Research Proposal

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Research Proposal

• Written statement of research design that includes statement explaining study’s purpose
• Detailed outline of procedures associated with particular methodology
Request for Proposal

Background: Our low-salt and unsalted crackers now account for 7.2 percent of total cracker sales, providing $119.3 million in sales and 88.6 million pounds in volume in 1992. The low-salt and unsalted crackers vary in importance to the parent brand. Our established entry into the low-salt and unsalted category now accounts for 23 percent of total brand volume, while our most recent entry accounts for 9 percent of total brand volume. However, with the recent success of our low-salt crackers, competitive entries have begun to appear.

In order to continue to build our low-salt cracker business and to effectively defend these brands against new competitive entries, a better understanding of consumers' usage of low-salt and unsalted crackers and their attitudes is needed.

Objective: The objective of this research is to better understand the overall dynamics (i.e., behavioral and attitudinal) of the low-salt/unsalted cracker market. More specifically, the research will help answer the following key marketing questions:

- What are the behavioral (purchase and usage) dynamics within the low-salt/unsalted cracker market?
- What is the attitudinal framework for low-salt/unsalted products?
- What demographic and attitudinal factors are best associated with product usage?

Sampling Frame: Minimum sample of 150 users (past 3 months) of each of the following low-salt/unsalted brands;

- Krispy (unsalted tops).
- Premium (both low-salt and unsalted tops).
- Ritz.
- Town House.
- Wheat Thins.
- Zestas (unsalted tops).

Timing Selection Criteria: The study should be completed within 20 weeks of its starting point. Proposals submitted will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Supplier skills/expertise  30
Comprehensiveness  25
Technical competency  30
Cost  15
Marketing Research Project Proposal

Category: Low-salt crackers
Project: Market study
Objectives: In order to continue to build low-salt/unsalted cracker business and to effectively defend these brands against new competitive entries, a better understanding of consumers' usage of low-salt/unsalted crackers and their attitudes toward low-salt/unsalted crackers is needed.

Research Method: A two-phase research study (screening and follow-up) will be conducted among households who are members of the supplier's mail panel.

Screening Phase: In order to address the marketing questions outlined above, it will be necessary to obtain a basic sample of low-salt/unsalted cracker users and readable samples (N = 150 in follow-up phase) for each of the brands of interest.

Sampling Frame: Screening questionnaires will be mailed to a nationally balanced sample of 36,000 panel member households. Within each household, men and women, age 18 or older, will complete the questionnaire.

Follow-Up Phase: In the follow-up phase, an extensive self-administered survey will be mailed to individuals having certain characteristics (i.e., category/specific brand usage) as identified in the screening phase.

Analysis: Analysis will include standard cross-tabular analyses plus a number of multivariate statistical techniques (specifically a segmentation analysis) in order to help answer key research questions. For example,
1. What is the underlying need structure within the low-salt cracker market?
2. How is the market segmented in terms of usage dynamics?
3. What are the (particular brand's) strengths and weaknesses among its franchise?

Action Standard: Not applicable.

Cost: The cost for conducting the study as specified within this proposal will be $121,500 ± 10% ($28,500 for screener and $93,000 for follow-up). This cost includes sample selection, questionnaire production, first-class postage (out and back), reminder postcards (follow-up study only), respondent incentives (follow-up study only), data processing (up to 12 cards and 6 open ends), four banners of tabulations at the follow-up phase, all necessary multivariate statistical analyses, and one presentation or report.

Timing: Scheduling for the study will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks Elapsed (from start of field, August 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screeners returned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase I data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase II commences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase II data collection ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase II data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft presentation available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prototypical Marketing Research Project Proposal

Brand: New products

Project: Snack foods—Concept test

Background and Objectives: The Brand Group has developed twelve new snack-food product ideas. The objectives of this research are to assess consumer interest in the concepts and establish priorities for further development.

Research Method: Central location concept testing will be conducted in geographically dispersed markets. Each of the concepts plus one test control concept will be evaluated by a total of 200 men and 200 women. The following age quotas will be used for both male and female groups within the sample:
- 18-34 = 50%
- 35-49 = 25%
- 50 & over = 25%

Each respondent will evaluate a maximum of six concepts. Order of presentation of concepts will be rotated throughout to avoid position bias.

Information to be Obtained: This study will provide the following information to assist in concept evaluation:

- Category usage
- Believability
- Purchase interest
- Importance of main point
- Uniqueness
- Demographics

Action Standard: In order to identify concepts warranting further development, top-box purchase-intent scores will be compared to the top-box purchase-intent scores achieved by the top 20 percent of the nonbranded concepts tested in earlier concept studies. (The top 20 percent of the concepts achieved top-box purchase-intent scores of 13 percent among all respondents and 16 percent among user groups.) Rank order of concepts purchase-intent scores and scores on the uniqueness, believability, and importance ratings will also be considered in the evaluation and prioritization of concepts for further development.

