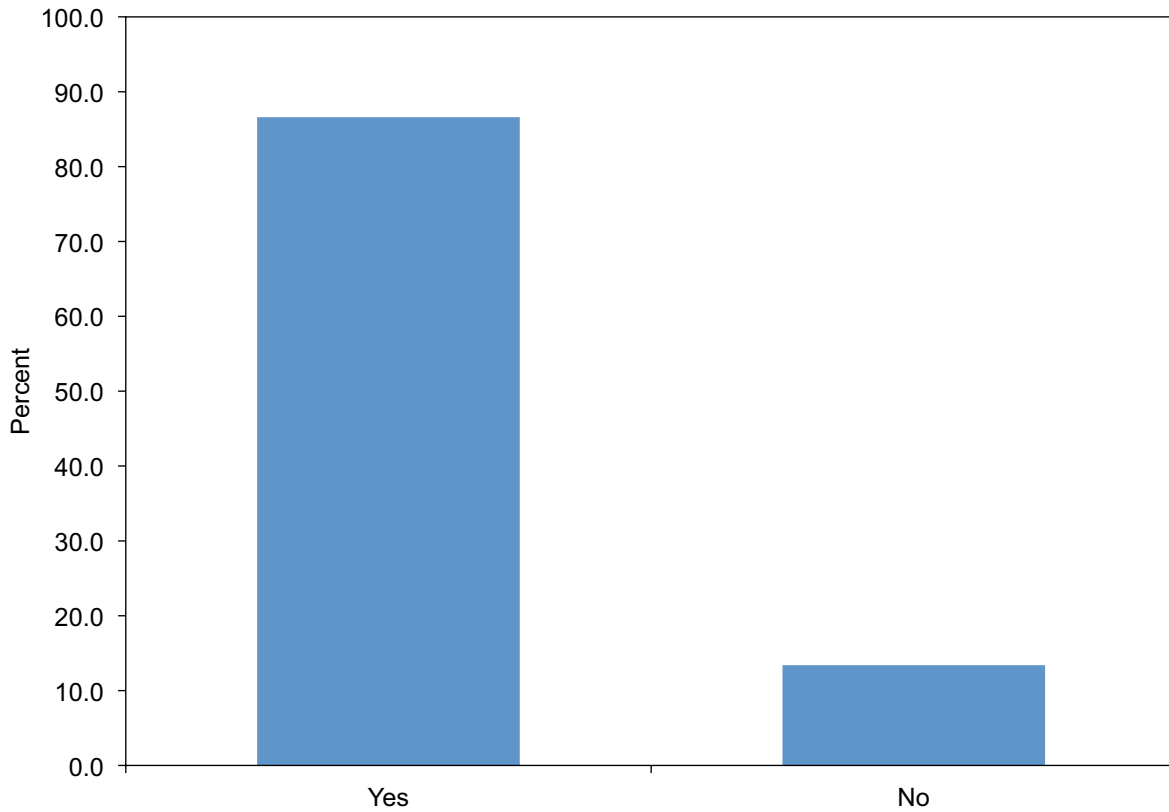


Figure 4. Summary of responses to Q5: “Are you more likely to register a product if registration is required to activate the warranty?”

Table 6
Percentage of responses, by gender and age, to Q5: “Are you more likely to register a product if registration is required to activate the warranty?”

Response	Gender		Age				Total
	Female	Male	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	
Yes	88.0	85.0	81.4	84.7	91.4	88.0	86.6
No	12.0	15.0	18.6	15.3	8.6	12.0	13.4

Expected length of ownership

A majority (60.3%) of respondents said that they would be more likely to register a product if they planned to own it for a long time. Figure 5 summarizes the results for all respondents, while Table 7 presents a complete summary of responses by gender and age.

Similar percentages of females and males stated that they would register a product they plan to own for a long time (58.9% and 61.9%, respectively).

Older respondents were more likely to say that they would register a product that they plan to own for a long time, peaking with the second oldest age group (67.6%). The youngest age group was least likely to register such products, with just slightly more than half (51.3%) saying they would register.

