



# Just the Facts: Impact of Strikes

## Voice of the Customer

### Reaction to the California Grocery Strike of 2003-04

"That becomes a little bit overwhelming when you're trying to get through your daily errands."

"I've got friends who still haven't come back."

"It was really miserable."

"It got us looking different directions and changed how we shop."

"I didn't shop here anymore."

"I don't think anybody won. Everybody lost. They had to find other jobs just to take care of their family."

In 2003, the UFCW, more than 59,000 workers, and three supermarket companies were embroiled in one of the most expensive grocery strikes in U.S. history. After 4½ months, the companies had lost about \$2 billion, customers' shopping patterns were permanently changed, and union members agreed to a contract that was little different than the companies' proposal when the strike started.

By many accounts, both sides lost.

### The Strike's Impact

- The extended strike affected major holiday shopping – Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years and the Super Bowl
- The companies lost about \$2 billion during the strike, instead of being able to invest that money in their businesses and improve shopping for consumers
- About 20-25% of workers did not return after the strike

- Employees said the strike pushed their families to financial ruin, forced them to leave their homes, caused them to leave the industry, and put stress on marriages and families
- According to one of the companies involved, a survey showed that customers were aware of three or four convenient shopping options prior to the strike. After the strike, they could identify seven or eight and relied less on traditional supermarkets

- Many shoppers say they stopped shopping the affected grocers and never entirely went back

### References

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