

Research Best Practices

A Guide to Creating Product Concepts for Testing



Why Creating a Product Concept Is Important

Product concepts are representations of the fundamental aspects of a new product or service that have yet to be fully developed. If poorly representative of an idea, they can prove detrimental to the accuracy of the predicted success of a product. While concept development and testing is nothing new, due to the variety of methodologies, it's difficult to know how to create a proper product concept for testing.

Benefits of Creating Standardized Product Concepts

- ⊕ Can provide a basis for benchmarking
- ⊕ Increases the accuracy and relevance of consumer feedback across a variety of concepts
- ⊕ Makes it easier to refine, post concept testing



Challenges with Creating Product Concepts

Choosing the Right Form

The form the concept takes is dependent upon what stage the concept/idea is in. Different formats are based on what stage the concept is currently in: idea, early stage, or full concept.

Deciding How Much Information to Share

This also depends on the stage the concept is in, but it's important to not over-deliver on the value proposition. Only include the information that consumers are likely to know at the time of purchase.

Showing the Right Image

The power of visuals is huge. Incorporating too much color, branding, or design elements into the imagery can detract from the concept. Further, incorporating an image too early on in the process can lead to meaningless results.

Getting Started

The strongest concepts start with a concept development process

1

Opportunity

Identification of an unmet need among a target group that aligns with product strategy.

2

Insight

An emphatic truth among consumers that approaches the unmet need in a new way and reveals a new solution to that need.

3

Resources & Capabilities

Evaluation of whether the solution can be sustained through company resources and capabilities.
(i.e., team, budget, materials etc.)

4

Ideation

The solution is developed with a clear proposition that reflects the key benefit(s) and reason(s) to believe (RTB).

5

Visualization

Depiction of the solution in concept form through the use of words and/or images, depending on its stage.

Creating the Product Concept

Key Qualities to Include by Concept Stage

Idea

Headline, Benefit(s) & RTB

Early-Stage Concept

Brand, Headline, Benefit(s) & RTB, and Image
(image can be a rendering)

Full Concept

Brand, Headline, Benefit(s) & RTB, Image
(actual product), and Extra Info

Brand

Headline
(idea or product name)

Benefit(s) & RTB

Image

Extra Info
Price, Sizes, Varieties,
Colors, etc.

GOOD
FOR ALL

POW SNX BAR

Good For All Pow Snx bar is a tasty way to fuel up before you get going. It's made with a delicious blend of raspberries, cranberries, almonds, flaxseed, oats, soy milk, and honey to pack a powerful punch of protein and whole grains into one yummy snack.



- 8 grams of protein
- Full serving of fruit from raspberries and cranberries
- 15 grams of whole grains from oats and flax
- Only 100 calories



Key Takeaways

The type of product and the stage of the concept determine just how aligned product concepts may be with this process. Either way, creating product concepts with this structure in mind allows for...

Greater Consistency

When it comes to testing multiple versions of the same concept and/or testing across multiple phases of the product development timeline, creating concepts in the same way keeps comparisons and results consistent.

Reduced Bias

Building out concepts in this way reduces the possibility of fluff or unnecessary adjectives within product descriptions and keeps the language simple so all audiences can understand it and approach it objectively.

Increased Relevance of Insights

Testing the right format or amount of content at the right stage in the product development timeline allows for more relevant insights and opportunities for refinement.

Wrapping It All Together

To ensure insights from concept testing are objective, relevant, and consistent across every product, concepts should be thoughtfully crafted. And utilizing a framework for concept development similar to this one makes it easier to conduct concept testing in an agile, iterative way that supports learning at every step.

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