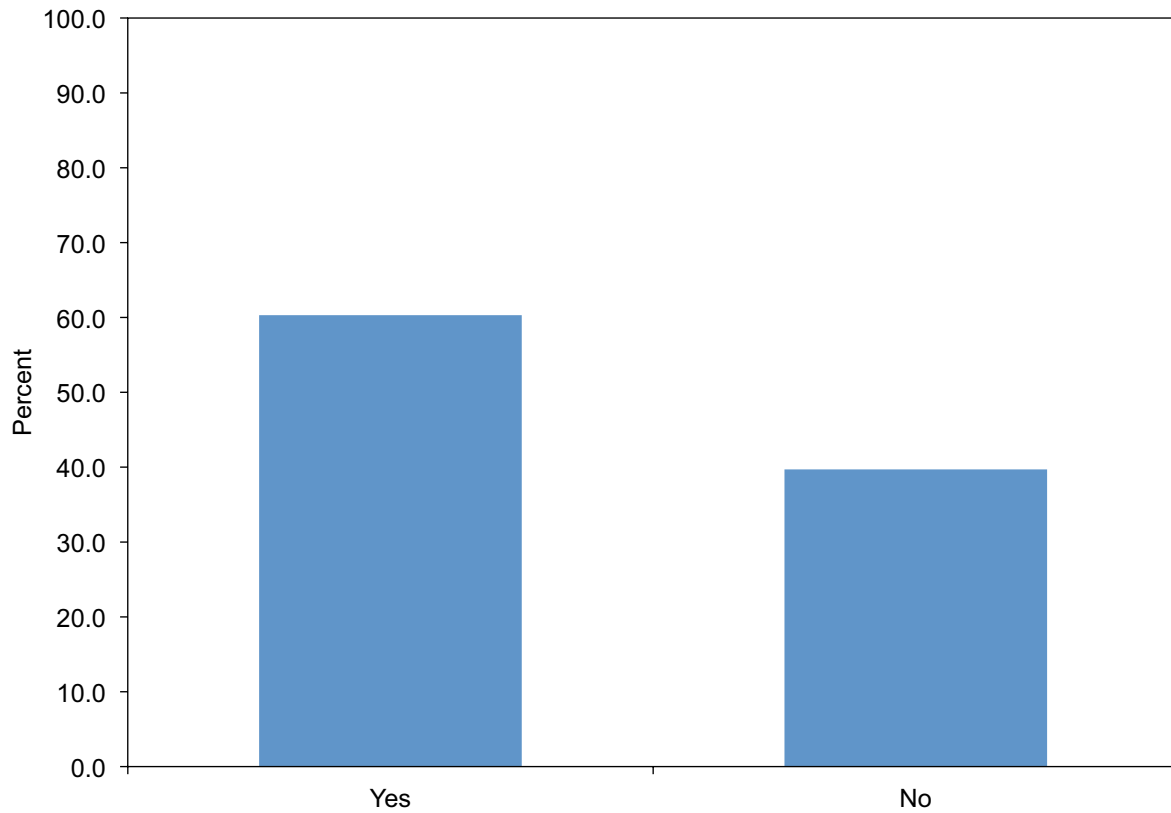


Figure 5. Summary of responses to Q6: “Are you more likely to register a product if you plan to own it for a long time?”

Table 7
 Percentage of responses, by gender and age, to Q6: “Are you more likely to register a product if you plan to own it for a long time?”

Response	Gender		Age				Total
	Female	Male	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	
Yes	58.9	61.9	51.3	59.9	67.6	60.9	60.3
No	41.1	38.1	48.7	40.1	32.4	39.1	39.7

Concern regarding unwanted communication

Just over half (58.6%) of all respondents said that they were concerned about product registration leading to unwanted communications from the company. Figure 6 summarizes the results for all respondents, while Table 8 presents a complete summary of responses by gender and age.

Males tended to be more concerned than females about unwanted communication from the company (61.1% and 56.4%, respectively).

No systematic age-related trends were observed, as most age groups were similarly concerned about unwanted communications.

