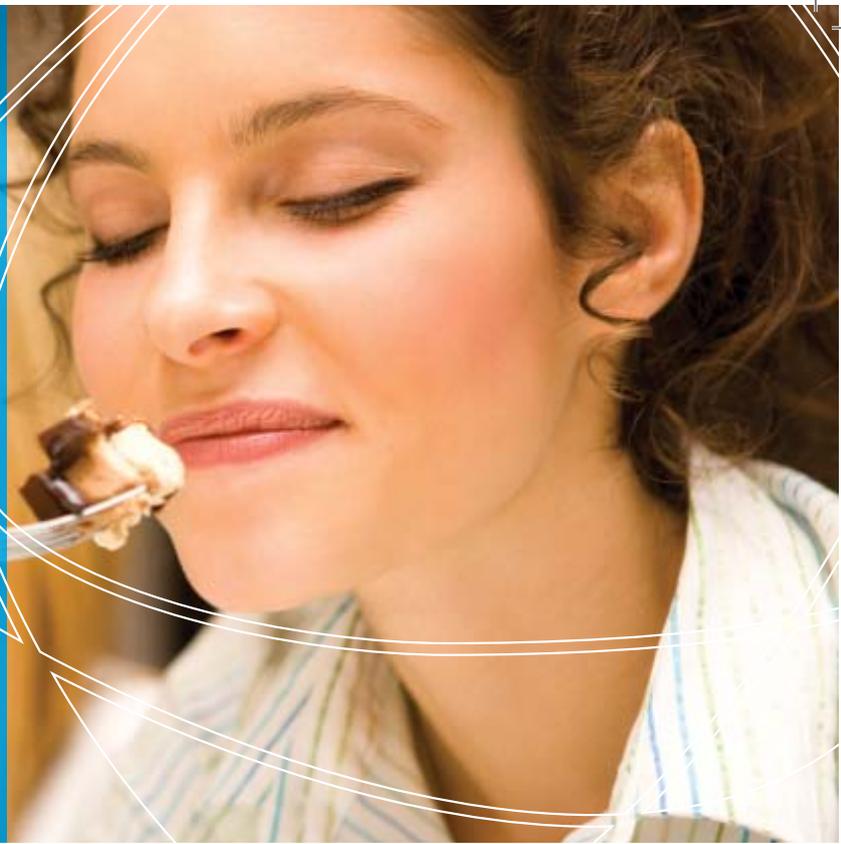




Making sense
of research.

Consumer Research



Our consumer research uses typical consumers to provide detailed feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of your products



Our consumer research can be conducted in a number of different ways, for example:

Central Location Tests

Consumers assemble in a central location to test products in a very controlled manner.

Test products are prepared and delivered under identical conditions (homogeneous sampling).

Home Use Tests

Consumers test products at home in their natural environment. Test products are prepared by the individual respondents.

The demographics of our consumer research panels are extremely important and respondents are selected based on specific criteria representative of the market at which products are aimed. WSS are able to specify different age ranges, socio-demographics, eating habits and gender, for example.



Wirral Sensory Services Ltd

37 Allport Lane, Bromborough, Wirral CH62 7HH

info@wssintl.com +44 (0) 151 346 2999

www.wssintl.com



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We also have state-of-the-art software integrated into each booth that allows for more accurate responses, as well as enabling us to provide detailed reports to our clients within 48 hours.

Feedback from our consumer research provides actionable information that can be used in several different ways. Some examples of how our consumer research can be applied are:

Product Development

Our research techniques are designed to assist product development and highlight any areas of your test samples that may require improvement.

Ingredient Analysis

Our consumer research can reveal whether changes in ingredients are noticed by typical consumers, for example, a reduction in expensive ingredients, or compliance with salt/fat regulations.

Gain Listings in the Supermarket

Our independent reports, highlighting the strengths of your products, may substantially improve the chances of your products gaining new listings in the supermarkets.

Packaging Designs

Our consumer feedback can promote packaging design enhancement, to give your products maximum impact when displayed on shelves.



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Sensory Profiling



Our sensory research is conducted by a panel of typically 12-15 trained respondents

Our respondents score test samples on each of the key attributes in absolute measurements on a linear scale.

