HOW TO MEASURE PACKAGING EFFECTIVENESS – THE BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH



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How to measure packaging effectiveness – The Behavioural approach

As per recent research takeaways, consumers make purchase decisions within a minute and do not indulge in comparisons for the same. This is a direct reflection on the fact that packaging and its design have a very significant role in capturing their attention. It's not necessarily a rationalistic approach, rather a more dynamic, quick and autopilot mode in a consumer's shopping journey.

This throws light on two facts about purchase decisions –

Research about packaging performance should be designed around how consumers engage with brands and their products.

Observed consumer behaviour should be factored in, rather than theoretical or rational measures, because there could be difference in what consumers say but actually do.

How to measure effectiveness of packaging?

The effectiveness of a product packaging and its impact on consumer behaviour can be measured with the following metrics –

Visibility

The first question always is if the consumer saw it or not. Despite the attractiveness of packaging, if the product is not visible or noticeable to consumer on the shelf, there is no chance for it to be chosen. The packaging may have motivating claims and benefits, but consumer will breeze by without giving it a second look if it doesn't catch his or her attention.

Catching a consumer's eye is more of a physiological function and not necessarily a rationalised function. The colours, graphic elements etc. on the packaging play a significant part in making the product stand out amongst its competitors on the same or nearby shelves.

Eye-tracking methods are used to track how product packaging catches consumer attention.



Findability

Avoiding any sort of confusion is key to catching attention. As consumers spend minimum time in navigating shelves, with eyes flitting from one to the next, any factor that adds friction to this action should be eliminated. The product should be placed such there is a clear differentiation in terms of variety or sub-category, from competitors.

Adopt a consistent pattern for communicating sub-category and product differences, and make it easy for consumer to find your product. It should clear and easy to comprehend.

Communication

Packaging communicates your story and product details to your consumers, and is designed to inspire consumers to behave in a certain way. Key product details are communicated with graphics, visuals, benefit claims, product features and similar elements on the design. This communicates your product positioning and differentiation from your competitors.

Techniques like flash exposure, association exercises etc. are used to track how product information is conveyed to target audience and how it impacts their purchase behaviour.

Shopping behaviour

The only way to understand packaging and its impact on consumers is to observe their purchase journey and track shopping patterns, be it in the offline or the online space. This helps to form accurate predictions of links between consumer interaction with products and purchase selections.

With the use of online testing methods, physical environments can be recreated and simulated, to track how and what consumers see rapidly and effectively, a more affordable way to test when compared to real in-person settings and testing.

How does the behavioural approach help?

The behavioural approach reflects triggers that are both rational and irrational, which impacts the way consumers act and do. Claimed or theoretical guidelines may not be reliable as humans in general tend to act differently despite what they may have said or answered earlier. As such, the contextual based approach is more effective and predictive to determine metrics for packaging design and its success.



Market Research – Powered by Behavioural Economics

Consumers may not always do what they say, or say what they do, and hence biases would always exist in market research. To counteract these, a first step would be to view the problem through the lens of behavioural economics - What is the behavioral challenge? Which could be the BE concepts involved? What are the appropriate responses and adjustments required to mitigate those behaviors?

We keep Behavioural Economics at the heart of what we do – sometimes that may mean "nudging" the respondent - here how the question is framed and asked, and how the preceding parts of the survey have brought a respondent to the next question, assume significance.

It may mean being cognizant of something seemingly simple - but which could botch up the output if not adhered to - such as the ranges given; the question order; and of course the phrasing.

Our understanding of the biases that could possibly be in play and keeping these "top of mind" results in improved measurements and frameworks, generating more accurate output, and consequently more incisive recommendations, to ultimately add to the bottom line.



About SixthFactor

SixthFactor is a new-age research consultancy firm, with offices in Dubai, Goa and partnering with Fortune 500 clients based in Middle East, Africa, SEA, India and Pacific markets.

SixthFactor helps clients understand, influence and shape human decision-making through the application of the latest knowledge from Behavioural Sciences and Neuro-marketing fields. Our designs, tools, interpretations and applications are consistently guided by the need to understand and influence consumers within their context of decision-making.

We also take pride in partnering our clients in GTM activations with applications of Design-thinking and crowd-intelligence ideas through stakeholder workshops.

About Author

Himanshu Vashishtha



Market researcher with two decades of experience in shaping marketing strategy for global brands. He was heading the largest research agency in MENA region before he set up a new age research firm with offices across Dubai, India and Singapore to help brands get clarity, predict consumer behaviour and help make profitable choices.

Himanshu is considered one of the leading thought expert in applied behavioural economics and Neuromarketing in the region and contributes to newspapers, periodicals and magazines regularly. He speaks on the topic in conferences across Dubai, Singapore and India as well as teaches the Behavioural Economics and Applied Neuromarketing in Indian Institute of Management. He has been on the board of numerous organizations and councils such as TiE, Retail ME, Super Brands Council, Asian Brand Council, Gemas Awards etc.

Himanshu is someone who seeks nature to revive his soul regularly. And is currently experimenting with minimalism.

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