

2024



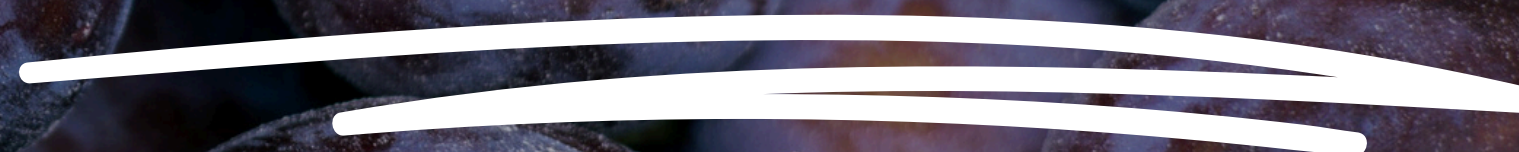
ORGANIC
RESEARCH CENTRE



**BETTER
FOOD
TRADERS**

ORGANIC CONSUMERS

TIPS FOR RETAILERS



UNDERSTANDING ORGANIC CONSUMERS



In early 2024, the Organic Research Centre and UK Organic conducted consumer research into organic purchasing behaviour, gathering survey responses from 2,000 people (with an even spread across income, gender, ethnicity, region and employment status).

This toolkit draws out data and insights from that work, and includes some tips and advice for food retailers on how to market to organic shoppers.

Better Food Traders is a UK-wide network for independent food traders who sell UK-grown organic.

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 - d. Baby Food, Wellbeing and Supplements
 - e. Drinks

33%
of respondents do
not shop organic
at all



67%

of respondents were
organic 'actives' or
'considerers'

WHY DO SHOPPERS BUY ORGANIC?*

72%

Excluding synthetic pesticides and other harmful chemicals

70%

Organic means higher production standards

68%

Organic is more nutritious & healthy for me and my family

67%

Organic products are better quality

66%

Organic prohibits the routine use of antibiotics

61%

Organic tastes better

*From a selection of multiple choice questions

THE ORGANIC SHOPPER

Half of organic shoppers follow special diets

Over half of organic shoppers buy from independent retailers

Emphasise your independence!

- 'Shop Local' messaging
- 'We are a family-owned business'
- 'Every pound you spend goes to our staff, our suppliers and our farmers - no shareholders here'.



Organic shoppers are twice as likely to have a passion for cooking and prioritise top quality ingredients.

Engage your customers by sharing seasonal recipes.

See the Better Food Traders Library for a collection of recipes, images and other useful resources.

Active organic shoppers are more likely to:

- be meat reducers/avoiders
- have allergies/intolerances
- follow special low carb/athletic diets.

Think about clustering gluten free, plant-based or Keto products on your shelves/on your website.

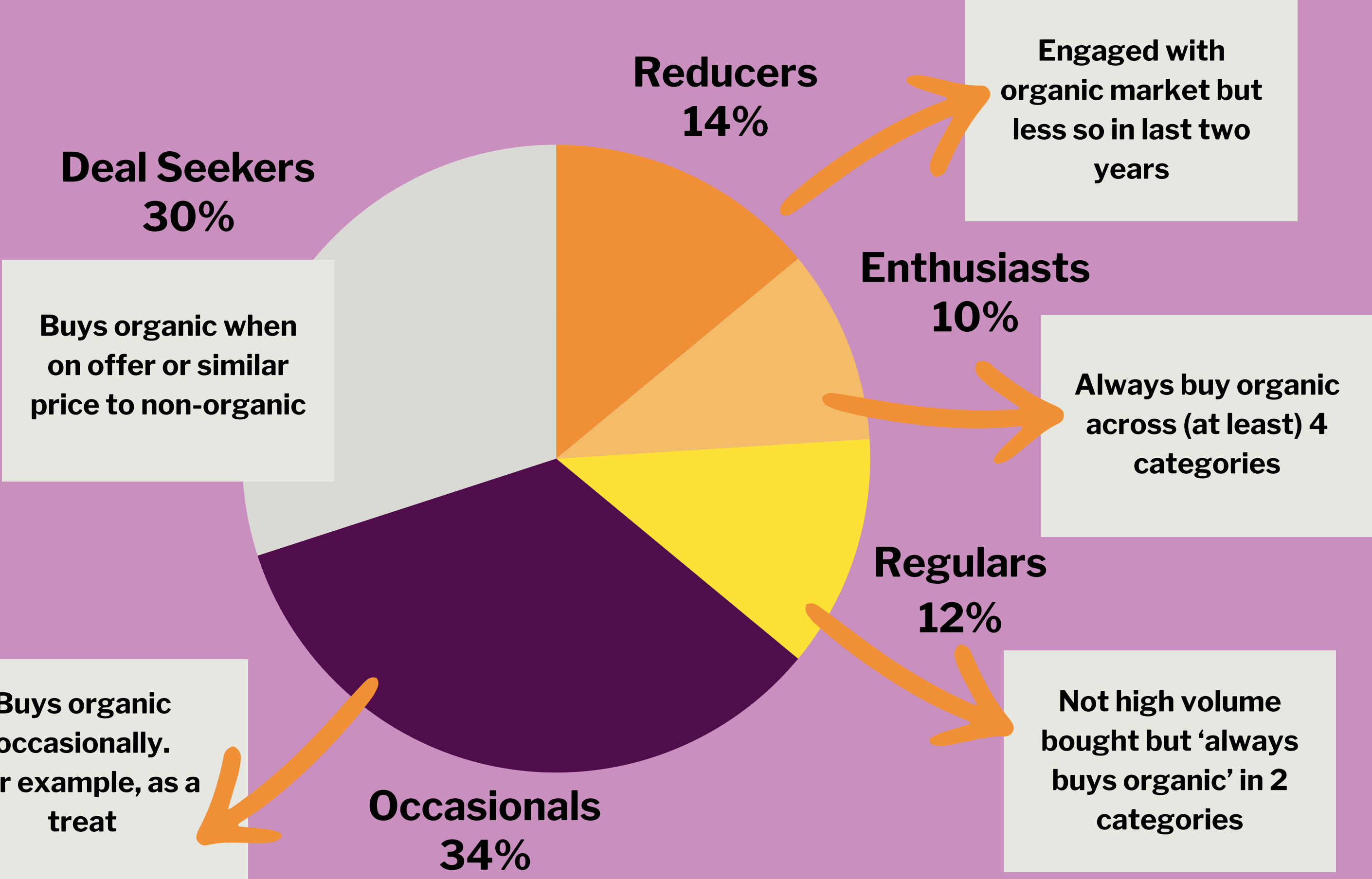
Make sure your staff are all trained in allergies and know the latest health/diet trends. The FSA has a [free allergens training here](#).



