
Ethnographic and Social In-Context Case Studies

- **Trends and Brand Value Exploration**
- **Retail Experience Ethnography**
- **Product Evaluation and Retail Space Redesign**



Trends and Brand Value Exploration

To re-establish consumer focus and long-term strategic growth as organizational priorities, a leading Canadian consumer package goods manufacturer sought to understand the evolving relationship between their products and a narrow but essential market demographic.

APPROACH

Discovering brand values and lifestyle trends within the market, and communicating these insights across all levels of the organization, were essential to the client's strategic development. To this end, W5 recommended a large-scale qualitative consumer lifestyle exploration, including ethnography, in-home interviews and dinner focus groups. This approach led to an understanding of important product and brand relationships within the consumers' lives. The research encompassed the diverse lifestyles, cultures and subcultures of four major Canadian metropolitan areas. In these environments, W5 was able to gather observational, anecdotal and physical data to assess consumer trends and derive key brand values.

RESULTS

W5 identified four major brand values and lifestyle trends which had meaning for the client's target consumers. To communicate these insights, W5 presented the results before a wide internal audience and later invited them to explore shadowboxes, posters, and consumer artifacts that illustrated key findings. Additional graphic takeaways and brand value summary sheets were designed to keep team members connected with the research to inspire future product design, communication, brand initiatives and innovations.



Retail Experience Ethnography

To capture an emerging market segment, a home equipment manufacturer and its advertising agency wanted to understand how consumers interact with products and make purchase decisions at retail. Understanding selection criteria and the shopping experience would help them develop a competitive strategy for retail engagement.

APPROACH

W5 conducted ethnographic qualitative research in home improvement retail stores, observing and interviewing shoppers and store employees. W5 ethnographers examined the role of brands, shopping environments, and word-of-mouth marketing in the decision-making process for home equipment. W5 gathered observational data and first-hand anecdotes from intercept interviews to conduct an analysis of how consumer attitudes and the physical retail space influence purchase behavior.

RESULTS

W5 identified areas in which their category had been commoditized and uncovered elements regarding brand, product features, retailer support, and consumer needs that provided opportunities to establish a differentiated brand identity. Additionally, W5 examined current messaging challenges, including those at point-of-sale and made recommendations to increase message relevance.



Product Evaluation and Retail Space Redesign

The client, an advertising agency of an international producer of food and agricultural products, was interested in better understanding consumers perceptions of their food products in a grocery store environment. Insight into how consumers shopped for food products and perceived in-store organization and communications helped guide the client in improving consumers' retail experience, from shelf to table.

APPROACH

W5 employed a three-staged qualitative research approach to capture the widest range of shopper perceptions of and interactions with the products. To understand purchase planning, cooking and preparation behaviors, W5 conducted a series of in-home interviews, pre-recruited shop-along interviews, and in-store intercepts with grocery store shoppers. Consumers were probed on pre- and post- grocery store shopping behaviors, organization and display of the client's food product, product quality, and effectiveness of in-store communications, including employee and consumer interactions.

RESULTS

Based on extensive conversations with consumers in their homes and grocery store environments, W5 was able to advise the client on significant ways to improve the shopping experience. As a result of the research, W5 learned that many consumers were unaware of specific production preparation and cooking techniques. Consumers expressed a desire for greater guidance in product selection, preparation and cooking options during the grocery store shopping experience. W5 provided the client with strategic guidance on how best to communicate with consumers, improving the retail experience by enhancing the level of product expertise and education via in-store communications, product organization, package design and increased employee outreach.



About W5

W5 is a boutique custom marketing research firm. We focus on answering **who, what, when, where, and why people relate to products, services, and brands. W5 combines the professional services offered by marketing research firms, strategy-oriented management consultancies, and brand planning agencies.**

Our approach: We believe in developing custom plans of action that result in helping clients make decisions to accomplish their goals. Rather than simply delivering data as the culmination of a research engagement, we produce sound and creative solutions for our clients. W5 prides itself on bringing client and consumer closer together.

Clients and industries: Our clients represent a broad spectrum of vertical industries and include both Fortune 500 companies and advertising agencies. While we are by no means limited to any particular set of industries, we maintain a focus on consumer goods, healthcare, technology, financial services, and casual dining and quick service restaurant.

Consulting worldwide: W5 consultants are expert packers. We work all over the world, always ready to go where your business needs might take us. We are not limited by insular product offerings. Our custom approach to each engagement means we work with you to establish the right location and the right tools and technology to get the job done. In person, online, around the world.

Diverse skills: W5 consultants hold a diverse set of skills, experience, and interests that yield harmonious collaboration with each client and each other. No two engagements are the same, but all flourish with the creativity and curiosity that unite our staff.

Research, Strategy, & Planning: Research delivers the insight you need to make decisions. Strategy is the map for navigating the business environment. Planning constructs the specific tactics that drive brand and messaging initiatives. Research without defined strategic objectives or communications planning falls flat. Strategy is great but requires research as fuel. Planning pulls it all together and prepares you to speak directly to the consumer.

RESEARCH

Qualitative

Brand Positioning
Concept Testing and Development
Consumer Experience Understanding
Ethnographic and Social Context Research
Message Development
Online Behaviors and Conversations
Retail and Environment Research
Trend Spotting

Quantitative

Attitude and Usage
Concept Evaluation
Conjoint Analysis
Copytesting
Pricing Analysis
Product Evaluation
Segmentation
Strategic Tracking

STRATEGY

Competitive Assessment
Meta Analysis of Existing Data
Strategic Consulting
White Papers
Workshops

PLANNING

Brand Books
Brand Positioning
Concept Development
Creative Briefing
Design Driven Deliverables
Ideation Sessions
Personas

Even when we don't get the opportunity to help a client with all three, we're thinking about the larger puzzle. We help put the pieces together.





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If you have a project in mind or would like to discuss your specific business needs, we can be reached by phone at (919) 932-1117, or you can email Tom Daly directly at tdaly@W5insight.com.