

Fending off the
competition
to protect my
market position

Case study

We advised an international snack manufacturer on how to reformulate their heritage product in order to meet changing consumer demands in the face of competition from premium brands and falling market share

Fending off competition to protect market share

Background ↗

A much-loved snack manufacturer was watching premium competitor snack products eat away at its customer base and was in a dilemma as to what to do. Their heritage product had remained largely unchanged (and successful) for many years but was now apparently failing to remain relevant to its market.

Our client reached out to us for help to understand to what extent it should change its signature recipe to match the competition, and whether that would lead to alienating its loyal customer base. They were also concerned about the R&D workload and speed to market associated with performing the multiple product changes that they felt were necessary to increase excitement around the brand and keep up with the pace at which consumer preference was changing.

Challenge ↗

Using Leatherhead's sensory trained panel, we created a sensory landscape showing how our client's product mapped against its competitors. By overlaying this sensory data with quantitative, consumer assessments of the products, we were able to give clear recommendations on the attributes driving liking in this category, how far the product was from consumers' ideal and how to reformulate to meet consumer approval without losing the product's signature taste.

We used this insight to give clear reformulation recommendations to respond to falling sales and, to save on costly rounds of consumer testing, created a statistical model to predict consumer appeal during recipe development: enabling leading concepts to be identified quicker and more cost effectively.

Benefit ↗

With a clear understanding of how far the product was from its competitors and pragmatic guidance on how to reformulate without losing the product's identity, our client was able to stream-line recipe development, time to market, and reduce overall insight spend.

As a result of our work, our client has created a development strategy for the product focussing on three possible new recipes. The new recipe is due to be launched this year.

“I used to eat this snack as a child, so to help make it relevant to a new market was really exciting. Being able to do this in a streamlined way by virtue of the predictive model was also a huge benefit to our client – they no longer have to do consumer testing on each product iteration so can get new concepts to market faster than before.”