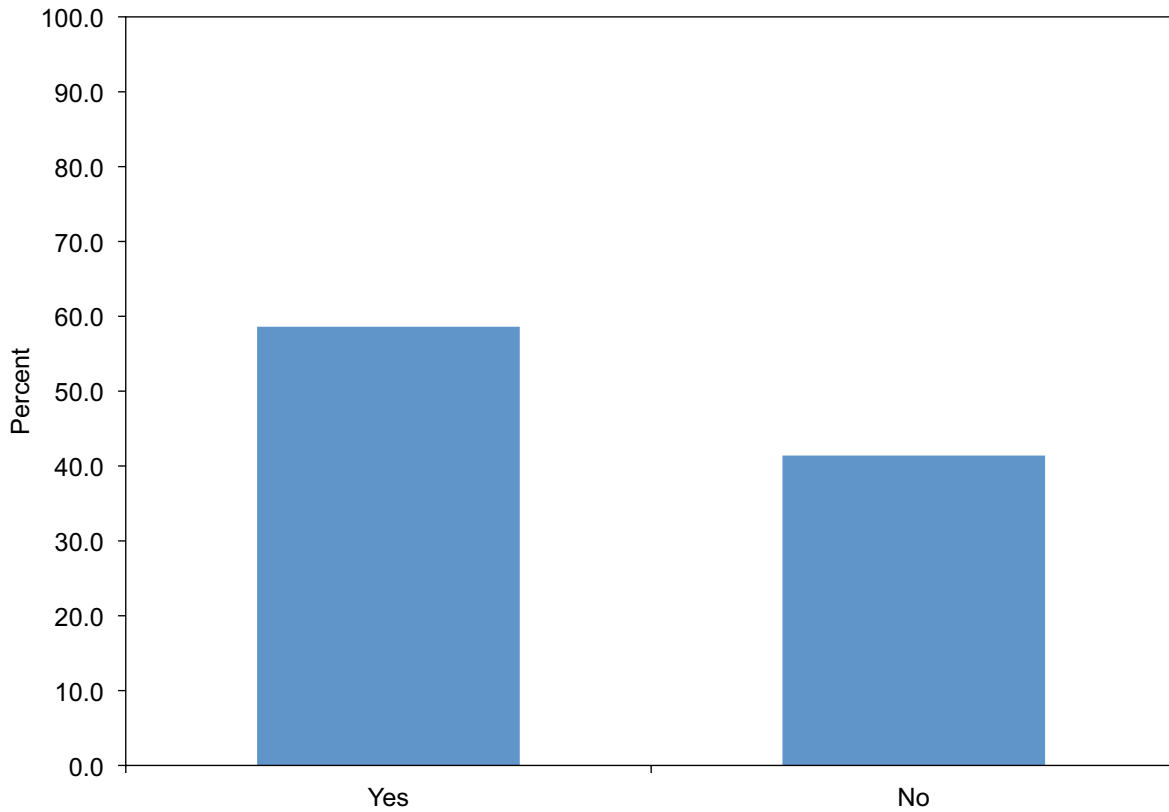


Figure 6. Summary of responses to Q7: “Are you concerned that registering a product will lead to unwanted, non-safety related communication from the company, such as advertising?”

Table 8

Percentage of responses, by gender and age, to Q7: “Are you concerned that registering a product will lead to unwanted, non-safety related communication from the company, such as advertising?”

Response	Gender		Age				Total
	Female	Male	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	
Yes	56.4	61.1	55.8	58.4	64.0	55.6	58.6
No	43.6	38.9	44.2	41.6	36.0	44.4	41.4

Effect of prohibiting unwanted communication

While just over half of all respondents said that they were concerned about product registration leading to unwanted communications from the company, most respondents (79.3%) said they would be more likely to register products if companies were prohibited from contacting customers for purposes other than safety warnings or recalls. Figure 7 summarizes the results for all respondents, while Table 9 presents a complete summary of responses by gender and age.

Females tended to indicate more frequently than males that they would register a product if the company were prohibited from contacting customers for non-safety related communications (82.2% and 76.1%, respectively).

The second oldest age group was the most likely to register (87.8%) if a prohibition regarding non-safety related communications existed, while the oldest age group was least likely to register (72.2%). (The two youngest age groups were not notably different from each other or the overall average.)