THE ORGANIC SHOPPER

86% of Better Food Traders track their customer demographics.

Who are your customers?
Do they fall into these categories?



THE ORGANIC SHOPPER

'ACTIVES'

Enthusiast: 1 in 10
Always buys organic

More likely to be Female,
Young. Lower-middle and
lower income, Renter,
Young families

Regular: 1 in 8
Consistently buys 2-3 items

Likely to be older than
'Enthusiasts'.
Priorities are Health,
Budget, Quality, Durability

If you don't know how to
carry out customer
segmentation, Better
Food Traders marketing
training can help you.

'CONSIDERERS'

Occasional: 1 in 3
Buys organic occasionally

More likely to be mature
families, private
homeowners, lower to
middle income.

Deal Seeker: 1 in 3

More likely to shop in high-
end chains (Waitrose,
M&S), cook from scratch,
upper-middle income, have
no children (in house)

Reducer: 1 in 7
Buying less in last 2 years

More likely to be a
homeowner.
"Organic products are too
expensive for me"

THE ORGANIC SHOPPER

Key trends

- Contrary to some perceptions of organic shoppers, the most active organic consumers are more likely to be renters, young families and on middle & lower incomes
- People buy organic for higher quality, and for nutrition and health

Tell your customers about organic standards of better quality, taste and welfare. Engage them through tastings, events, social polls and recipes.

Gut health is a big trend, and recent test tube and animal studies have shown that some synthetic pesticides (e.g. glyphosate) may have a direct toxic effect, as well as an indirect negative effect on the gut microbiome.

The Organic Sector is seeing strong growth among Independents, with sales up 9.9% in the last year.

THE ORGANIC SHOPPER

Turn your occasionals, deal seekers and reducers into regulars or enthusiasts...

Remember... Eye Level is Buy Level - put your most valuable items in prominent places that are easy for shoppers to find. You can also highlight popular or award-winning organic products with personalised staff recommendations.



Loyalty Programs - reward repeat visits and offer exclusive discounts or perks for frequent shoppers.

Engage customers with consistent, targeted newsletters and social media content that showcases new products, special offers, and useful tips and information. You can access marketing training and more through Better Food Traders.

**Use Instagram for visually-driven content like product photos, recipes, and behind-the-scenes shots.
[Find some useful tips on Food Photography here.](#)**

Facebook is great for sharing longer posts, engaging in community discussions, and hosting events.

FRUIT & VEGETABLES

Vegetables are an 'entry' product, meaning that they are likely to be the first or only organic product that a person will buy. They are the product with the largest market share in the organic market.

Fruit and Veg are popular with more 'occasional' organic shoppers, particularly those who only buy organic when products are on offer or similarly priced to non-organic.

Put fruit baskets near lunch items and at till points. Freshness is key – customers are likely to judge an entire shop on its fresh produce!



