Blueberry
Marketing & Sensory Research

Case Study: **What Happens When Ingredient Changes Result in Two Different but Equally-Liked Options**

Business Problem

Our client is considering a different formulation for its Chipotle Veggie Chip and wants to ensure there are no discernible differences between the reformulations and Current.

The reformulations include one prototype using a new flavor house and three prototypes using reduced seasoning levels from the current flavor house.

Our Approach

- Compare the current formulation to the revised prototypes to determine if consumers equally accept any/all formulations.

- Determine any optimization priorities for the new formulations to ensure they deliver as well as Current.

- Methodology: a Central Location Test among ~150 Chipotle Veggie Chip Users.

What We Learned

Insight 1:

Although some attributes are negatively impacted as seasoning levels decline, other attributes show minimal difference between formulations.

Seasoning Dependent Attributes

- Appearance
- Potato flavor
- Saltiness
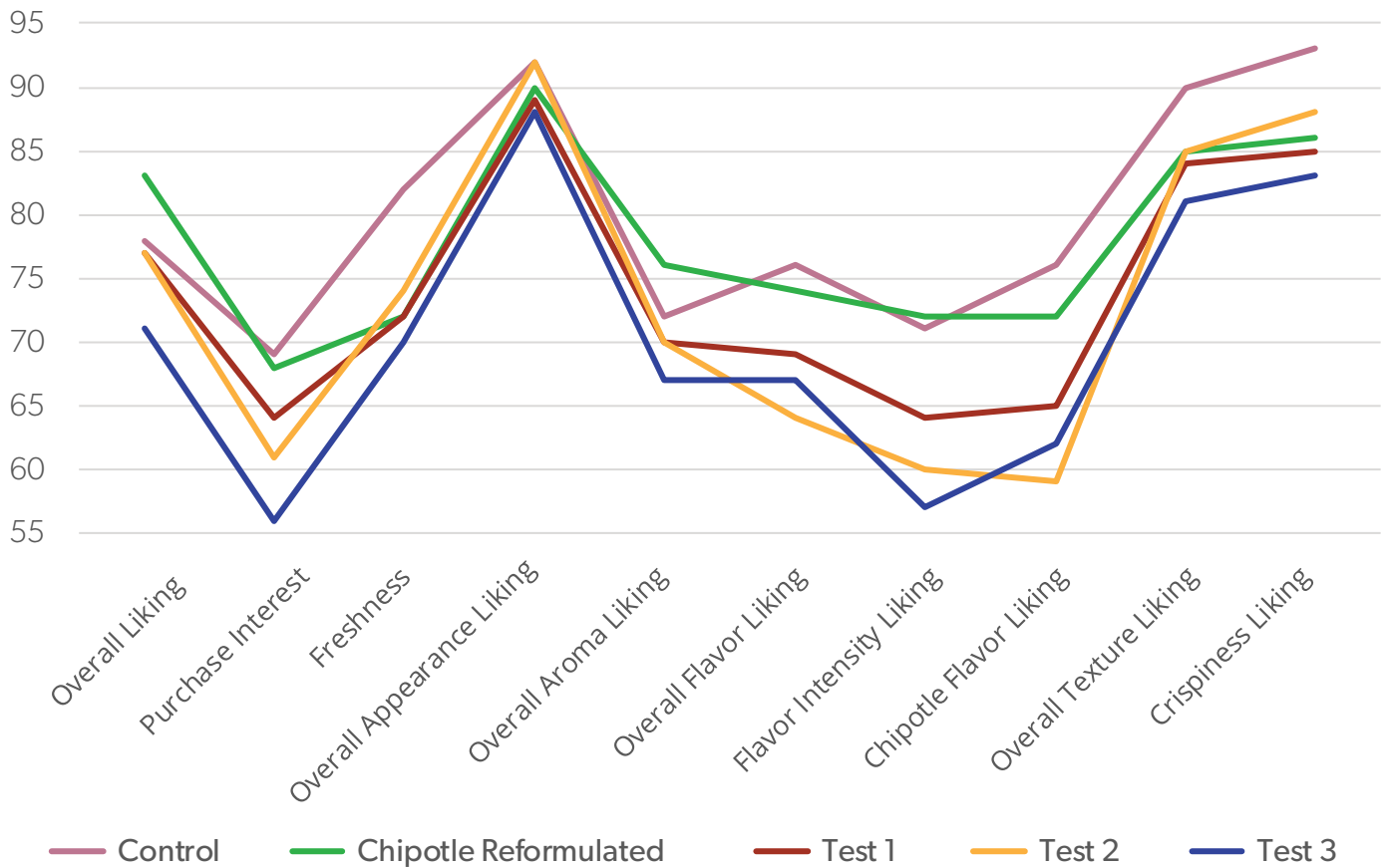- Flavor intensity
- Overall preference

Consistent Across Formulations

- Freshness
- Not Greasy
- Texture
- Crispiness
- Aroma

Insight 2: Chipotle Reformulated and Test 1 most closely align with the Control flavor profile.

