SPECIAL TECHNIQUES IN SALES PREFERENCE STUDIES

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The purchasing power of Mrs. Meat Buyer, indeed, plays a significant role in the decisions she executes in selecting foods and other products for her family. The importance of efficiently allocating the dollar to meet this family's demands for wholesome, high quality and yet economical food products is therefore a factor which should be considered when measuring consumer preferences of various meats and meat products. It is true that many preference studies not considering the sales approach,have however, enriched our knowledge and understanding of specific phenomena of consumer behavior. Yet, one must remember an old but reliable principle. "Whatsoever a man saith" can only be interpreted as an intent and not an action. It is the actual monetary transfer which insures a decision when investigating a reaction which may be affected by dollars and cents.

It is the purpose of this presentation to discuss the various sales techniques - their purposes, end results and major advantages, which have been studied in the past several years. To more effectively condense my report, I have prepared the following chart to illustrate the types of sales studies encountered and the specific characteristics of each. Certainly, many good projects do not appear in this discussion. I have attempted only to portray each type of sales technique with one example which is typical, but not necessarily the ultimate for the classification it represents.

The classification of the various techniques is based on the following four criteria:

1. Type of consumer participation
2. Sample display
3. Nature of price differential
4. Extent of follow-up interviews after the initial purchase

TECHNIQUES USED IN CONSUMER PREFERENCE SALES STUDIES

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TECHNIQUE	EXAMPLE	PURPOSE	RESULTS	ADVANTAGES
1. Random participation Random sample display Constant price differential Semi-Follow-up interview	Washington State "Consumer Preference of Quality in Beef Cuts".	To study preference of: A. USDA grades vs Packer brands. B. Color of lean and fat. C. Beef Quality. D. Prices of USDA grades.	1. No preference for grades vs. brands. 2. Dark beef not preferred. 3. Off-colored fat not preferred. 4. Lean beef preferred. 5. Consumers lacked knowledge of beef quality.	1. Mail interview requires a minimum of time. 2. Any evidence of test is kept obscure. 3. Allows for large scale sampling.
2. Random participation Samples sorted and identified Constant price differential No follow-up interview	Iowa State University "What do Consumers Want from Pork?".	To determine the preference for muscling in pork chops.	1. Sorting of pork cuts at retail level may be advantageous. 2. Consumers indicated a preference for larger meatier pork chops.	1. A specific question can easily be asked to a large sampling group.
3. Selected participation Random sample display Constant price differential Complete follow-up interview	University of Missouri "Consumer Preference for beef in relation to finish".	To determine: A. Amount of fat preferred. B. Criteria for selecting beef by consumer. C. Preference of beef before & after consumption.	1. Lean, lower grade beef was preferred. 2. Consumers lacked knowledge of beef quality.	1. A method of evaluating consumer's ability to learn factors of meat selection. 2. Provide a personal contact between consumer and researcher.
4. Random participation Semi-random sample display. Fluctuating price differential Complete follow-up interview	University of Wis. "The consumer acceptance of pork marbling as related to price".	To measure the acceptance of leanness & marbling in pork when price differentials exist.	1. Lean chops were preferred even at wide price differences. 2. Taste reactions did not carry over to purchase counter.	1. Cross elasticity of price may be studied. 2. Preference measured after consumption.

In summary, I have listed five factors for consideration in measuring consumer preferences when the sales approach is a constituent of the study.

1. Purchasing power aids in identifying a preference.
2. Sales studies, when compared to non-sales techniques, require additional time, thought and planning to insure for accurate results and finally for intelligent interpretation.
3. Follow-up interviews and consumer palatability tests are necessary to provide answers for more precise conclusions.
4. Repeat sales are important to establish continuity in consumer purchasing and consumption preferences.
5. Sales studies allow for sampling on a large scale. This in turn provides greater confidence in predicting the actions of an entire population.

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MR. BIRMINGHAM: The next speaker, Dick Seaton, Quartermaster Food & Container Institute, will present the next paper.

MR. R. SEATON: We do have several hand outs - where we do not have enough hand outs for the individual members, we will have enough for each university that is here.

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