curion
Consumer Insights. Delivered.

A better way to spill the tea: A controlled, multi-category consumer experiment to assess optimal ways to elicit open ended feedback in quantitative surveys



Michael Nestrud, PhD
VP, Strategic Accounts
Curion, Chicago, IL
Correspondence:
mnestrud@curioninsights.com



Kristi Bottonari
Sr. Director, Quantitative Research
Ravel, Minneapolis, MN
Correspondence:
kbottonari@curioninsights.com



Carrie Zaunczkowski
Research Director
Curion, Old Bridge NJ
Correspondence:
czanuczkowski@curioninsights.com



Kari Mannina
Director, Global Strategy
Curion, Chicago, IL
Correspondence:
kmannina@curioninsights.com

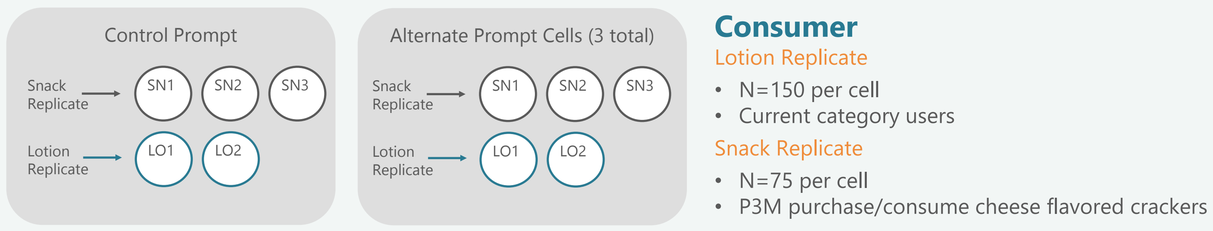
Background

Open Ended Responses are an invaluable tool in quantitative surveys to diagnose concerns unarticulated by quantitative measures. This research hypothesized that, by modifying the prompts for open-ended questions, one can change the context for consumer's responses tailoring them better to the research objectives.

Methodology

- 1 control and 3 alternative prompts were developed in collaboration with our in-house insights team, Ravel.
- Consumers visited one of our facilities in Illinois or New Jersey and completed a CLT
- The questionnaires were typical for their category including JARs and Hedonics.
- We replicated this study across 2 product categories, cheddar flavored snacks & lotions.
- Within each product category, a multi cell design was developed with all products and 1 prompt assigned to each cell.
- Products were presented blind.

Study Design



Consumer

Lotion Replicate
- N=150 per cell
- Current category users

Snack Replicate
- N=75 per cell
- P3M purchase/consume cheese flavored crackers

Within each cell, consumers saw 1 prompt and all products within their replicate.

Open Ended Prompt Design

(Cracker Condition shown; beauty had minor adjustments for category)

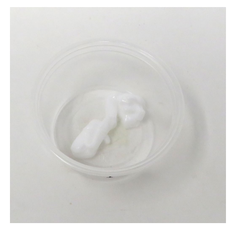
CELL 1: BENCHMARK	CELL 2: FOOD CRITIC or INFLUENCER WRITING REVIEW	CELL 3: RECOMMENDATION TO FRIEND	CELL 4: COMPARE TO IDEAL
Q12a. What do you **like** about these Cheddar Cheese Crackers? Please be as detailed as possible	Q12a. Imagine you're a food critic writing a review about these Cheddar Cheese Crackers for other cracker lovers. Thinking about your overall experience with this sample, please give it a rating from 0-5 stars. ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Q12a. Imagine you're describing this sample of Cheddar Cheese Crackers to a friend who has similar tastes in food as you. What would you say about these crackers to help them decide whether or not to buy it?	Q12a. Think about your ***ideal*** Cheddar Cheese Cracker. How does this sample compare? Please be as detailed as possible.
Q12b. What do you **dislike** about these Cheddar Cheese Crackers? Please be as detailed as possible.	Q12b. Now, write a review of this cracker based on your experience with this sample. Consider as you write your review: **What would you want other cheese cracker lovers to know about these crackers?** You might describe positive or negative aspects, but please be as detailed as possible.	Q12b. What would you tell your friend is especially **appealing** about this Cheddar Cheese Crackers and makes it worth considering? Please be as specific as possible.	Q12b. If you were to redesign this sample, what would you **change or improve**? Please be as specific as possible.
	Q12c. Give your review a title: **What's most important to know?**	12c. What would you tell your friend is **unappealing** about this Cheddar Cheese Crackers and why might it **not** be worth buying? Please be as specific as possible.	Q12c. If you were to redesign this sample, what would you want to **keep the same**? Please be as specific as possible.

Products


Annie's Cheddar Squares


Ritz Cheese Crispers


Cheez-It Original


Suave Advanced Therapy Lotion


Aveeno Daily Moisturizing Lotion

Question 4 (your ideal product) elicited more responses

Total Average Character Count Responses Combined Across Products and w/in Cell	CELL 1 BENCHMARK What do you like/dislike? 2Qs	CELL 2 Food Critic 2Qs	CELL 3 Description to Friend 3Qs	CELL 4 Ideal Cheese Cracker 3Qs
Cheddar Snacks	111	151	174	186
Lotion	78	111	115	120

Question 4 (your ideal product) yielded more comments on appearance but fewer on application and mouthfeel

