Our Findings in Marketing Research for Hartville Potato Chips

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Hartville Potato Chips: Recommendations

GROUP 2: ELENA KOZMA, ASHLEY WHITTEN, TAMIA HENDERSON, COREY KEIM, ABBIE FORD
Agenda

Overview
• Overall Goals
• Research Methods

Research
• Interviews
• Focus Groups
• Survey
• Eye tracking

Recap of Key Recommendations
• Summary

Q&A
Overall Goal

• **Our overall goal** – Find out how to expand & grow brand awareness for Hartville Potato Chips.

• Provide **data driven** recommendations on how to improve:
  • Positioning
  • Packaging
  • Social Media

All three methods can be utilized to grow brand awareness.
### Research Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Semester: Secondary Research</th>
<th>Spring Semester: Primary Research Focus Groups</th>
<th>Spring Semester: Primary Research Survey</th>
<th>Spring Semester: Primary Research Eye tracking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit Hartville and learned more about the company</td>
<td>9 participants</td>
<td>106 responses received</td>
<td>8 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established SMART goals and researched questions</td>
<td>Asked detailed questions on certain packages and performed taste tests</td>
<td>Asked simple questions about packaging and potato chip preferences</td>
<td>Asked open-ended questions relating to packaging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendation #1: Positioning

We asked questions on our survey to better understand the following attributes and their importance to consumers:

- Gluten Free
- Made Fresh Daily
- Family Owned and Operated
- Simple Ingredients
- Locally Owned and Operated
Your Position

After thorough research, we recommend that your positioning should be....

"Simple Ingredients"

Oil – Salt - Potatoes
Survey Demographics (n=106)
We asked participants to which attribute was most important to them....
Simplicity Theory
Simplicity Theory

What is the Simplicity Theory?

- This theory states that people have bias toward simplicity and are predisposed to choose products that minimize their cognitive load. (Clinehens, 2024)

- 64% of consumers are more likely to recommend a brand because a simple experience (this includes simple ingredients)

- 55% of consumers are willing to pay more for a simple experience (this includes simple ingredients)
RX Bar and Lärabar

Both of these brands use simplicity theory within their packaging design, without explicitly saying what their positioning is.

How did they do this?
- "Just 6 Real Ingredients."
- Clearly listing the ingredients on the packaging.
Why This Matters

According to the International Food Information Council (IFIC),

- **63%** of consumers said they were paying more attention to ingredients list. (Manning, 2021)
- **2/3** of these customers say they try to choose foods made from simple/low ingredients.

With your recipe being 3 ingredients (oil, salt, potatoes):

- You can cater to your existing audience of potato chip lovers **AND**...
- Cater to a **NEW** audience that prioritizes simple ingredients
Your Positioning Statement

With your current positioning statement aligning with our recommendation, we suggest you keep your positioning as:

"We produce potato chips the way they used to be made, small batch and kettle cooked with simple ingredients"
Recommendation #2: New Packaging

Investing money into packaging can help:

1. Better **target** your audience members
2. Make the product increase in **value** to the eye of the shopper
3. **Boost** sales and profitability in the long-run
   - Effective/visual-pleasing packaging will create brand identity which will increase sales (Financial Model Slab, 2023)
Key Finding #1: Quality of Images

During the focus group and interviews, we asked participants to view several potato chip package images. (Cape Cod, Hartville Potato Chips, and Hartville's Private Label, Dorothy Lane).

- The following quotes show that the image and quality (specifically photos on the packaging and colors) of the HPC packaging are not as appealing as Cape Cod's packaging.
Focus Group Demographics (n=9)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hartville Potato Chips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It looks like a stock image.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Subject 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It needs more color.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Subject 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Needs images of potato chips.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Subject 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;[Looks like the artist] joined art class for the very first time.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Subject 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Simple but boring. Needs to be spiced up.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Secondary Research Interviewee 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cape Cod

When moderator showed this image to participants and asked how Cape Cod could improve their packaging...

...All participants agreed that **NOTHING** should be changed.
"Image makes chips look very greasy."
- Subject 3

"The colors, the pictures, the font, it's just not there."
- Subject 1

"Change the picture of the chips for sure."
- Subject 1
Idea: Improve Image of Chips
Key Finding #2: Matte finishing is perceived as higher quality

Matte finish = Higher quality packaging
Non-matte finish = Lower quality packaging

- "It looks like a trash bag."
  - Subject 1

When ranking the price of 4 different potato chip bags, HPC was ranked last
  - Compared with Cape Cod, Kettle, and HPC's Private Label
We asked participants if they agreed with the following statement:
"I believe this brand is high in quality."
Key Finding #3: What To Include on Packaging

- After conducting the eye tracking, we concluded that the best things to include on a packaging design are...
  o Hartville Potato Chips
  o Flavor
  o An image of potato chips with good perspective
  o "Kettle cooked"
  o Positioning (as recommended: "Simple Ingredients")
  o Color palette (preferably more than 2 colors)

- Based on the eye tracking, this is what our participants looked at most frequently and were most interested in.
Image #1
Hal's Chips
Result #1

Key areas on the Heat Map:

• NY Grown
• Gluten Free
• Red outlines of the text.
• "Hal's New York Kettle Chips"
Image #2
Siète Chips
Result #2

Key areas on the Heat Map:

• Avocado Oil
• Vegan
• Colorful packaging is fun and inviting
• Gluten Free
• Non-GMO
Image #3
Deep River Chips
Result #3

Key areas on the Heat Map:

- Gluten Free
- "Because We Give A Chip"
- Image of Chips with ingredient's being used.
Eye-Tracking

Key Takeaways

Gluten Free - Most eye catching on all packing, something consumers are looking for.

