Food buying is a complex and endless mental and physical activity that can be categorized into 5 key areas of concern.

- Each house has a primary shopper who has a complex understanding of his/her family’s food needs and what food is in the house. This person’s ‘mental pantry’ is strong and he/she is often unwilling to relinquish control of food shopping and meal planning.

- If grocery lists are made people deviate from the list often not getting all they need or getting additional items. Many lists are stored in the shopper’s head.

- Meal planning, food selection is an ongoing, endless exercise that people don’t do perfectly or religiously.

- Meal ideas are stored in head and accessed upon recall, often by seeing an individual ingredient.

- How we grew up influences how we shop and how we eat. Users have about 10-50 recipes in their brain based off of things they grew up with or experienced in life and learned how to cook.

Using one’s senses (sight & touch especially) is useful when assessing the quality of fresh food or unfamiliar foods. Using the senses helps build trust that the food what one expects. The greatest emotion may be around selecting these foods.

Drivers of choice such as organic, sustainability, health, tastes, quality, price, and brand deeply affect our mental models in the act of selection and where we shop. Many times these drivers of choice are in conflict. When these drivers are most in conflict the need to control the selection increases as does the emotion of the user in the act of selecting.

Grocery shopping is described as both a ‘joy’ and a ‘chore’. It depends on how much time people have for shopping and where they shop.