FOOD LIKES/POSITIVE SPONTANEOUS COMMENTS (Samples combined to analyze across cells)	CELL 1 BENCHMARK What do you like? A	CELL 2 Food Critic / Beauty Influencer B	CELL 3 Description to Friend C	CELL 4 Ideal Cheese Cracker D
FLAVOR/ TASTE	65% bD	57% D	65% D	47%
TEXTURE/ MOUTHFEEL	53% D	47%	55% bD	42%
APPEARANCE	49% Bc	22%	41% B	63% ABC
Thickness	19%	21%	26% D	18%
GENERAL LIKE [NET]	5%	16% AC	10% A	14% A
NOTHING/ NO POSITIVE MENTIONS	4%	20%ABC	6%	4%
BEAUTY				
SCENT MENTIONS	46%	51%	52%	43%
PRODUCT TEXTURE/CONSISTENCY	43%	57% A	62% A	60% A
APPLICATION	41%	48% D	53% AD	37%
SKIN BENEFITS	16% D	21% D	18% D	6%
APPEARANCE	11% BC	1%	4% B	35% ABC
PERFORMANCE	1%	19% AcD	12% Ad	6% A
NOTHING/ NO POSITIVE MENTIONS	4%	12% AD	10% Ad	5%

FOOD Sentiment Findings

- Cell 1 *Benchmark* prompt produces similar results to Cell 3 *Description to a Friend*
- Cell 2 *Food Critic* prompt elicits the fewest positive mentions overall with 20% of consumers not providing any positive mention.
- Cell 4 *Ideal* prompt generates significantly more positive *appearance* comments vs the other prompts.

LOTION Sentiment Findings

- Cell 1 and Cell 4 produce significantly greater overall positive mentions compared to Cells 2 and 3.
- When asked to describe the ideal body lotion (Cell 4) there are significantly more mentions around the texture/consistency and liking the color/look of the product compared to how it was asked in the other cells.
- Describing to a friend brings higher ratings around not being greasy/oily.
- Beauty critic sparks comments around its' performance, working well/effective.

Open ended responses also elicit similar information to quantitative penalty analysis

Some penalties do not show up at all, but others are captured by some or all the prompts.

DISLIKES/NEGATIVE SPONTANEOUS COMMENTS (3 Samples separated within each cell)	CELL 1 BENCHMARK What do you like?			CELL 2 Food Critic			CELL 3 Description to Friend			CELL 4 Ideal Cheese Cracker		
	Annie's A	Ritz B	Cheez-It C	Annie's A	Ritz B	Cheez-It C	Annie's A	Ritz B	Cheez-It C	Annie's A	Ritz B	Cheez-It C
Bland/ Too plain/ Not enough flavor	51% Bc	33%	38%	44% BC	9%	17%	14%	10%	39%	44%	38%	60% ABC
Dislike flavor/cheese flavor/taste	9%	17%	12%	28% BC	30%	23%	32%	40% B	15%	27% a	26% a	26%
Not salty enough	13%	8%	9%	10%	3%	3%	4%	5%	13%	5%	10%	22% Bc
Not crispy/crunchy enough/too soft	5%	1%	3%	9% Bc	-	3%	-	1%	13%	20%	27% A	40% ABc
Dislike color	4%	5%	9%	10%	13%	8%	10%	15%	8%	4%	9%	10%
Dislike size/shape	4%	-	3%	13% AC	5%	3%	1%	13% aBC	5%	1%	4%	6% b

Penalties	
Annies	• Cheddar Flv Weak • Not Crispy Enough • Not Salty Enough

Penalties	
Ritz	• Cheddar Flv Strong • Color Too Dark • Too Salty

Penalties	
Cheeze-It	• Cheddar Flv Weak • Not Salty Enough

DISLIKES/NEGATIVE SPONTANEOUS COMMENTS (3 Samples separated within each cell)	CELL 1 BENCHMARK What do you dislike?		CELL 2 Beauty Critic		CELL 3 Description to Friend		CELL 4 Ideal Body Cream	
	Suave	Aveeno	Suave	Aveeno	Suave	Aveeno	Suave	Aveeno
Sticky	33% b	21%	26% B	10%	32%	22%	22%	18%
Does not absorb well enough	22% B	11%	18% b	9%	19%	10%	32% B	12%
Dislike smell/scent	13%	41% A	10%	30% A	21%	38% A	27%	35%
Can't smell it/ Unscented	1%	21% A	3%	25% A	4%	38% A	13%	34% A

Penalties	
Suave	• Time to absorb too slow • Feel on Skin Too Sticky/Tacky

Penalties	
Aveeno	• Scent Strength Too Weak • Feel on Skin Too Sticky/Tacky • Scent Too Strong

Key Difference:
This sentiment analysis is comparative and penalty analysis is not, thus "Feel on Skin" penalty is difficult to find using this method.

What would we do different?

- The "Ideal" prompt lacked an element of communication compared to the Influencer/Critic and Tell a Friend prompts. We would modify the prompt to add an element of personalization to increase the relevance.
- We would create more ways to compare open ended measures to quant measures beyond penalty.
- We would explore open ended prompts that require comparison across products tasted.

Specific Findings

Classic Prompt:

- Achieves results that mimic the overall quant survey and is similar to tell a friend. Limited external context limits findings.

Critic/Influencer:

- Food Critic and Beauty Influencer Cells have fewer positive mentions overall
- Both star ratings correspond well to Overall Liking and PI (not shown here)

Compare to ideal

- Elicits greatest number of negative responses for both Snacks and Lotion
- Critic and Influencer also has fewest negative responses – perhaps there's a reluctance to express sentiment?

Tell a Friend

- Most similar to classic prompt

Discussion and Conclusions

- Open ended prompts are typically both generic and overlooked.
- However, experienced researchers know that unique and important insights can come from open ended responses.
- By modifying the prompt, you can shift consumers mindsets to better meet your objectives at hand, for example prioritizing visual aspects of a product, or more negative or positive aspects of a product, or to be more verbose, etc.
- The prompts shown here can be used as-is or modified to your specific objectives.
- Do not be afraid to experiment!