

CASE STUDY

identifying opportunity through custom research

Customer Satisfaction

The Issue:

An outbreak of contaminated pet food products created low levels of consumer confidence in pet foods and associated pet food retailers. A national pet food retailer was interested in conducting customer satisfaction research surrounding the incident. The retailer was specifically interested in assessing customer satisfaction with the company's response to the outbreak and understanding whether they were gaining or losing customers due to the incident.

The Solution:

MRSI was asked to conduct a telephone survey among pet owners about the contaminated pet food outbreak. The survey focused on awareness of the incident, whether the consumer was affected, and any impact the incident had on shopping behavior. A representative mix of current and competitive customers was included in order to fully understand the issue.

Business Implications:

Research indicated that nearly all pet owners were aware of the incident, but very few personally experienced issues with contaminated products. While the incident had direct impact on few in the pet community, shoppers as a whole were concerned with the issue at hand. The pet food and supply company was able to leverage this information to build confidence among their consumers and position themselves as a high quality pet food supplier with the best interest of pets as a key messaging platform.

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The Issue:

A national retailer initiated a strategy of including in-store kiosks in several of their stores that offer healthy drinks and refreshments. The goal of this strategy is to enhance the customer experience, add a lifestyle point of differentiation, and generate incremental sales.

However, patronage at some in-store kiosks started to decline and sales were inconsistent across stores. This client requested research that would help them understand customer satisfaction levels for the in-store kiosks as well as better understand shopper purchase behavior at the kiosks.

The Solution:

Kiosk customers were recruited in-store to participate in this study. Invitations provided a website address and a single-use password for accessing an online survey hosted on MRSI's online interviewing platform.

Survey quotas were established by sales tier to secure sample representation for three different levels of in-store kiosk sales performance.

Business Implications:

The research found that satisfaction levels were quite high for the in-store kiosks, regardless of kiosk sales performance. Therefore, factors other than operational effectiveness were driving lower kiosk sales and the sales differences across stores.

The study further enabled this retailer to better understand "destination" visits to the in-store kiosks as compared to kiosk patronage as part of a shopper's typical store shopping behavior.

A higher percentage of destination visits was identified as a quality of better performing kiosks. Store location, trade area demographics, and convenience were drivers of these destination visits as well as key contributors to overall kiosk success.

This research provided insight into customer satisfaction as it related to in-store kiosk performance. It also pointed to non-operational drivers of sales performance as areas of client marketing focus to generate more destination-type visits and patronage.

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Ethnographic Research

The Issue:

A retailer wanted to improve customer loyalty and increase sales for its store brands. The retailer identified “best in class” competitors with strong store brands and wanted to understand how the mix of product offerings, store experience and price impacted customer loyalty and the success of these brands.

The Solution:

MRSI designed a research program that included a series of shop-alongs at key competitor stores across the country. The shop-alongs were conducted with female heads of household that were primary grocery shoppers. These consumers shopped most often at the stores where the research was taking place and they were also frequent purchasers of store brand products. Insight was gathered first-hand on purchase drivers, emotional connection with the store and its brands, and overall store experience.

Business Implication:

The research uncovered that customers truly valued customer service, ambiance, store amenities, and cleanliness; and that it was those key triggers that led to an emotional connection with the store and its brands. Therefore, it was not necessarily just product offering or price, but also this emotional connection that ultimately led to increased customer loyalty and purchase of store brands. The retailer used these research insights to improve the overall customer experience at their stores to achieve loyalty and sales objectives.

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Pricing Research

The Issue:

A major U.S. retail chain offers a number of “store brand” products. These products are generally of comparable quality to national brand products but at a lower price. What is the optimum price for these store brand products that will maximize profits without sacrificing market share?

The Solution:

MRSI designed research to test consumer demand within each product category. This test allowed consumers to view a number of scenarios with store brand products at various price points compared to national brands at fixed price points. Demand curves were created for each product category showing brand choice for the store brand and national brands at different price points for the store brands.

Business Implications:

Some categories demonstrated an opportunity for raising price without sacrificing significant market share while other categories indicated that a lower price would lead to significant increases in market share. The retailer used the findings to adjust prices for several store brand products, resulting in increased profits.

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