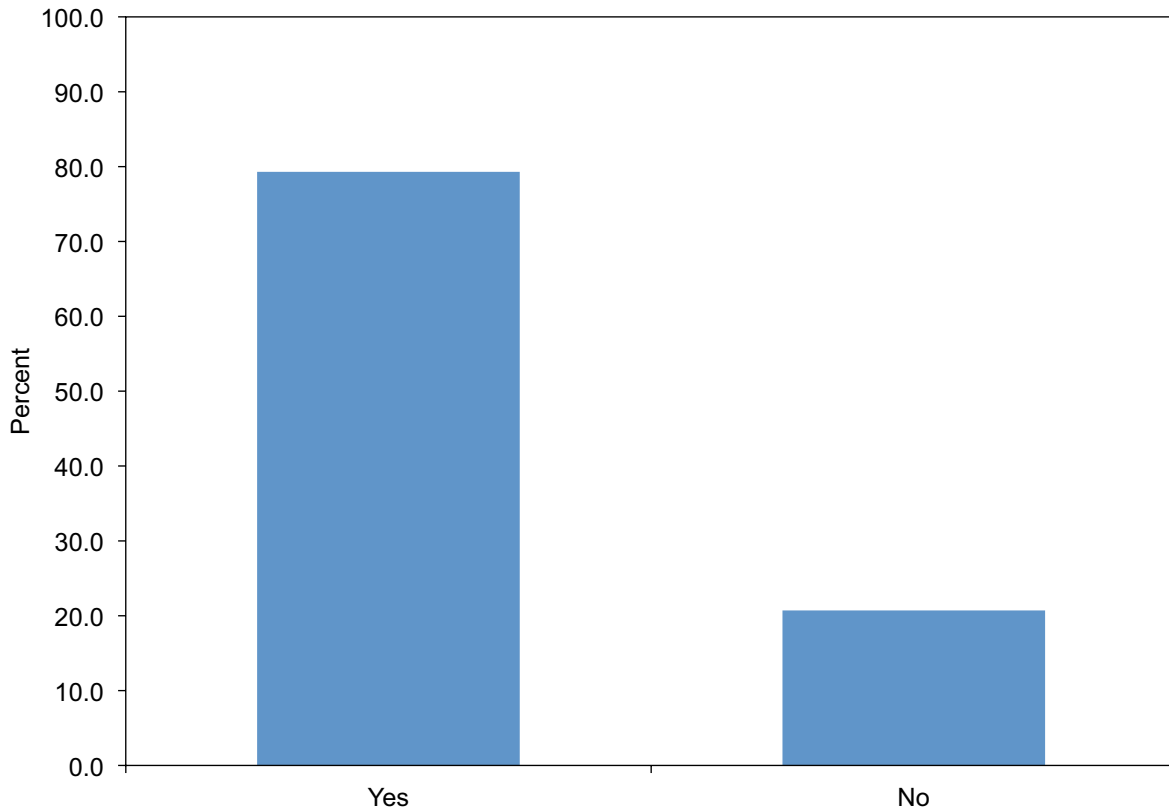


Figure 7. Summary of responses to Q8: “*Would you be more likely to register a product if all manufacturers were legally prohibited from contacting you for any purpose other than safety warnings or recalls?*”

Table 9

Percentage of responses, by gender and age, to Q8: “*Would you be more likely to register a product if all manufacturers were legally prohibited from contacting you for any purpose other than safety warnings or recalls?*”

Response	Gender		Age				Total
	Female	Male	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	
Yes	82.2	76.1	79.6	77.4	87.8	72.2	79.3
No	17.8	23.9	20.4	22.6	12.2	27.8	20.7

Automatic registration

Most respondents (78.2%) said that they would prefer to have product registration occur automatically whenever possible. Figure 8 summarizes the results for all respondents, while Table 10 presents a complete summary of responses by gender and age.

Females tended to prefer to have automatic product registration more often than males (80.7% and 75.3%, respectively).

Preference for automatic product registration increased as age increased (ranging from 73.5% for the youngest group to 85.0% for the oldest group).

