

MBA STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECT
Consumer Perceptions of Bottled Water Packaging

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Professors Jeff Danes, Jeff Hess, and Lynn Metcalf, Marketing
Professor Jay Singh, IT Packaging

Units: 4

Quarter: Winter 2010, with **work starting immediately**—October 19, 2009

We are willing to "flex" and allow you to register for the credit either in Winter 2010 or Spring 2010

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Purpose








The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of consumer attitudes toward (eco- and non-eco) bottled water packaging, as well as the impact of packaging perceptions on brand perceptions.

Methods

This study employs a partial factorial experimental design with 3 levels of brand (Arrowhead, Aquafina, and unbranded) and 2 levels of packaging (eco-bottle and non eco-bottle). The figure below illustrates the 10 different conditions comprising the experiment. Twenty respondents will be randomly assigned to each condition. Respondents will be exposed to varying brands of bottled water at varying types of packaging and will be asked to rate their perceptions of quality, benefit, and brand, as well as their purchase intentions. Respondents will also be asked questions about their attitudes toward sustainability. Finally, respondents will be asked nominal classification data at the end of the study, such as gender and age.

About 10% of the respondents will be videotaped as they examine different types of water bottles. We will review videotapes for the purposes of content analysis—we will be counting behaviors, e.g a grimace as a subject opens a bottle or an expression of delight. The videotapes will help us interpret the data in the Web-based survey. For example, survey results may show the majority of participants preferring Brand A over Brand B. Videotaped observations may help us explain the preference, showing that participants had difficulty opening Brand B and water gushed out as the Brand B bottles were being opened.

The dependent variables are perceptions of benefit, perceptions of quality, impact on brand relationship, and purchase intentions.

 Unbranded Eco	Condition 1  Unbranded Non Eco	Condition 7  Unbranded Non Eco	Condition 8  Unbranded Eco
 Arrowhead Non Eco	Condition 2  Aquafina Non Eco		
 Arrowhead Eco	Condition 3  Arrowhead Non Eco	Condition 6  Arrowhead Eco	Condition 9  Arrowhead Non Eco
 Aquafina Eco	Condition 4  Aquafina Non Eco	Condition 5  Aquafina Eco	Condition 10  Aquafina Non Eco

The experiment will be performed in the 03-114, because it enables us to set up a physical layout that supports the experiment and maintain the integrity of the data collection.

Data collection will begin the week of 10/26. The experiments will be run 6:00-9:00 p.m. The plan is to run 2 sessions per evening for 6 evenings—Monday-Thursday, depending on the availability of 03-114. You would need to be present at these sessions. **We can work with your availability and stretch out the data collection period through mid-November.**

Student Deliverables:

1. Run the experiments in 03-114.
 - 6:00-6:30 set up room and video cameras, check in group, hand out laptops, introduce the experiment, and field questions.
 - 6:30-7:15 Group 1
 - 7:15-7:45 collect laptops, reset room, check in new group, introduce the experiment, and field questions.
 - 7:45-8:30 Group 2
 - 8:30-9:00 clean up
2. Run preliminary analyses on Web-based survey data
3. Review videotapes and extract themes

4. Analyze results from follow-up Dialogr (virtual brainstorming tool) task
5. Develop tables and charts
6. Write up results

Time required: Experiments, survey and qualitative data analysis, and Dialogr tasks will take place in Fall quarter. Results will be written up Winter quarter. We anticipate an average of 10 hours / week for 10 weeks, beginning 10/19. Four (4) units of credit will be awarded in Winter quarter upon successful completion of assignment.

Student Benefits:

You gain professional experience with

1. The issues being studied: Consumer perceptions of bottled water packaging
2. Web-based survey design and data analysis
3. Experimental design
4. Observational research, content analysis, and theme extraction
5. Dialogr, a virtual brainstorming tool
6. Writing up results for a professional audience

Additional information: We will be developing manuscripts for four publications, based on this research. If the student deliverables meet our standards of excellence, we will consider including some student drafted portion(s) with an acknowledgement of assistance, such as a footnote with acknowledgement of assistance by the named student.

If the caliber of work is of outstanding academic quality, consideration will be given to naming the student(s) as co-author(s), and if published, this would be a tremendous addition to the resume of the student(s). There is no assurance that mere participation in this project will result in being acknowledged in the underlying article or named as a co-author, as only the highest professional and academic quality of work will even be considered or suitable for acknowledgement or co-authorship. By undertaking this project, the student agrees that the GSB 500 advisor (Lynn Metcalf) and her colleagues (Jeff Danes, Jeff Hess, and Jay Singh) have exclusive control over content and submittal for publication of the resulting work product, and consents to grant copyright to the advisor's selected publication for any published works.