Legend:
- Control
- Chipotle Reformulated
- Test 1
- Test 2
- Test 3

X-axis categories: Overall Liking, Purchase Interest, Freshness, Overall Appearance Liking, Overall Aroma Liking, Overall Flavor Liking, Flavor Intensity Liking, Chipotle Flavor Liking, Overall Texture Liking, Crispiness Liking

Insight 3: There is room for improvement in Control and in the top two formulations.

Control
Overall flavor too strong

Potato flavor too mild

Vegetable flavor too mild

Chipotle flavor too strong

Too salty

Chipotle Reformulated
Overall flavor too strong

Potato flavor too mild

Vegetable flavor too mild

Chipotle flavor too strong

Test 1
Not enough visible seasoning

Overall flavor too mild

Overall flavor too strong

Potato flavor too mild

Chipotle flavor too mild

Chipotle flavor too strong
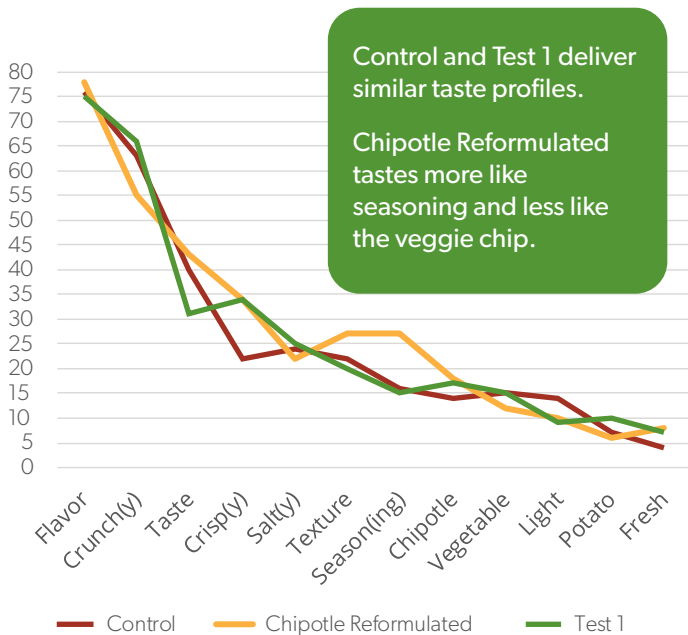
Vegetable flavor too mild

The Fork in the Road

Control, Test 1 and Chipotle Reformulated are equally liked, however Chipotle Reformulated has a noticeably different flavor profile. What's going on?
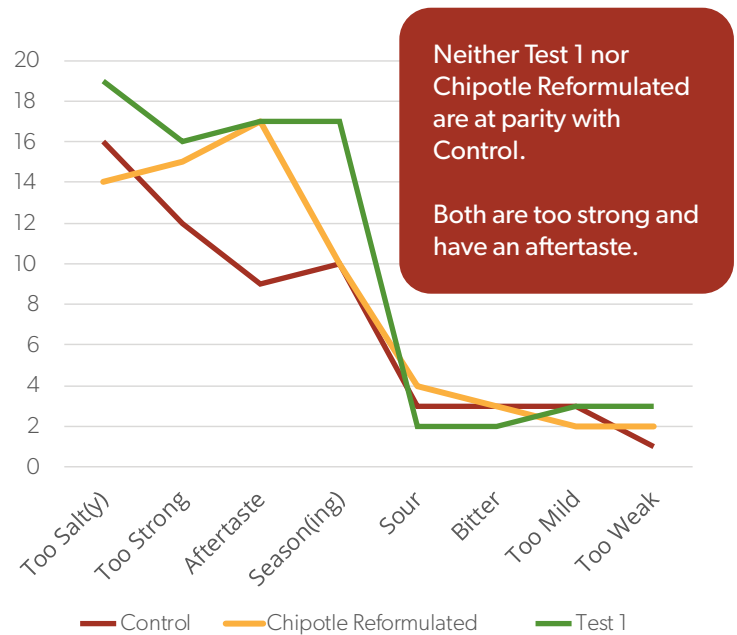
Digging into the open-end data, we gained a clearer picture of what was driving consumer preferences.

Positive Mentions

> Control and Test 1 deliver similar taste profiles.
>
> Chipotle Reformulated tastes more like seasoning and less like the veggie chip.

Y-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80

X-axis categories: Flavor, Crunch(y), Taste, Crisp(y), Salt(y), Texture, Season(ing), Chipotle, Vegetable, Light, Potato, Fresh

Legend: Control, Chipotle Reformulated, Test 1

Negative Mentions

> Neither Test 1 nor Chipotle Reformulated are at parity with Control.
>
> Both are too strong and have an aftertaste.

Y-axis: 0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20

X-axis categories: Too Salt(y), Too Strong, Aftertaste, Season(ing), Sour, Bitter, Too Mild, Too Weak

Legend: Control, Chipotle Reformulated, Test 1

Insights to Action

Although Control, Chipotle Reformulated and Test 1 are equally liked for nearly all measures, Chipotle Reformulated is significantly better optimized for vegetable flavor over Control and Test 1 and better optimized for chipotle flavor over Test 1.

Still, there's risk in switching to Chipotle Reformulated, as it does not emulate the current Veggie Chip profile in the same manner in which Test 1 does. Flavor differences detected in Chipotle Reformulated could indicate that this formula is more "potato-chip" like, thereby potentially alienating current consumers.