Material Requirements: Fifty copies of each concept (color print format)

Cost: The cost of this research will be $25,000 ± 10 percent.

Timing: This research will adhere to the following schedule:
- Fieldwork 1.5 weeks
- Computer tape 1 week
- Topline 2 weeks
- Final report 3 weeks

Selected Supplier: WB Research Associates, Inc.
Outline of an Extremely Detailed Research Proposal

1. LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL
   
   The purpose of this letter is to establish some rapport between the client and the research proposal writer. It briefly identifies what is to follow.

2. INTRODUCTION
   
   This section supplies background material and introduces the general context of the research problem.

3. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE
   
   In academic research studies, part of the proposal will include a review of the basic research literature.

4. PROBLEM STATEMENT OR RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
   
   This section documents the information needed to be met and/or the specific marketing decision area to be clarified by the research. It explains the research in measurable terms and defines the standards of what the research should accomplish.

5. METHODS
   
   This section describes the activities to be employed to achieve the desired results. The research design will be discussed in this section. The questionnaire or types of questions to be asked are discussed in this section. Sometimes the design and method of sampling will be discussed in this section, and on other occasions it will be in a separate section.

6. SAMPLE DESIGN AND FIELDWORK
   
   This section explains how the sampling units will be selected and who is responsible for implementing the sample selection in the field.

7. EQUIPMENT
   
   The equipment to be used in the study is described here.

8. EVALUATION
   
   This section presents a plan for determining performance criteria and determining the degree to which objectives are met.
Outline of an Extremely Detailed Research Proposal

9. **BUDGET**
   
   Clearly delineated costs appear in this section.

10. **TIMING**
   
   A statement indicating the schedule of when various activities will be completed is provided here.

11. **PERSONNEL**
   
   Which research personnel will be working on the research project is often a question that clients ask. Information about the researchers and their backgrounds is sometimes included in the proposal.

12. **APPENDIXES**
   
   Many technical appendixes, including information such as the questionnaire, a description of exploratory research necessary, or statistical formulae, will be represented here.
An Abbreviated Version of a Research Proposal for the IRS

Purpose of the Research
The general purpose of the study is to determine the taxpaying public's perceptions of the role of the IRS in administering the tax laws. In defining the limits of this study, the IRS identified the study areas to be addressed. A careful review of those areas led to the identification of the following specific research objectives:

1. To identify the extent to which taxpayers cheat on their returns, their reasons for doing so, and approaches that can be taken to deter this kind of behavior.
2. To determine taxpayers' experience and level of satisfaction with various IRS services.
3. To determine what services taxpayers need.
4. To develop an accurate profile of taxpayers' behavior relative to the preparation of their income tax returns.
5. To assess taxpayers' knowledge and opinions about various tax laws and procedures.

If you were calling the IRS for assistance and someone was not able to help you immediately, would you rather get a busy signal or be asked to wait on hold?
- Busy signal
- Wait on hold
- Neither
- Don't know

During the interview a self-administered questionnaire will be given to the taxpayer to ask certain sensitive questions, such as

Have you ever claimed a dependent on your tax return that you weren't really entitled to?
- Yes
- No

Sample Design
A survey of approximately 5,000 individuals, located in 50 counties throughout the country will provide the database for this study. The sample will be selected on a probability basis from all households in the continental United States.

Eligible respondents will be adults over the age of 18. Within each household an effort will be made to interview the individual who is most familiar with completing the federal tax forms. When there is more than one taxpayer in the household, a random process will be used to select the taxpayer to be interviewed.

Data Gathering
The fieldworkers of a consulting organization will conduct the interviews.

Data Processing and Analysis
Standard editing and coding procedures will be utilized. Simple tabulation and cross-tabulations will be utilized to analyze the data.

Report Preparation
A written report will be prepared, and an oral presentation of the findings will be made by the research analyst at the convenience of the IRS.

Budget and Time Schedule
Any complete research proposal should include a schedule of how long it will take to conduct each stage of the research and a statement of itemized costs.

Research Design
The survey research method will be the basic research design. Each respondent will be interviewed in his or her home. The personal interviews are generally expected to last between 35 and 45 minutes, although the length will vary depending on the previous tax-related experiences of the respondent. For example, if a respondent has never been audited, questions on audit experience will not be addressed. Or, if a respondent has never contacted the IRS for assistance, certain questions concerning reactions to IRS services will be skipped.

Some sample questions that will be asked are:

Did you or your spouse prepare your federal tax return for (year)?
- Self
- Spouse
- Someone else

Did the federal income tax package you received in the mail contain all the forms necessary for you to fill out your return?
- Yes
- No
- Didn't receive one in the mail
- Don't know