

*How Consumers Shop for Credit Cards  
Research Executive Summary*



*The Ohio State University's  
Consumer Finance Monthly Survey*

**Business Problem:** You are thinking of revamping your financial institution's credit card marketing materials and need to know what information potential customers want.

**Solution:** Read this research to better understand the marketing information needed.

**Research Details:** What is the profile of the typical new credit card searcher? Responses from a set of questions fielded to over 1,000 families via a telephone survey show that the average person who searched for a card within the past five years tends to have higher education, more income, is younger and is more likely to be married than the general population.

When a person decides to shop for a card they compare on average four to five different cards. However, a small but significant number of individuals do an extensive amount of comparison. Almost 10% compared 8 to 11 cards, and 8% compared 12 to 50 cards.

Not surprisingly, the vast majority (60%) of people get information on credit cards from mail solicitations. The second most likely method is getting information directly from a bank or financial institution.

What do people compare when looking at card offers? The average person considers five different factors. The top five factors in order of importance are; the interest rate on outstanding balances; the APR; the annual fee; the length of the grace period; and the amounts of other fees.

Credit card users fall into two broad categories. Convenience users utilize credit cards as a way to make purchases without using cash or checks. These users typically pay off their entire balance each month. Revolvers use credit cards as a way of financing purchases over time and maintain balances for long periods of time. These two groups search for very different features in their new credit cards. This means marketing materials for revolvers need to stress different features to the different types of card users.

**Research Title:** *Relationships among Information Search Activities When Shopping for a Credit Card*

**Authors:** Jinkook Lee and Jeanne Hogarth

---

---

**For More Information Contact:**

Professor Randall Olsen  
Director, Center for Human Resource Research

Phone: (614) 442-7348  
Email: Olsen.6@osu.edu