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A Target Consumer Profile and Positioning for Promotion of a New Locally Branded Beef Product

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This research examines the consumer profile and positioning for a new locally branded beef product. The research involves 413 beef consumers in California. The target consumers for the new locally branded beef product are approximately one-third of beef consumers in the local area. They are older, married, and from higher dual-income households. The target consumers for the new locally branded beef product are likely to have purchased other branded beef products. Approximately one-half of the beef consumers indicated that they make their meat purchase decisions in the store. The characteristics of beef that are important to the consumers when purchasing beef are price, quality, and appearance of the beef. Therefore, competitive pricing, packaging that highlights the product, and point of purchase material that focuses on the brand concept are very important to the positioning and marketing of the new branded beef product.

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to examine the consumer profile and positioning for a locally branded beef product. In particular, this research examines the marketing potential for a beef product that is produced by the College of Agriculture, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California. The College of Agriculture markets other food products under the Cal Poly label; therefore, the new beef product is a line extension. The proposed name for the line of beef products is Bar P Beef from Cal Poly.

Methodology

This research examines 413 consumers in San Luis Obispo, California. The data for this research was collected through personal interviews using a consumer survey instrument. Questionnaires were administered randomly in San Luis Obispo during February 1999. The respondents represented male or female heads of household. The questionnaires were completed at various times of day and at supermarkets to ensure that the respondents represented typical food shoppers in San Luis Obispo County. The income and age distributions of the sample reflect those of San Luis Obispo County (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991).

The new product exposure to consumers was achieved through the use of concept test marketing methodology (Clancy, Shulman, and Wolf, 1994).

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During the concept test market interview, beef-purchasing information was collected. After the beef purchasing information was collected, the respondent was exposed to the concept, the new Bar P Beef from Cal Poly, in a competitive context (Clancy, Shulman, and Wolf, 1994). The concept was priced, accompanied by a competitive array with the key branded beef competitors priced appropriately for the market. A concept board and a competitive board were used as stimuli. The presence of a competitive set is key to simulating the real world purchasing environment. Purchase interest was evaluated using an 11-point purchase interest scale. Each of the 11 points is coupled with a verbal anchor from: "Certain will buy—99 chances in 100" to "No chance will buy—zero chances in 100" (Clancy, Shulman, and Wolf, 1994).

The target consumers for the new Bar P Beef from Cal Poly were identified as those that indicated a purchase interest of 90 percent or higher. Thirty-five percent of the consumers indicated a positive purchase interest for the new locally branded beef product. The non-target indicated less than a 90 percent purchase interest.

Demographic Profile of Locally Branded Target Consumers

The target consumers for the new Bar P Beef from Cal Poly are older than the non-target consumers. Fifty-three percent of the target consumers are over the age of 40 while 44 percent of the non-target consumers are over the age of 40. The target consumer is more likely to be married and to come from a higher dual-income household income than the non-target consumer is. The non-target consumer is more likely to be employed full-time than the target consumer is (Table 1).

Table 1. Consumer Demographics.

	Target (N=141)	Non-Target (N=264)	Chi Square ^a
Age			
18–21	1.4%	7.5%	
22–24	10.6%	12.5%	
25–29	9.2%	16.6%	
30–34	7.7%	10.2%	
35–39	7.7%	9.1%	
40–44	12.0%	10.6%	
45–49	16.2%	7.5%	
50–54	9.2%	9.1%	
55–59	4.2%	4.9%	
60+	21.8%	12.1%	23.65**
Gender			
Female	57%	55.8%	
Male	43%	44.2%	0.05
Marital Status of Beef Consumers			
Married / Living With Partner	72.5%	51.5%	
Single	23.9%	42.3%	
Widowed	3.5%	2.6%	13.49**
Education			
Grade School Or Less	0.0%	0.4%	
Some High School	2.1%	0.8%	
High School Graduate	15.5%	11.7%	
Some College	33.8%	39.2%	
College Graduate	35.9%	37.4%	
Post-Graduate Work	12.7%	10.6%	4.10
Employment			
Full-Time	50%	60.8%	
Part-Time	17.6%	18.5%	
Not Employed	32.4%	20.8%	6.96**
Dual Income			
Dual-Income	56.8%	47.7%	
Single-Income	43.2%	52.3%	4.91*
Household Income			
Less Than \$34,999	29.0%	41.1%	
\$35,000–59,999	29.0%	30.2%	
\$60,000 or more	42.0%	28.7%	8.42**

^aTests for independence between value-added target and non-target.

*Significant at the 0.10 level.

**Significant at the 0.05 level.

Shopping Behavior of Locally Branded Target Consumers

Most beef purchasers indicated that they do not plan all meals for the week in advance. Only slightly more than one-half of beef purchasers shop with a written list, and approximately one-half of beef consumers make a decision to purchase meat in the store. Therefore, the presentation of the meat and point-of-purchase

material are important in the marketing of beef (Table 2).

The target consumer for the locally branded beef product serves beef approximately the same number of times as the non-target consumer; however, the target consumer spends more each month on beef (Table 3).

The target consumer for the locally branded beef is more likely to have noticed or purchased other brands of beef in the grocery store than the non-target consumer is (Table 4).

Table 2. Shopping Behavior.

