

## Recessionary Value Proposition: Durable Quality

Here's some news that may be a comfort to marketers dreading the prospect of offering ever-lower prices as the only tactic to get consumers to buy. Value is not all about low cost, even in this recession. In fact, it ranks 6<sup>th</sup> out of 9 measured factors related to getting value. Consumers say that now, more than ever, **quality products that last are the ones that provide real value.**

Half of American adults say "inexpensive" is very important when they think about getting value from a product. This seems like a respectable number until it's compared with the share who say so about durability, quality, and several other attributes. Durability in particular is about twice as likely as

"inexpensive" to get "very important" ratings, peaking at 94% for those age 30 to 44.

There is one exception to the low-cost exclusion – young adults. Two-thirds of those age 18 to 29 rate "inexpensive" as a very important piece of the values equation, compared with fewer than half of older adults. Even so, **durability and high quality rank first and second for all age groups** (see chart).

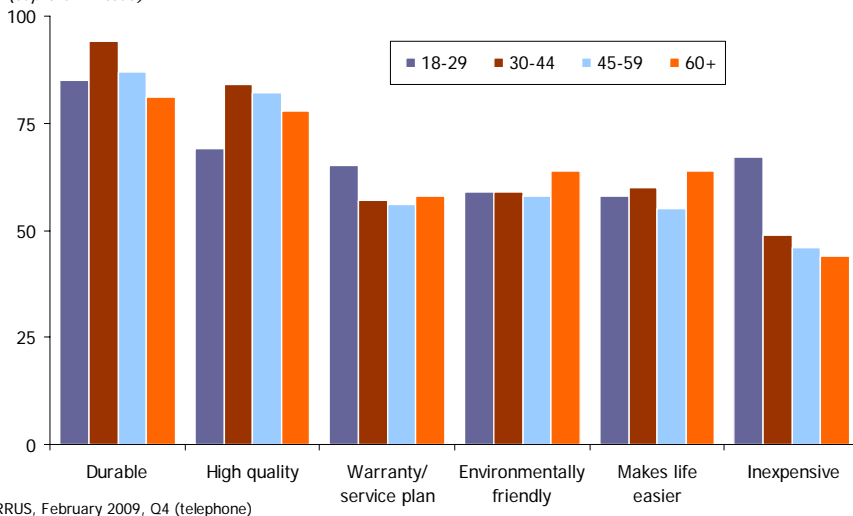
Gen Xers in early middle age care most about durability and quality. They are also the group least pleased with the value they feel they get for products ranging from clothing to groceries to appliances. But they're not the only ones who are less than satisfied.



Panasonic Toughbook 30

### Durability Very Important to All, Critical to Gen X

% of adults 18+ who say factors are "very important" when they think about getting value for a product (top 6 of 9 listed)



Overall, consumers are far more likely to say they get "good" or "fair" than "excellent" value. This suggests that marketers focusing solely on price are missing the boat.

It might also be that durable products could find new customers. For example, rugged laptops currently aimed at military, construction, and other industrial markets might appeal to middle-aged parents. Anyone who has seen the abuse a teenager can inflict upon electronic devices will grasp the potential of this opportunity. Price matters, but it's not the only game in town.

**PulsePoint:** Marketers who cannot or choose not to compete on cost need not despair, as long as they can offer the qualities consumers associate with value. A product that lasts noticeably longer than others or helps other products endure (e.g., clothing that holds up to repeated laundering or laundry products that extend the life of clothing) may not have to resort to price wars.