

CASE STUDY | VIRTUAL INTERCEPTS

Reading it Right:

Using 20|20's Virtual Intercept hybrid research technology to ensure a better customer product experience

Category:

Pet care

Methods:

Quantitative survey with a qualitative follow-up sampling using a moderated webcam intercept

Summary:

RPG Innovations, an international pet care products company, wanted to ensure that consumers have the best experience possible with a revolutionary new Out! Petcare brand stain and odor cleaning product. Given the highly-innovative concept, the Out! brand team questioned consumer acceptance and understanding:

- Would consumers follow proper use instructions to achieve optimal results?
- How would they feel about the revolutionary application method?
- Did the product seem like a good value compared to conventional alternatives?
- How would consumers assess this?

A first-of-its kind quant-qual research methodology was developed to both measure and more fully understand consumers' reactions, expectations and assumptions, with the intent of driving rapid evolution of the concept. The research team comprised Slaughter Branding of Dallas, TX, Rocket ROI of Boulder, CO and 20|20 Research of Nashville, TN.

Strategic issues:

Out! Petcare is a nationally distributed US brand, and part of a larger family of brands owned by NCH's Retail Products Group (RPG), based in Dallas, Texas. The brand's growth strategy was innovation-driven and, therefore, favored rapid and efficient -- over more traditional -- research approaches to bring products to market. Regardless the speed, products had to be grounded in strong strategic insights. One of the key challenges the brand team presented to the research suppliers was to create a methodology that would eliminate the tradeoffs between time, money and quality in the research process, while still allowing for swift product refinement, packaging and marketing communications development. To gain the needed insights, Moderator Dana Slaughter, Slaughter Branding, suggested combining 20|20 Research's Virtual Intercept tool with a traditional concept survey to unite two typically de-coupled phases of research and provide a complete qualitative and quantitative assessment of the concept in one step.

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Research objectives:

- Measure the concept appeal, purchase intent and uniqueness.
- Explore the “whys” behind the concept ratings (likes, dislikes, etc.).
- Understand whether consumers would follow the product use instructions as intended, and change their attitudes and behaviors in the category accordingly.
- Uncover any packaging and communication changes that would better enable success.

Research design and methods:

The entire survey was conducted over a mere eight hours. The study design consisted of a 15-minute online survey followed by 15-minute webcam intercepts with a selected sub-set of the survey respondents. To ensure the webcam interviews were effective, Slaughter turned to Rocket ROI to provide a high-quality sample of especially articulate and participatory respondents.

In the survey, 100 respondents were shown a product video and concept statement and were asked several typical concept-rating questions. The role of the survey was to directionally measure the concept’s appeal, purchase intent, uniqueness and acceptance of the new application method for the product.

Immediately following the survey, all participants were presented with a link and the option to opt-in to a 15-minute moderated webcam interview with Slaughter. Twenty-five interviews were completed in the eight-hour window using 20|20’s Virtual Intercept platform. The interviews were aimed at understanding drivers, barriers, and believability for the concept, and exploring whether consumers would follow the product application instructions fully.

Results:

The survey affirmed that consumers found the concept to be both appealing and unique (nirvana for innovation!). However, the webcam interviews revealed a lack of willingness to follow the correct application instructions, which would ultimately undermine the product’s effectiveness and value and lead to consumer disappointment in practice. These insights were critical to driving changes in the concept including packaging design, on-pack communication and pricing strategy to better ensure product success. The ability to get behind the survey responses via the webcam interviews provided the richness that took the team from “nirvana” to “retooling” in the span of two days instead of a more typical two-month process for both quant and qual concept work. And, it was all accomplished with about one-third of the traditional research budget.

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Results Continued:

"We are always looking for new research methodologies that allow us to uncover insights in a more effective manor but at less cost and more quickly," said Matt Smith, vice president, Marketing for RPG. "Consumers were very engaged with the process and were able to easily see and react to the stimulus presented. It also seamlessly allowed for us to engage directly with the moderator during a 1:1 video interview to add additional questions throughout the process."

"When clients present me with challenges of 'breaking tradeoffs' in the research process, that means innovation in the design – leveraging new technologies, combining previously de-coupled methodologies or both," Slaughter said. "Completing the study in such a short time and on budget is probably success in and of itself given the cycle time and budget savings we delivered. But what was really powerful was being able to retool the concept so quickly because we had a complete picture of the issues all in one research step. The strategy for RPG to undertake this research project was bold -- and maybe a little risky. The Out! marketing and insights team went out on a limb to get the rewards and now we have repeated this methodology in other studies where it continues to prove its benefits."