A Splash Of Flavor In Product Testing Excites New Developments In Beverages For Gen Z Consumers



Emily Kimmins
R&D Lead - Sensory and Consumer Science
The Kraft Heinz Company, Chicago, IL
Correspondence: emily.kimmins@kraftheinz.com



Rebecca Maine
Client Services Director
Curion, Deerfield, IL
Correspondence: rmaine@curioninsights.com

Background

- Curion provides leading CPG companies with product and consumer insights to support critical business decisions.
- Agility is key to product development, marketing and sales for new products.
- The Kraft Heinz Company needed a quick approach for developing new line extensions for the Mio brand that provided formula optimizations & positioning strategies for Gen Z.

Methodology

Curion's BluePrint®

- BluePrint is a consumer co-creation approach where consumers visit and provide feedback on 'multiple stations' (e.g., concept, flavor, packaging, benefits)
- Visit One: 80 Consumers; Three Stations, each with 3 samples per variety following a randomized complete block design.
- Visit Two: Subset of 24 from Visit One; Six, 60-minute Focus Groups of 6 consumers each.



Consumer Recruit

- 50% Female / 50% Male
- Ages: 18 to 24 – Generation Z
- 1/2 Mio Users
- 1/2 General Flavored Water Users

Project Goals include identifying…

- The ideal color for flavored water enhancers.
- The optimal sweetness level.
- The most appealing flavor varieties for now and in the future.
- Ideal packaging.
- Communication around the appeal of flavored water enhancers – why should Gen Z use them.

Station Set-Up

Concept Tastings Visuals Competitive Review Benefits Packaging





Allows consumers to "co-create" an innovate product within reasonable parameters

Which do you prefer?

Station

- How much do you like the color?
- How natural or not natural is the color?
- Ranking based on best fit name



Station

- How much do you like the FLAVOR?
- Sweetness: Just About Right
- Do you detect an aftertaste? If so, how pleasant or unpleasant was it?
- Preference Ranking



Station

- How much do you like the PACKAGE OPTION?
- How well does it communicate the Benefits?
- How well does it communicate the flavor?
- Which set do you prefer?



Qualitative helps us understands the Gen Z Appeal Around Flavored Water Enhancers and Reasons for Liking.

Investigate the "Why's" & "Motivators"

- Other Key Properties That May Have Been Left Out
- Usage Occasions vs Competitors
- Packaging Feedback
- Additional Follow-up Regarding Any Quant Data Surprises

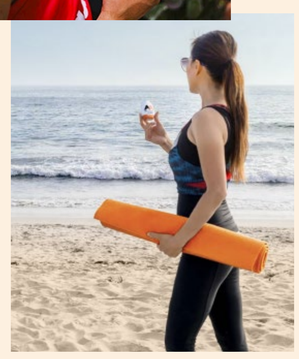
Flavors Make it Better

"You know you have to drink water, stay hydrated. Adding a little sweetness and a little flavor makes it more enjoyable."
"It makes it more relaxing."
"It sort of makes ordinary water into more of a treat."



Familiar Variety

"When you're drinking water all day, you get tired of the same old thing."
"The reason I use these is for the taste. Water has no taste."



Important Learnings

- Fruit forward
- Offers a new twist on familiar favorite
- A main flavor that is recognizable but "modernized" by the infusion of an unexpectedly complementary flavor
- Flavorful but still "light and refreshing"
- Balanced in sweet and sour flavor
- A thirst-quenching experience which doesn't overwhelm the tongue
- Sweet but not too sweet
- Less artificial sweetener tasting and more "natural" sweet

Findings and Benefits of this Approach

A Quicker Way to Obtain Feedback and Understand the "Whys"

- Allows consumers to "co-create" an innovated product within reasonable parameters
- Answers the questions that remain after reviewing quantitative data.
- Provides consumers stimuli to react to on important properties
- Incorporates all facets of the product – concept, components, sensorial properties and packaging

In Two Days, The Blueprint Method Sped Up The Development of New Flavors.

- Feedback on New Flavors
- A checklist for future innovative flavors for Gen Z
- An optimal color level for Mio products
- Direction on ideal sweetness levels
- Reactions and opportunities for new package design
- Positioning ideas



PANG2023_0691
U011 Poster session 2, 23rd Aug 23, 14:00 - 15:15 CEST, Great Hall