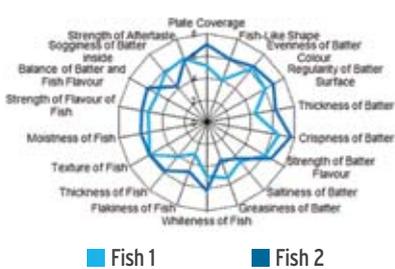
Our trained respondents are selected from a pool of consumers who have higher than average sensory acuity, who are also screened for their ability to identify different tastes and smells.

WSS have ongoing relationships with several clients which involve Sensory Profiling. These are generally longer term projects when compared to consumer research. Our panels of trained respondents are dedicated to these clients and are used over a period of time to profile NPD samples and competitor products.

This type of research will develop Sensory Profiles for your products and competitor samples. These profiles will give you indications as to why one product is outperforming another in the market place.

This provides a full and comprehensive overview of changes in products in the market place and allows our clients to develop the best possible tasting products, therefore maximising sales.

Sensory Profile Chart



Product Optimisation

This technique links our consumer research with Sensory Profiling. Correlation of sensory and acceptance data enables identification of the key drivers for consumer acceptance and enables us to create a profile for a 'Gold Standard' product.

Other areas in which Sensory Profiling benefits our clients are; fluctuations due to ingredient changes, close monitoring of batch quality and providing a cost effective way of screening a large number of development products.



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Qualitative Research

Qualitative projects answer research requirements in more detail than quantitative projects



The art of qualitative research is to explore the reasons why consumers say and think as they do.

The most common form of qualitative research is through focus group sessions. These sessions typically involve 8 respondents who discuss research topics in detail for a period of up to 2 hours.

Our focus group sessions are led by moderators who ensure sessions progress smoothly and that the objectives of the research are discussed in detail.

WSS have been conducting focus group sessions since 2002 and we employ two moderators, each with over 15 years experience of managing such sessions.

We have three locations where our focus group sessions are conducted; Watford, Central Birmingham and Wirral.

One of the most important factors when conducting focus group sessions is to ensure that after the research has been completed we have full and relevant information to address the objectives of the project.

WSS place strong emphasis on the role of our moderators and a flexible, yet comprehensive pre-group discussion plan, to ensure research provides actionable information.



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Claim Support

Claim support quotes can be used to promote the strengths of your products for advertising and on packaging



There are two main types of claim support; product claims and competitive claims.

Product claims will highlight the strengths of your products, for example. '8 out of 10 people thought that this product tasted delicious.'

Competitive claim support compares your products to benchmark samples, for example. '84% of people thought that this product tasted better than the leading brand.'

The two types of claim support require different robust methodologies to ensure that the claims can be substantiated.

Claim support research is currently very topical and many companies across the food and beverage industry are looking to use claim support to promote their products.

WSS have conducted many claim support projects working with the necessary authorities (e.g. Clearcast, CTPA) to ensure that all methodologies are comprehensive and can back up claim support quotes.

Issues that must be considered when assessing the methodologies for different claim support techniques include close analysis of preparation methods, the demographics of the consumer panel, the number of panellists and the location of the testing.

Independent consumer testing demonstrated that 300 consumers felt significantly fuller for up to 3 hours after eating a can of Stay Full soup, compared to a typical soup. (Testing conducted by Wirral Sensory Services. The standard soup benchmark being Baxters Chicken Broth.)



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Children's Research



A specialised area of research for which there are strict rules and regulations that must be adhered to when using children in research

WSS have tested all of the children's food and beverage products for a major supermarket since 2003 and we have built up an extensive database of families who have agreed to take part in children's testing.

Strong relationships with schools, playgroups and children's activity groups are essential to ensure our database of families is maintained.

There are key differences in the research methodology when testing with adults when compared to testing with children.

When conducting children's research, we give careful consideration to:

- Specialised questionnaires
- Different objectives for the research
- The adults in the household are often involved in the practical aspects of the test
- Different types of incentives for children/families
- The majority research is best conducted using Home Use Tests

Omega 3 - 10 Fish Fingers

More Kids Prefer Young's

In recent taste tests, more* kids preferred Young's Omega-3 Fish Fingers to the leading brand of Omega-3 Fish Fingers. They're made with 100% Fish fillet and are a natural source of long chain Omega-3.

* 132 out of 200 kids aged 8 - 15 years. Source - Wirral Sensory Services. July 2010.



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