	Target (N=141)	Non-Target (N=264)	Chi Square ^a
<i>Plan Meals for the Week</i>			
Plan in advance	27.2%	22.0%	
Plan part in advance	31.9%	29.1%	
Plan one night at a time	38.2%	41.4%	
Other	7.6%	7.5%	1.14
<i>Shop Most Often</i>			
Shop with a written list	57.6%	55.4%	
Shop w/unwritten	25.7%	23.8%	
Shop w/o list	16.7%	20.8%	1.35
<i>The Decision to Buy Meat (multiple possibilities)</i>			
At-home	55.6%	47.9%	3.38
In-the-store	49.6%	55.3%	1.21
Traveling to store	4.9%	5.9%	2.07

Table 3. Beef Purchase Volume.

	Target (N=141)	Non-Target (N=264)	t-test
Dollars spent in a month	\$54.45	\$38.92	3.30**
Times served in a month	8.85	7.94	1.19

**Significant at the 0.05 level, using an independent sample t-test.

*Significant at the 0.10 level, using an independent sample t-test.

Table 4. Other Branded Beef Products.

	Target (N=141)	Non-Target (N=264)	Chi Square ^a
<i>Seen in the Grocery Store</i>			
Harris Ranch	90.8%	79.8%	8.83**
Certified Angus Beef	33.3%	33.1%	2.15
Bill Baily's	2.8%	1.1%	3.51
Black Angus Beef	31.7%	30.8%	0.77
Manning Natural Beef	13.5%	5.2%	10.35**
<i>Purchased in the Grocery Store</i>			
Harris Ranch	81.7%	61.0%	18.77**
Certified Angus Beef	16.3%	13.5%	0.75
Bill Baily's	2.1%	0.0%	7.62**
Black Angus Beef	14.2%	11.7%	0.54
Manning Natural Beef	5.1%	3.4%	3.28

^aTests for independence between value-added target and non-target.

**Significant at the 0.05 level.

*Significant at the 0.10 level.

The Cal Poly brand name appears to have positive brand equity since almost three-fourths of the target consumers have purchased a Cal Poly product in the past, and 81.8 percent of the target rates Cal Poly products excellent or very good (Table 5).

Desirability Ratings of Beef Characteristics

Sixteen characteristics that describe beef were rated on a five-point desirability scale (Clancy, Shulman, and Wolf, 1994) to examine the characteristics of beef that impact a consumer's purchase decision. Physical characteristics and characteristics concerning quality, price, and use of beef were rated. Consumers were asked the following question: "Please rate the following characteristics you look for when shopping for beef as 5=Extremely Desirable; 4=Very Desirable; 3=Somewhat Desirable;

2=Slightly Desirable; and 1=Not At All Desirable." (Table 6).

Analysis of the mean ratings of the interval data indicates that the characteristics are divided into three groups: very to extremely desirable characteristics, somewhat to very desirable characteristics, and slightly to somewhat desirable characteristics. The attributes that are *very to extremely desirable* to beef consumers concern price, value, quality leanness, color, and healthiness. The *somewhat to very desirable* characteristics of beef concern juiciness, premium brand, quick preparation time, boneless, natural and easy-to-clean. The characteristics of beef that received the lowest mean ratings, *slightly to somewhat desirable*, were: family pack, single serving, grass-fed, and certified organic. Therefore, when marketing beef, the characteristics concerning price, value, high-quality grade, leanness, color, and health are important to the consumer.

Table 5. Other Cal Poly Products.

	Target (N=141)	Non-Target (N=264)	Chi Square ^a
<i>Purchased Cal Poly Products</i>			
Yes	72.9%	57.7%	9.27**
<i>Rating of Cal Poly Products</i>			
Excellent	43.8%	19.6%	
Very Good	38.0%	39.7%	
Good	17.4%	36.6%	
Not Very Good	0.8%	3.1%	
Not Good	0.0%	0.9%	42.00**
<i>Cal Poly Products Purchased</i>			
Eggs	52.8%	38.1%	9.00**
Milk	41.55%	29.1%	12.00**
Ice Cream	25.4%	18.7%	3.04
Jams and Jellies	12.0%	10.1%	0.80

^aTests for independence between value-added target and non-target.

**Significant at the 0.05 level.

*Significant at the 0.10 level.

Table 6. Desirability Ratings of Beef Characteristics for the Beef Consumer.

	Mean (N=405)	Standard Error (N=405)
<i>Very to Extremely Desirable</i>		
Reasonably Priced	4.38	.04
Good Value For the Money	4.34	.05
High-Quality Grade	4.24	.05
Is Lean	4.17	.05
Color	4.14	.05
Healthy	4.01	.06
<i>Somewhat to Very Desirable</i>		
Juicy	3.72	.06
Premium Brand	3.63	.05
Quick Preparation Time	3.54	.06
Boneless	3.29	.08
Natural	3.21	.06
Easy-to-Clean-Up	3.19	.07
<i>Slightly to Somewhat Desirable</i>		
Family Pack	2.73	.07
Single Serving	2.57	.07
Grass-Fed	2.39	.07
Certified Organic	2.22	.09

Conclusions

This research indicates that the target consumers for the new locally branded Bar P Beef from Cal Poly are approximately one-third of beef consumers in the local area. They are older, married, and from higher dual-income households. The target consumers for the Bar P Beef from Cal Poly are likely to have purchased other branded beef products. Approximately one-half of the beef consumers indicated that they make their meat purchase decision in the store.

The desirability analysis of beef characteristics indicates that the price, quality, and appearance of beef are important to the purchase decision. It is likely that the importance of these fac-

tors explains why the meat purchase decision is often made in the store. Therefore, competitive pricing, packaging that highlights the product, and point of purchase material focusing on the brand concept are very important to the positioning and marketing of the new Bar P Beef from Cal Poly.

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