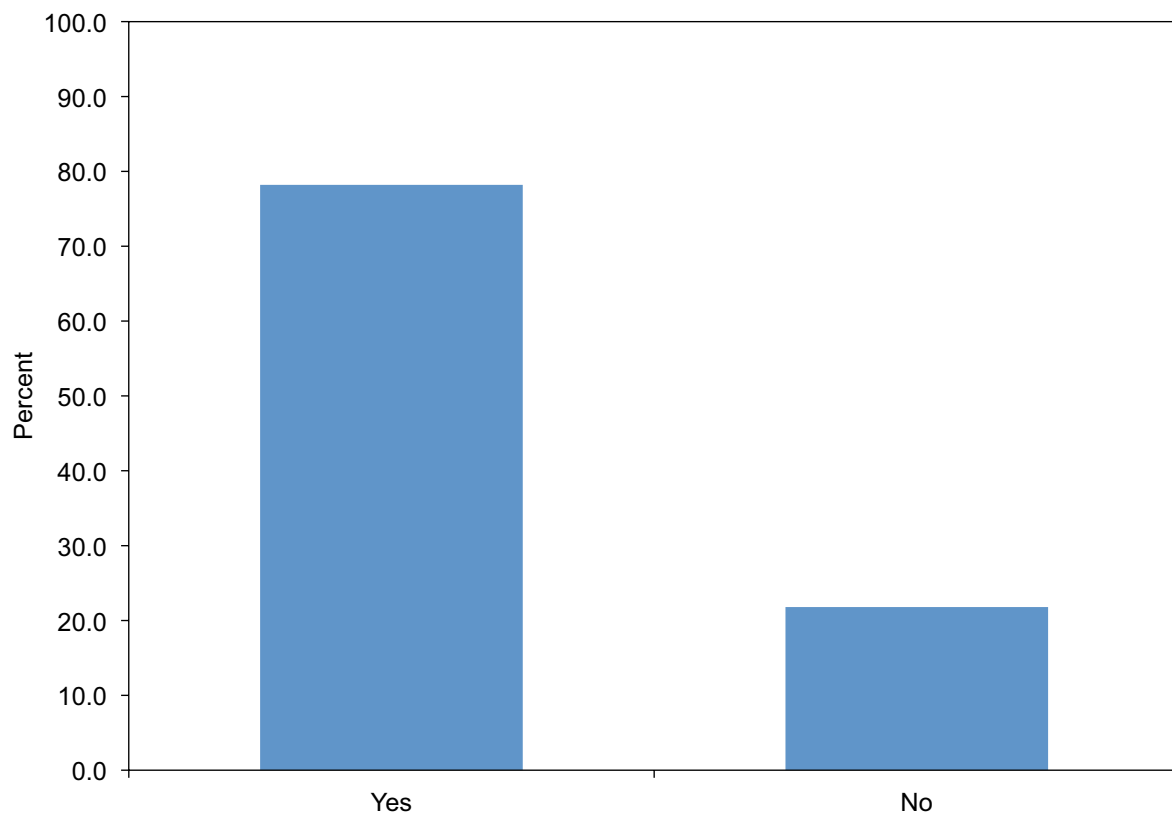


Figure 8. Summary of responses to Q9: “*Would you prefer that product registration occur automatically whenever possible?*”

Table 10
 Percentage of responses, by gender and age, to Q9: “*Would you prefer that product registration occur automatically whenever possible?*”

Response	Gender		Age				<i>Total</i>
	Female	Male	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	
Yes	80.7	75.3	73.5	73.7	79.9	85.0	78.2
No	19.3	24.7	26.5	26.3	20.1	15.0	21.8

Preference for different registration methods

Respondents were asked to rank (forced rank) their preference for each common method of product registration. Automatic registration was the most preferred method (average rank of 1.6 out of 4.0), while post cards were the least preferred (average rank of 3.4 out of 4.0). Figure 9 summarizes the results for all respondents, while Table 11 presents complete summaries of responses by gender and age.

Females and males expressed similar preferences for registration methods.

Preferences for each registration method were similar across age groups. However, while the oldest age group ranked each method in the same order as the other groups, comparatively they showed a stronger preference for automatic registration and lower preference for website registration.