Avocado Oil - Simple, healthy ingredients. Consumers want to know what they are eating.

NY Grown - Making it known you are a local company.

Images of chips - Positioning of the image and quality is key to successful catching consumers eyes.
Packaging Recommendation Recap

Why invest money into new packaging?

1. A matte finish will make products look more expensive
2. Presentable images of chips will help the product stand out to consumers (spread out vs stacked)
3. Include more of a range in the color palette on packaging

These recommendations are backed up by our eye-tracking, surveys, and focus group data.
Recommendation #3: Social Media

We recommend including social media on packaging to help display your business...

But what else can social media do for your business?

- Increase brand awareness
- Cost-effective marketing
- Insights and analytics
  - Direct interaction with customers for feedback.
  - Analytics relating to new followers, engagement, and follower retention
Improving Social Media

- Staying up to date on trends on most relevant platforms
  - Referring to our secondary research, we found these platforms to be the most effective for posting:
    - YouTube/YouTube Shorts
    - Instagram/Instagram Reels
    - Facebook/Facebook Reels
    - TikTok
Your Current Social Media

KEYHOLE WAS USED TO ANALYZE HARTVILLE POTATO CHIPS' CURRENT SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE
Keyhole Findings

- Red line indicates engagement
- Orange bars indicate the number of posts
Keyhole Findings

High engagement

- Vlog-style video visiting Unhitched Brewery, from February 9

- **Why?** Instagram's algorithm tends to favor videos. Additionally, the tag and possible reshares from @unhitchedbrew helped.

High activity

- Two posts were released this week
- This resulted in your second-highest engagement number
How Do You Achieve High Engagement?

**Videos Following Trends**
- Following trends and utilizing trending audios will help you to reach new viewers

**Bigger Reach**
- Consider utilizing sponsored/paid ads to ensure that your posts will reach new consumers in the Akron area
- Also include geotrackers on your normal posts – this will allow more people to view your content

**Building & Cultivating a Loyal Following**
- By posting more frequently, your audience will see your content more frequently
Scrub Daddy uses trending video themes and dry humor to appeal to a younger audience.

Has collaborated with other companies (such as Duolingo) to expand their brand.

Increased its net worth, revenue, and sales through social media platforms (gaining over 3 million followers on TikTok and Instagram).

Communicates with their customers directly through social media about their products:
- Including posting new videos about their products.
How Can You Implement This?

According to guest speaker, Kate Spector, who graduated from Akron in 2012, and currently works for 1848 Ventures after spending nine years at Smucker's and has her own design company called Spectory Design. She discussed how....

"The average adult attention span is 8 seconds."

- Making short videos within trends is a great way to attract a younger audience
  - Utilize popular social media platforms (YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook)

- Examples of short videos:
  - Giving a tour of the factory
  - Interviewing Hartville Potato Chip Staff
  - Videos that relate to current trends
  - New/current products and/or collaborations
  - Summary of your company's story
On the back of your packaging, you can include a QR code for:

- A LinkTree
  - Social Medias
    - Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube
    - If handle is the same for all platforms, you can put @HartvillePotatoChips
  - Your Website
Harville Potato Chips LinkTree

• Free and easy-to-use marketing tool
Recommendation Overview

1. Position yourself as... "Simple Ingredients"

2. Improve packaging by...
   - Switching to a matte finish, adding more colors and utilize a better image of chips

3. Improve social media by...
   - Posting more frequently and utilizing a video format, to build an engaged audience
Thank you for your time!

Questions?

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Vanja Djuric, Associate Professor, Marketing

Tausif Utchhash, Graduate Assistant, Marketing Department

Dr. Matthew Wyszynski, Senior Associate Dean, Williams Honor College

Dr. Deborah Owens, Department Chair, Marketing Associate Professor
Appendix
Focus Group
Conducted Monday, March 18 in the Taylor Institute Focus Group Lab

Nine anonymous and unbiased participants

Participants were provided food and incentives for participating

Moderated by group member: Corey Keim
Survey
Survey

• Overall goal – to gain insights and better understand the importance of factors such as...

- Freshness
- Value
- Price
- Flavor
- Brand Preferences
Survey Methodology

How valid is our data?

Our survey was open from April 9 to April 26.

We offered a monetary incentive of a $50 Amazon gift card to be raffled off to one lucky participant.

We had 106 responses, ranging from High School students to Ph.D. graduates.
Survey Methodology

How valid is our data?

When prompted, **84%** of respondents correctly stated that they were "very unfamiliar" with Krispy King (a **fake** potato chip brand).

Only **3%** of respondents stated that they were somewhat familiar, or very familiar with the brand.
Eye Tracking
Conducted April 30th in Suarez Applied Marketing Research Lab

Eight anonymous and unbiased participants

Participants were provided incentives for participating

Moderated by group member: Abbie Ford
Participants were shown 10 different images of packaging.

Asked open ended questions about attributes of packaging and distinguishing factors on the packaging that most stands out to consumers.

Heat Map results help show best recommendations for future packaging.