

Category: *Personal Care Product Manufacturer*

Methods: *In-The-Moment Research; Diary Panel; Tracking Research; Market Assessment, Ethnography*

Summary

A personal-care-product manufacturer wanted to understand and quantify consumers' personal hygiene routines in order to identify new opportunities or marketing campaigns for an existing product. To obtain this level of detail, Decision Analyst recommended that diary research be conducted "in-the-moment." Consumers were asked to report on their daily personal hygiene routines over a 90-day period as they related to a specific product in our client's product line. Respondents were recruited to record their hygiene activities right after they were completed throughout the entire day. The goal was to gather as much in-the-moment information as possible in order to reduce recall bias.

Strategic Issues

Respondent recall bias is an issue that impacts all survey research relying on past experiences, yet it is still frequently used within primary survey research. Respondents struggle to recall with any useful accuracy how many products they purchased within a specific category in the past 30 days, much less how many times (and where, when, and why) they interact with a product. In-the-moment research attempts to remove recall bias by having respondents record their responses to critical questions as the events happen (or immediately after they happen), when recall is strongest.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of the research was to quantify personal-hygiene activities, where a representative group of respondents used (or could have used) the product category. Additional objectives included the following:

- Gain an ethnographic understanding of consumers' daily hygiene habits from a large number of consumers over a long period of time.
- Identify possible usage occasions for nonusers of the client's products.



- Identify popular usage occasions.
- Identify new marketing and advertising opportunities.

This was the first time this particular client utilized a diary methodology, so they wanted to ensure the research was reliable, so secondary objectives included:

- Identify the percentage of diary entries that were in-the-moment.
- Understand how diary participation rates changed over the course of 90 days.

Research Design and Methods

The survey was conducted entirely online in two phases: an online screener followed by a 90-day online diary.

Phase One: Online Screener

The initial phase used an online screener to identify general population respondents who were willing to participate in the diary study for 90 days. Product category buyers and nonbuyers were identified in the sample, in order to track any possible differences that might occur in the data. Since the respondents were being asked to record their daily hygiene activities for 90 days, some attrition was likely to occur. To account for this attrition, more respondents were recruited into the diary panel than required.

Phase Two: Online Diary

The second phase was the 90-day online diary research itself. Respondents were reminded daily to log into the online survey and input their personal hygiene occasions for the day. For every possible hygiene occasion, respondents answered a series of 10 questions on what, where, why, and the frequency of their daily habits as they related to the product category. Respondents could log in and complete the short survey from any device, including any smartphone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer.

To encourage participation throughout the 90-day period, email or text reminders were sent to the respondents on a daily basis. The respondents who reported their daily activities for each week received



an incentive, plus they were entered into a weekly drawing. Since the project was overrecruited from the beginning, participants who fell out did not need to be replaced.

Results

The research was a success. Decision Analyst was able to successfully quantify several hundred thousand possible product usage occasions over the course of a 90-day period.

The client was able to identify possible usage occasions for nonpurchasers of their product, and the company is creating a marketing campaign targeted towards the nonusers. The client was also able to identify high-usage occasions and is adjusting their marketing communications to include those high-usage occasions.

As for the secondary objectives, about two-thirds of all diary entries were considered to be in-the-moment, which was more than originally forecast. Due to the manner in which the respondents were screened and the incentives were structured, participation rates remained consistent over the course of the 90-day period. While a multiple-entries-per-day diary format was a new approach for Decision Analyst and for the client, the method turned out to be very useful and informative in the end.