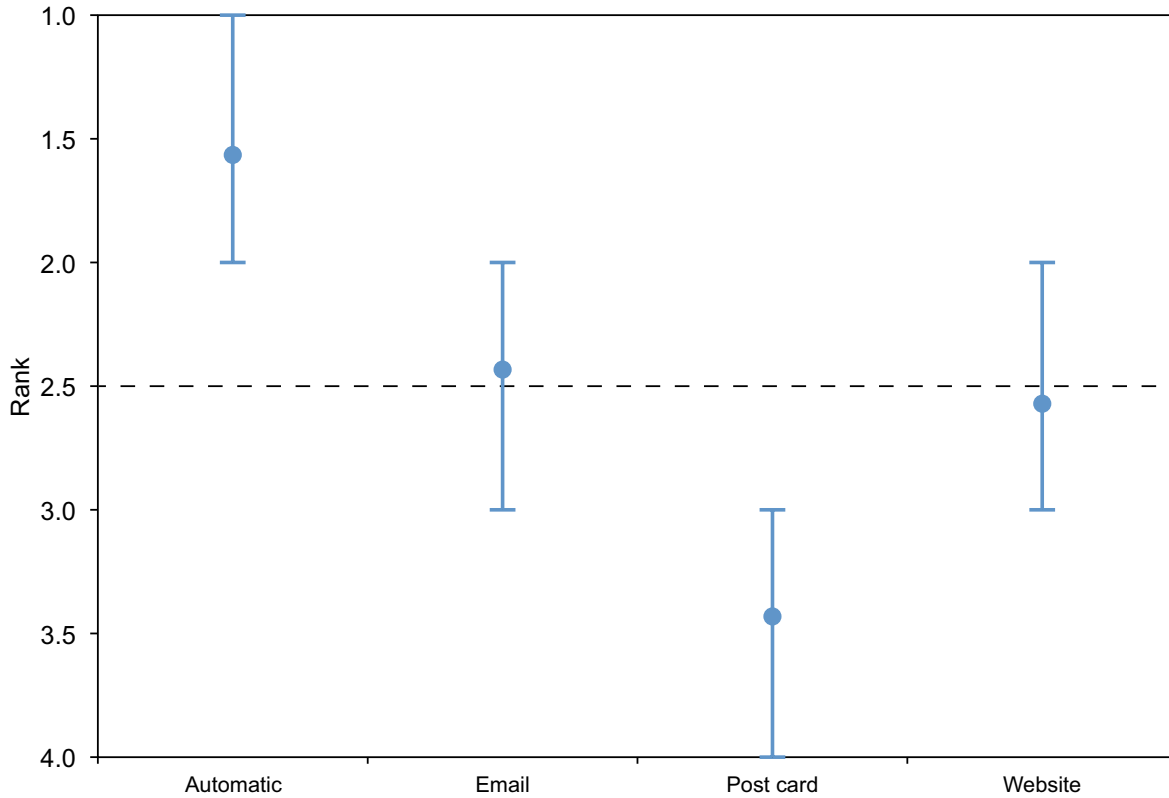


Figure 9. Summary of responses to Q10: “Please rank your preference for each method of new-product registration.” The symbols mark the average rank for each registration method, while the error bars show the span between the 25th- and 75th-percentiles. The dashed line indicates the midpoint (2.5) in the rankings.

Table 11

Average ranking, by gender and age, for Q10: “Please rank your preference for each method of new-product registration.” (1 = most-preferred method, 4 = least-preferred method; the highest ranking method for each column is shown in **bold**.)

Response	Gender		Age				Total
	Female	Male	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	
Automatic	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.3	1.6
Email	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.4
Post card	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.4
Website	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.9	2.6

Likelihood of registering different product types

Respondents were asked how likely they would be to register eight different product types. A response option indicating that a product type was not applicable for a respondent (“I do not purchase this type of product”) was available. Respondents who selected this option for a specific product type were excluded from the analysis for that product; a summary of nonapplicable responses (i.e., those who report not purchasing each product type) is shown in Table 12.

Table 12
Percentage of respondents stating that they do not purchase a specific product type. (Those respondents were excluded from the analysis for that product type.)

Automobile tires	Electronic devices	Furniture	Infant and toddler products	Major appliances	Outdoor and garden equipment	Power tools	Sports equipment
7.7	1.3	3.4	37.5	4.8	9.4	10.3	15.3

The majority of respondents said that they were likely (either *very likely* or *somewhat likely*) to register five out of the eight product types that were presented. Major appliances were the product most likely to be registered (81.7% said *very likely* or *somewhat likely*), while furniture was the least likely to be registered (38.9% said *very likely* or *somewhat likely*). Figure 10 summarizes the results for all respondents who purchase each product type, while Table 13 presents complete summaries of responses by gender and age. A breakdown of the most likely and least likely products to be registered (listed in order of likelihood of *very likely* responses) is presented below.

- 1) *Major appliances*: 56.3% very likely, 8.5% very unlikely.
- 2) *Electronic devices*: 44.7% very likely, 9.7% very unlikely.
- 3) *Infant and toddler products*: 39.3% very likely, 16.3% very unlikely.
- 4) *Power tools*: 30.6% very likely, 17.1% very unlikely.
- 5) *Automobile tires*: 29.7% very likely, 22.6% very unlikely.
- 6) *Sports equipment*: 14.5% very likely, 32.6% very unlikely.
- 7) *Outdoor and garden equipment*: 13.1% very likely, 30.4% very unlikely.
- 8) *Furniture*: 10.7% very likely, 33.5% very unlikely.