Many shoppers seek organic fruit and veg in order to exclude synthetic pesticides and other chemicals. Phrases like 'spray-free', 'no artificial pesticides' and Dirty Dozen resonate with these shoppers.



Organic shoppers are also motivated by higher environmental and production standards, so shout about the environmental benefits, the soil benefits, and try to minimise your plastic packaging.



DAIRY

Dairy and eggs are popular products for organic purchases - they are another 'entry' category for shoppers who might expand into other organic food categories.

If you don't already, add local organic milk, butter, eggs and cheese to your offering.

Focus on provenance.

Share stories about the farms where the dairy products are sourced, focusing on humane treatment of animals, and the absence of hormones, antibiotics, and pesticides in organic dairy.

Introduce a wider variety of organic dairy options, such as lactose-free, grass-fed, or A2 milk, catering to customers with specific dietary needs.

Write cheese prices as per 100g rather than per kg.

Place unusual items and short-dated stock centrally to maximise sales.

Don't forget to put organic chutneys and crackers close by.

Indie retailers should try to offer unique, locally-sourced dairy products that are not available in larger stores. This can include specialty cheeses, artisan yogurts, or small-batch milk.

PROCESSED, PRECOOKED & PACKAGED

Processed, precooked and packaged foods are purchased by people who frequently buy organic across a large range of products.

These shoppers are more committed to buying organic, less price focused and will buy more niche items.

These types of products have more price elasticity, where customers are willing to pay a premium - retailers should look for a higher margin here.

Organic processed foods, precooked and packaged foods are most likely to be purchased with:

- Organic Dairy
- Organic Red Meat
- Organic White Meat



Basics at the Back - shoppers will seek out basics such as milk and bread so put those at the back (or on the bottom shelf) and use the front of your shop to display interesting, higher margin items.

Try clustering

- with dairy and meat
- with items that create a complete meal
- by using 'suggest products' in your online store
- in seasonal themes

BABY FOOD, WELLBEING & SUPPLEMENTS

The survey data tells us that buyers of Baby Food, Wellbeing products and Supplements are very likely to always buy organic in these categories. However, they are also likely to buy no other organic products.

These customers buy organic because of the higher production standards - particularly animal welfare - and for higher levels of quality, purity and nutrition.



Baby food is likely to be an entry point into organic market for young families.

Encourage new parents to make the jump into organic Fruit and Vegetables by sharing baby weaning recipes.

Make sure customers are aware of the health benefits of eating more fruit and vegetables and other nutritious products, to encourage them to purchase a wider range of organic products.



Legally, you can't make advertising claims for the higher nutritional value of organic products. However, you can inform customers about healthy eating and organic production standards.

Organic is a guarantee of food quality. High production standards mean shoppers can trust in the prurity of their products.

DRINKS

The survey data shows that people who buy organic alcohol and soft drinks are more likely to purchase these items at independent stores.

Generally, this group are more interested in 'local' products than organic products.

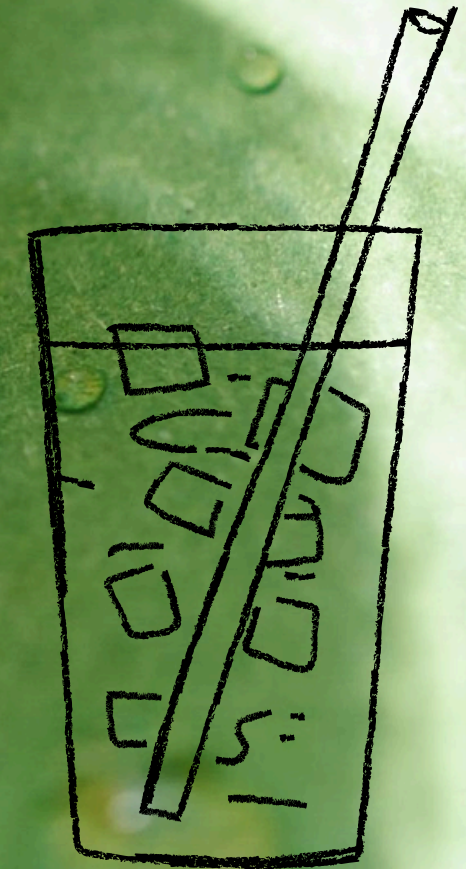


Focus your drinks marketing on people and provenance.
Tell the stories behind the products.



Run events and tastings.
For example, offer customers the chance to Meet the Makers.
Use these events as a springboard to talk about organic standards.

Use in-store signage, brochures, and social media to engage and inform customers about the benefits of organic.





You can access lots of great retail resources, training and more organic insights by joining Better Food Traders. We provide business support, networking and marketing for independent food traders who sell organic produce. Find out more and sign up on our [Membership page](#).