



How Research Helped King's Hawaiian Decide to Enter a New International Market

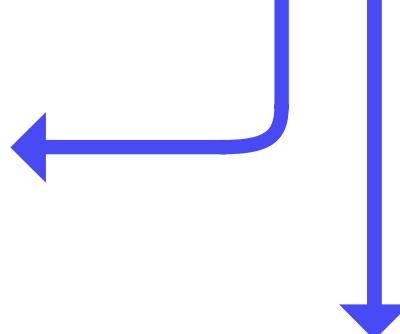
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As a brand entering a new market, we have one chance to make a good first impression. So we find it imperative to understand as much as possible in potential new markets prior to expansion. While brands can quickly understand market sizing and potential, understanding consumer behavior, preferences, and finding unique opportunities for your brand to truly win requires significant up-front effort.

Mark Luker
Brand Manager, King's Hawaiian

The Challenge

Many consumers in the United States are familiar with King's Hawaiian, a family-owned bakery business known for its signature sweet rolls and other baked consumer packaged goods. However, this wasn't always the case. Historically, the company was known on a more regional and niche basis. But over the last decade, the company has had success growing its presence throughout the United States.



Now, with national brand recognition and strong household penetration, the company is looking at further growth through product innovation and entrance into new geographical markets. One country in particular was identified as a potential expansion opportunity based on previous qualitative research executed by GutCheck.

Prior to moving forward, King's Hawaiian wanted to further validate their decision to enter this new market and learn more about the nation's consumer attitudes and behaviors. They not only wanted to ensure they were making the right decision to expand, but also needed to understand how they could most effectively roll out their brand when doing so.

The Solution and Research

King's Hawaiian deployed GutCheck's International Constellation® solution, which connects survey responses with billions of big data points to build a holistic picture of consumers.

This methodology analyzes and enriches consumer segments and helps companies understand how to target them based on attributes like media consumption, lifestyles, interests, personality profiles, and other behavioral and purchase data.

This research focused on the following key question:

What's the path to purchase for bread in the potential new market, and who is the most likely consumer base to purchase King's Hawaiian products?

Objectives Based on the Key Question

- Understand perceptions of the King's Hawaiian brand and products in this new target market and learn how the company can compete with the rest of the bread category within the country.
- Build a holistic audience profile that identifies not only who the target consumers are – but also who they are not – in order to deliver more personalized and effective marketing strategies.
- Develop an ideal consumer profile that includes shopping behaviors, personality traits, lifestyles, interests, and media consumption habits.
- Pinpoint which regions throughout the country that King's Hawaiian should prioritize.



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The insights gained from the Gutcheck team informed our initial go-to-market strategy. The insights informed geographic and channel prioritization and initial messaging / promotional strategies.