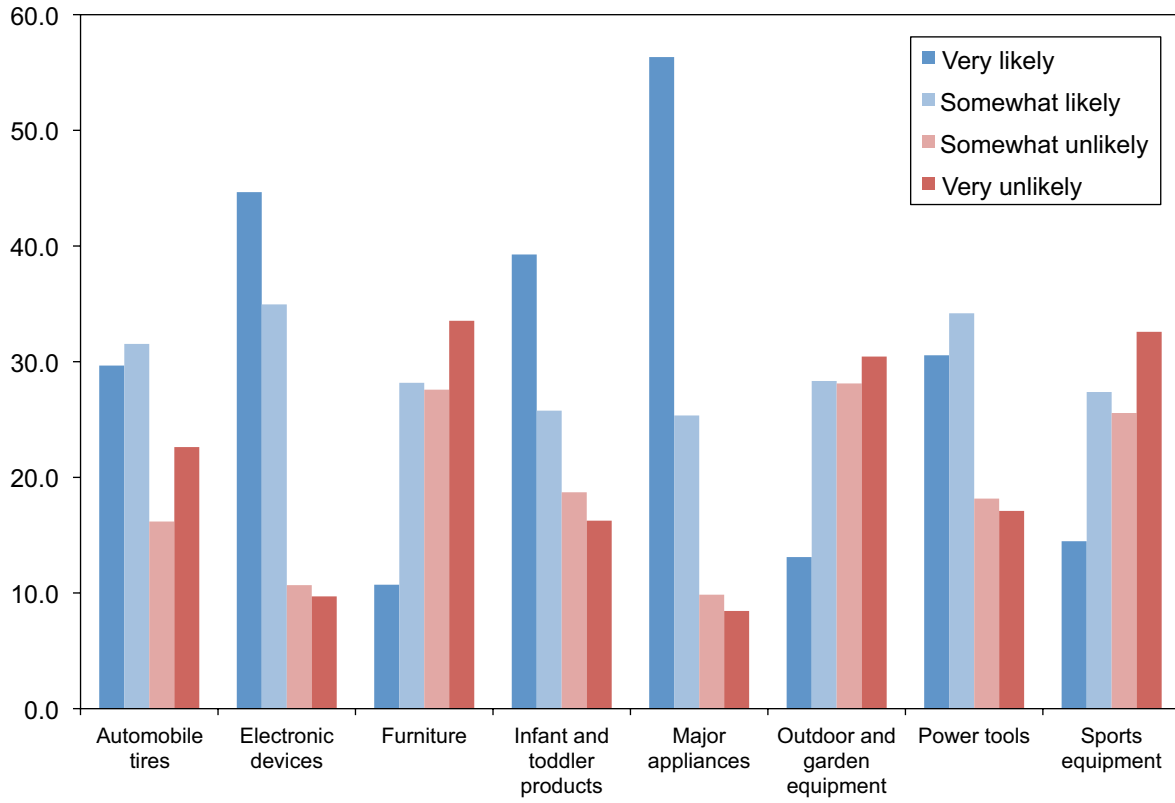


Figure 10. Summary of responses to Q11: “How likely are you to register the following types of products?”

Table 13
 Percentage of responses, by gender and age, for Q11: “How likely are you to register the following types of products?” (The most frequent response for each column within each product type is shown in **bold**.)

Product type	Response	Gender		Age				Total
		Female	Male	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	
Automobile tires	Very likely	27.4	32.2	20.8	21.0	37.1	36.9	29.7
	Somewhat likely	34.1	28.7	29.2	29.8	33.3	33.1	31.5
	Somewhat unlikely	17.1	15.2	18.8	22.6	13.6	10.8	16.2
	Very unlikely	21.4	23.9	31.3	26.6	15.9	19.2	22.6
Electronic devices	Very likely	48.4	40.4	34.2	42.6	49.6	50.4	44.7
	Somewhat likely	29.8	40.8	39.6	36.0	34.1	30.8	35.0
	Somewhat unlikely	10.9	10.4	13.5	13.2	8.9	7.5	10.7
	Very unlikely	10.9	8.3	12.6	8.1	7.4	11.3	9.7
Furniture	Very likely	12.3	8.9	8.7	7.6	15.4	10.5	10.7
	Somewhat likely	27.9	28.5	24.0	29.8	27.9	30.1	28.2
	Somewhat unlikely	27.9	27.2	28.8	27.5	30.9	23.3	27.6
	Very unlikely	32.0	35.3	38.5	35.1	25.7	36.1	33.5
Infant and toddler products	Very likely	48.2	29.5	23.3	43.6	47.8	39.1	39.3
	Somewhat likely	23.5	28.2	32.9	21.3	22.2	29.0	25.8
	Somewhat unlikely	13.5	24.4	24.7	18.1	16.7	15.9	18.7
	Very unlikely	14.7	17.9	19.2	17.0	13.3	15.9	16.3
Major appliances	Very likely	58.1	54.3	35.3	53.8	68.7	62.6	56.3
	Somewhat likely	21.9	29.3	29.4	27.7	19.4	26.0	25.4
	Somewhat unlikely	10.6	9.1	20.6	10.0	7.5	3.8	9.9
	Very unlikely	9.4	7.3	14.7	8.5	4.5	7.6	8.5
Outdoor and garden equipment	Very likely	13.3	12.9	7.5	12.2	17.7	13.4	13.1
	Somewhat likely	31.0	25.3	23.7	22.8	31.5	33.9	28.3
	Somewhat unlikely	27.0	29.3	36.6	34.1	24.6	19.7	28.1
	Very unlikely	28.6	32.4	32.3	30.9	26.2	33.1	30.4
Power tools	Very likely	32.2	28.8	16.3	25.2	40.3	36.7	30.6
	Somewhat likely	34.7	33.6	40.2	32.3	29.5	36.7	34.2
	Somewhat unlikely	15.5	21.0	22.8	24.4	14.7	11.7	18.2
	Very unlikely	17.6	16.6	20.7	18.1	15.5	15.0	17.1
Sports equipment	Very likely	14.0	14.9	13.3	12.0	16.5	15.7	14.5
	Somewhat likely	24.9	29.9	25.6	22.2	31.5	29.6	27.4
	Somewhat unlikely	29.0	22.2	22.2	31.6	25.2	22.2	25.6
	Very unlikely	32.1	33.0	38.9	34.2	26.8	32.4	32.6

