Blueberry
Marketing & Sensory Research

Case Study: **Understanding Core and Category Consumer Impact of an Ingredient Change**

Business problem

Can we reduce overall cheese content by 10% in our cracker product without negatively impacting consumer perception?

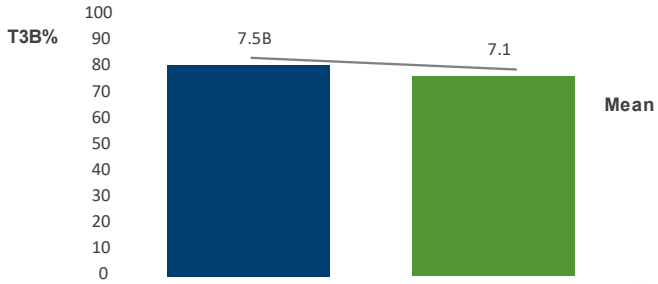
Our approach

Test the current product against the test product with both medium and heavy brand consumers to determine if consumers equally accept the test product.

What we learned

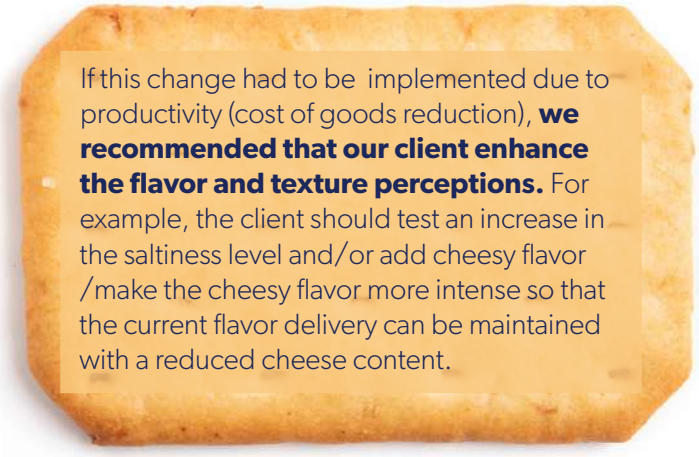
Heavy brand users were able to identify differences between the current and test products.

Core Users are likely to notice a 10% reduction in cheese content and do not like the cracker with reduced cheese as much as Control.



9- Like Extremely 1- Dislike Extremely	Control (A)	Test 1 (10%Less Cheese) (B)
Top 3 Box %	81	76
Middle 3 Box %	18	20
Bottom 3 Box %	1	5a

Though heavy brand consumers purchased the client's product frequently, they also purchased competitive product just as frequently. Since the proposed ingredient change resulted in a slightly less satisfactory product, **if implemented, these flavor and texture differences present a risk to the franchise and may erode perceptions of the brand over time.**



If this change had to be implemented due to productivity (cost of goods reduction), **we recommended that our client enhance the flavor and texture perceptions.** For example, the client should test an increase in the saltiness level and/or add cheesy flavor /make the cheesy flavor more intense so that the current flavor delivery can be maintained with a reduced cheese content.

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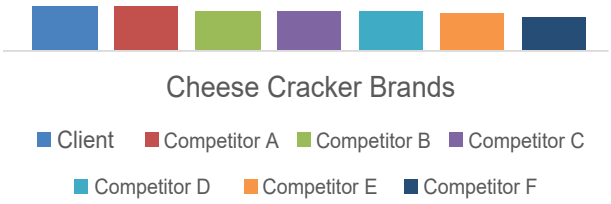
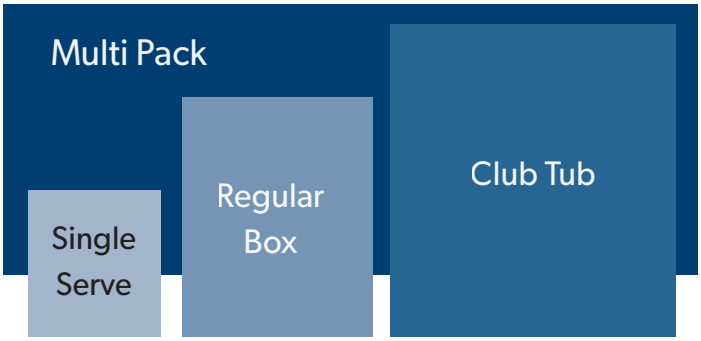
Why it's important

Core Users are lovers of many cracker varieties



They purchase the Product in a variety of packaging formats



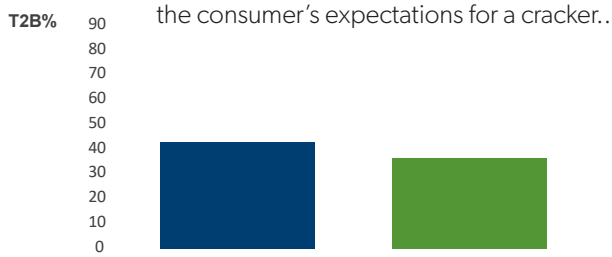
And while these users indicate brand loyalty by purchasing ~8 bags per year, there is a potential brand switch threat.

Our Client *	100
Competitor A	75
Competitor B	69
Competitor C	59
Store Brand	40

To combat brand switch threat, it is essential that our Client delivers a cheesy cracker that meets/exceeds cracker and brand expectations of Core Users.

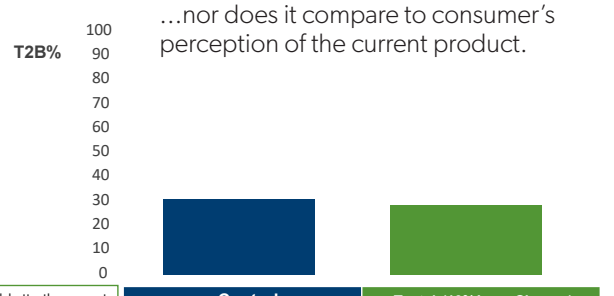
While the test product was liked among both medium and heavy brand consumers, it consistently ranked slightly lower than the current product in all product categories, including cheesiness, saltiness, texture, and aroma. Specifically, the overall flavor, cheesy flavor and saltiness were all too weak and these perceptions negatively impacted overall liking.

Reducing the cheese content does not meet the consumer's expectations for a cracker…



5-Much better than expected 1-Much worse than expected	Control (A)	Test 1 (10% Less Cheese) (B)
Top 2 Box %	41	34
Same as Expected %	30	28
Bottom 2 Box %	29	38a

…nor does it compare to consumer's perception of the current product.



5-Much better than current 1-Much worse than current	Control (A)	Test 1 (10% Less Cheese) (B)
Top 2 Box %	29	27
Same as Expected %	37b	28
Bottom 2 Box %	35	45a