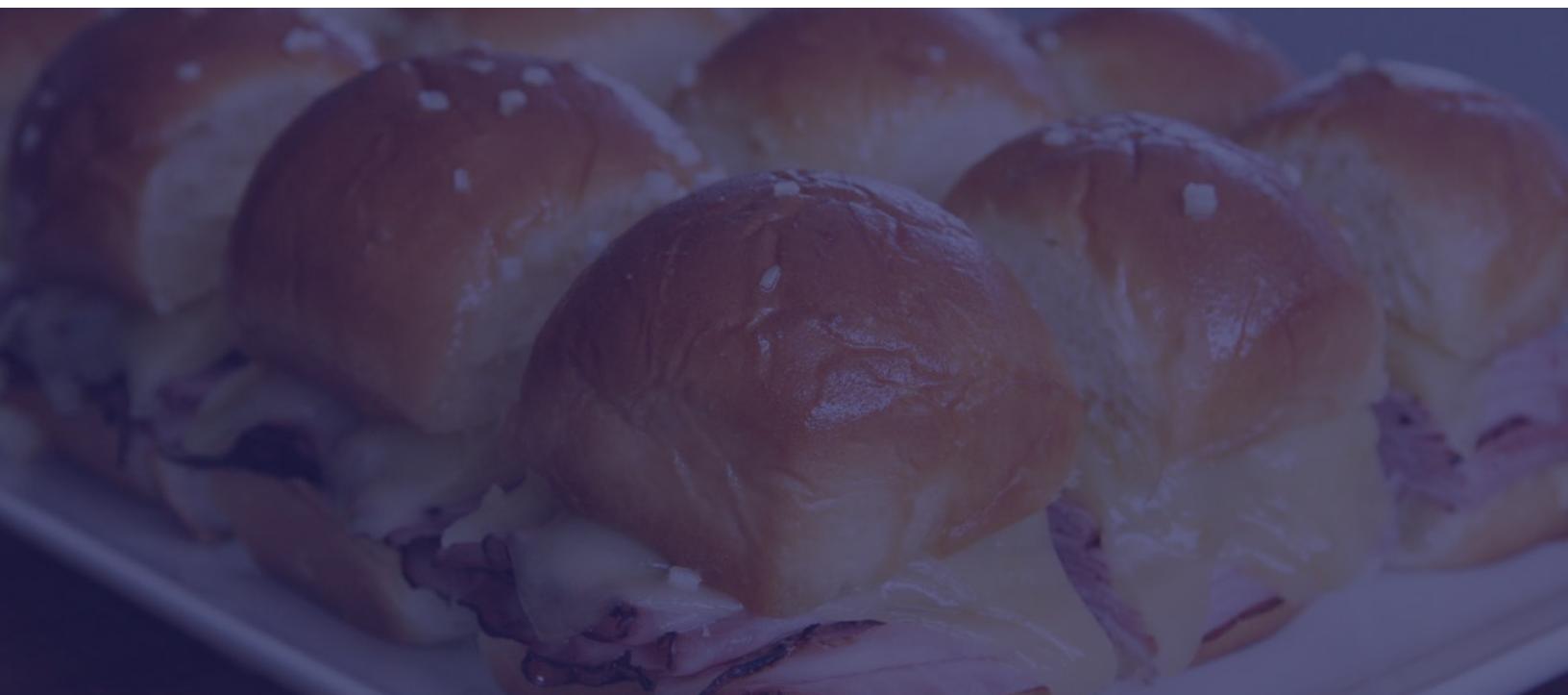
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The Results

Based on GutCheck's research, King's Hawaiian was able to confirm that the previously identified country is indeed a market they can succeed in and should expand into.

They created their ideal customer profile, gathered a significant amount of information on that group's shared traits, characteristics, interests, and habits, and can now compare how their brand fits into the existing bread category. Additionally, GutCheck unlocked insights regarding potential product usage in the market, which is already being incorporated into marketing and merchandising efforts.

All of this information will help the King's Hawaiian team build a much more effective go-to-market strategy, a critical contributor to successfully launching a brand in a new region.



GutCheck uncovered several other key findings that influenced King's Hawaiian's decision to enter the market and will help inform the company's next steps.

1

Differentiating itself from established players in the bread category in the new market will be critical to King's Hawaiian's success.

2

The company can feel comfortable entering this region because consumers there are already seeking out premium bread options like its own.

3

Position King's Hawaiian's products in club stores like Costco and Sam's Club as a first point of entry, because their target audience frequently shops in those types of stores.

4

Message to parents, as likely purchasers are typically higher income and have more children living at home.

5

Advertise multiple consumption occasions such as snacks, special treats, and parties, to drive trial and influence bulk buyers.

6

Emphasize Hawaiian – rather than traditional American – heritage, as there are many positive perceptions of Hawaiian values in the new location.



In a matter of weeks, the King's Hawaiian team reached an internal consensus in a timely manner, based their expansion plans on real consumer feedback and data, and has officially began rolling out plans to enter the new market. The research also helped improve internal processes at the company to inform and develop future expansion opportunities.



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We pioneered agile audience intelligence to provide clients with multi-layered, actionable insights that enable them to accelerate time to market and compete with disruptive brands that steal share. Our technology-enabled solutions and experts use a connected data approach to deeply profile specific audiences, helping clients activate successful consumer-centric strategies.

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