Key Findings

General frequency of product registration

- Respondents generally indicated some level of product registration (*seldom*, *usually*, and *sometimes* were the top three responses), though *always* was the least frequent response.

- Those who were more likely to register products do so to activate warranties or to receive recall notices, while those less likely to register products find the process to be inconvenient, of no benefit to them, or generally are forgetful about completing the process.

Preferences for different registration methods

- Respondent preferences for registration methods, from most to least preferred, were: automatic, email, website, and post card. Older respondents showed stronger preferences for automatic registration and against website registration than the other respondents.

Factors influencing product registration

- A large percentage (77.7%) said that they would be more likely to register expensive products, with females and older respondents being more likely to register than males and younger respondents.

- The majority of respondents (62.5%) said that they would register safety-related products, and females were more likely than males to say so.

- Most respondents (86.6%) said they would register a product to activate the warranty, with a tendency for older respondents to say this more than younger respondents.

- Expected long-term ownership of a product would cause a majority of respondents (60.3%) to register, with a tendency for older respondents to say so more than younger respondents.

- More than half (58.6%) said that they were concerned about unwanted communication from the company after registration.

- Most respondents (79.3%) said that prohibiting unwanted communication from the company would increase their likelihood of registering products, with females being more likely to say this than males.

- Most respondents (78.2%) would prefer that product registration occur automatically at the time of purchase whenever possible, with females and older respondents showing greater preference for this option.

Likelihood of registering different product types

- Respondents rated the likelihood of registering the various product types as follows, shown in descending order from most to least likely (with the last three types being unlikely to be registered):

- Major appliances
- Electronic devices
- Infant and toddler products
- Power tools
- Automobile tires
- Sports equipment
- Outdoor and garden equipment
- Furniture

Importance of factors and likelihood of registration

- While most respondents indicated an increased likelihood of registering safety-related products, warranty activation and the cost of a product both had greater influence on the likelihood of registering a new product. As an example of this influence, respondents were more likely to say they would register major appliances and electronic devices (usually expensive items with a warranty to activate) than infant and toddler products or automobile tires (both safety-related products).

References

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Appendix: Questionnaire

We are conducting a survey of opinions about product registration.

1) How often do you generally register products that you purchase?

- Always
 - Usually
 - Sometimes
 - Seldom
 - Never
-

2) What is the main reason that you [insert Q1 response] register products that you purchase?

Please describe reason: _____

3) Are you more likely to register an expensive product?

- Yes
 - No
-

4) Are you more likely to register a product if it is safety related?

- Yes
 - No
-

5) Are you more likely to register a product if registration is required to activate the warranty?

- Yes
 - No
-

6) Are you more likely to register a product if you plan to own it for a long time?

- Yes
- No

7) Are you concerned that registering a product will lead to unwanted, non-safety related communication from the company, such as advertising?

- Yes
- No

8) Manufacturers of certain types of products, such as infant and toddler products, are prohibited by law from using the registration information for any purpose other than contacting consumers for safety warnings or product recalls.

Would you be more likely to register a product if all manufacturers were legally prohibited from contacting you for any purpose other than safety warnings or recalls?

- Yes
- No

9) Registration with the manufacturer for some types of products, such as new automobiles, is automatically included in the process of purchasing or leasing the vehicle.

Would you prefer that product registration occur automatically whenever possible?

- Yes
- No

10) Please rank your preference for each method of new-product registration. (1 = most preferred, 4 = least preferred)

	Rank
Automatically with purchase	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>
Post card (mail)	<input type="text"/>
Website	<input type="text"/>

11) How likely are you to register the following types of products?

	Automobile tires	Electronic devices	Furniture	Infant and toddler products	Major appliances	Outdoor and garden equipment	Power tools	Sports equipment
Very likely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat likely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat unlikely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very unlikely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!