

IN-CLASS EXPERIMENTS FOR JULY 14

Please select one of the following projects opportunities for in-class experiments. For the project you choose, please:

1. Make specific hypotheses (e.g., 50% of consumers can taste the difference between Coke and Pepsi but 80% can taste the difference between a store brand a name brand);
2. Design and decide on the specifics of how to carry out the experiment (e.g., how much water should be used to "cut" the juice);
3. Perform the experiments and record results;
4. Analyze your results; and
5. Discuss your results. Were you surprised by what you found? Are there any apparent confounds or problems? (E.g., it was not possible to obtain fuel additive bottles without labels identifying the brand). Are there any managerial implications?

NOTE: Realistically speaking, you will probably not be able to collect enough data to make statistically significant determinations, but you might pretend, for purposes of analysis, that you had a larger sample. The "big picture" objective of this project is to appreciate the "nuts and bolts" of performing an experiment.

Teams:

1. **Cola Taste**—can consumers reliably differentiate between brands? Can consumers correctly identify the provided Coca Cola, Pepsi, or store brand cola drink? (Supplies are available from the instructor). Is there any relationship between the ability to taste differences and how strongly a person feels that one brand is better than another?
2. **Orange Juice**—can consumers differentiate "real" orange juice from watery concoctions? How much you can "cut," by adding water (or some other kind of juice), the provided orange juice before consumers can taste the difference? You should think carefully about how you want to ask people about differences. If you tell people outright that water has been added to one, they may know what to "look" for, and may perform better than the regular consumer who is given no such notice. Instead, you may want to ask something like "Which of these two orange juice brands do you prefer? Why?" or "Do you taste any difference between these two? Please describe."
3. **Fuel Additives**—how do consumers select a "quality" product? How do people perceive and evaluate two different brands of fuel additives based on the container?
4. **Fruit Selection Supermarket Shopping Strategy**. NOTE: This assignment probably cannot be performed on campus, so you will need instead to arrange to meet at some other time at a supermarket of your choice. Please (1) identify a fruit category in which in which the quality of the goods tends to vary; and (2) attempt to determine any "rules" used by consumers to decide which pieces are best. To do so, you may want to employ both (1) observation, where you merely look at consumers (as discretely as possible) and see if you can infer what they look for; and (2) brief interviews, wherein you ask people which criteria they might use.
5. **Cranberry Juice**—or is it? To what extent can consumers taste the difference between plain cranberry juice and cranberry juice mixed with apple juice? How much, if any,

apple juice can you add before the consumer can taste the difference? Which tastes better? Please see the orange juice experiment description for cautions.

6. **Cosmetics.** How many different shades are needed to provide a "full" line of red lipstick? What do people believe, and what is the reality? (Hint: You may find some interesting results comparing responses from males and females!) If possible, have a team member check out in a store how many shades exist in this line. Alternatively, you may want to bring some cosmetics samples to class and ask different groups to identify the specific color. Does one group tend to use more precise color terms than another?
7. **How long does it take to decide?** In the campus convenience store, please select one or more product categories. How long does it take each consumer to choose brand, flavors, or other product variations? How many consumers actually examine more than one brand or package?
8. **Product Distinctiveness.** Please (1) go to a store of your choice (e.g., University Book Store, Union Shop) and examine several product categories (e.g., canned peas, soft drinks [or, more specifically, fruit juice based soft drinks], shoe polish, yogurt, table sugar, tortillas, felt tip pens, or loose leaf binders) and (2)
 - a. Discuss any apparent ploys used by the manufacturers to get their products noticed among competing products;
 - b. Discuss what the manufacturer might want to communicate through its packaging strategy (e.g., value, performance, ease of use);
 - c. Think about the packaging that you might want to use in introducing a new brand within that category. What would be your objectives with respect to your packaging choices, and might there be any conflicts between these objectives?
 - d. Consider the possible implications of the above issues for the retailer.
9. **How dangerous do smokers and non-smokers believe smoking to be?** One interesting study suggests that smokers actually have a higher estimate of the amount of time that smoking reduces one's life than do non-smokers. Does this hold up among college students? Are there other variables—such as major, gender, or ethnic group—that influence this estimate? Alternatively, you could ask smokers and non-smokers to estimate what percentage of the U.S. population smokes. (People often assume that more people are like themselves than really are).
10. **How knowledgeable are consumers about food contents?** Do women tend to have more accurate estimates of the calorie content of a McDonald's quarter-pounder with fries than do men? You might also see if there are group differences in the relative estimates of regular and "super sized" meals. (Feel free to compare on a variable other than gender and/or with a product other than hamburgers—e.g., are there differences in calorie estimates of pizza between those who eat this food more than once a week and those who do not?)
11. **Experiment of your choice.** Please design and carry out any ethical experiment on consumers that would be of interest to some marketer.

At the end of class, each person should turn in a one paragraph discussion, in his or her own handwriting, of what you found most interesting. You can write up the results individually for up to 10 points of extra credit.

HAVE FUN!