

## **Dannon Yogurt Case Study: When Speed and Accuracy Matter**

### **A leading yogurt company uses a Hybrid Quant / Qual research methodology for concept evaluation. The Results: Data and Insights Together - Fast!**

Faster access to research learning is a competitive advantage. Our client, Dannon Yogurt, took full advantage of a Hybrid Quant / Qual research methodology to quickly gauge the rational and emotional responses to product concepts which allowed the brand team to develop, refine, and perfect the best positioning for their product.

Traditional qualitative focus groups happen every day. Research professionals skillfully moderate small select groups of respondents on any given topic and uncover insights from the learning. But Dannon needed more. They needed to add the strength of numbers and data to shore up the insights that would help them to build the best possible positioning for their product. And they needed it fast.

To achieve both speed and accuracy, Dannon's moderator and long-time research consultant, Albert Sanchez of Market Focus, recommended they use the Hybrid Methodology, an approach that combines quantitative data gathering with traditional qualitative moderating. Albert tells us, "When speed is of the essence, this is my 'go-to' methodology. And in addition to speed, it offers sufficient robustness for the client to make an informed and confident decision."

Albert contacted Owen Jones of Better Decisions, Inc. to deliver the methodology.

### **The Data Gathering of Quant / Qual**

To gather the quantitative data you first need to recruit larger groups to attain a significant sample size. The client chose a sample of 200 respondents spread over two markets, one of which was Raleigh NC. Using central location testing, three groups of 35 respondents per market would deliver the required numbers. L&E Research's Raleigh location handled the local recruiting and facility needs.

Once the group was seated, each respondent was assigned a hand-held keypad. General instructions were given by the facilitator who then launched into the questionnaire. The software that collects the responses also instantly tabulates the results. The client observers, sitting behind the one-way glass, can view these tabulated and graphed responses as each question is asked and answered by the group. One key advantage is that the responses are private and given without influence from other respondents. So the data being viewed represented the immediate, gut reaction to the stimulus with no "group-think" involved. It only took 35 minutes to present and evaluate three positioning concepts, a number of packaging designs, and to complete 50 scale questions. Rachel Shuf, of The Dannon Company, Inc., explains that "Seeing the hard numbers up there on the screen in real time meant we

were able to make key decisions faster and smarter, and we were better prepared for what we needed to dig into during the following qualitative groups.”

## **Transitioning from the Quant to the Qual**

Upon the completion of the quant survey, the respondents were given a five minute break while the facilitator conferred with the client and determined the criteria for selecting the best sub group of respondents for the qualitative process. Part of the questionnaire included demographic questions such as gender, frequency of purchase, and brand preference. The assigned keypads are identified with a number which facilitates the identification of the best qualitative respondents. For example, for the first qualitative session the client may have opted to select from the original 35 respondents, only those females who purchase yogurt weekly but generally choose a competitive brand and who responded top box score to the third concept. Cross-tabbed selections such as these are made easy by the Hybrid process. The qualitative session took place immediately following their break.

The ability to be both agile and reactive to the latest learning, in this case the quant data from the group, is a key advantage to the Hybrid methodology. You could think of it as “Just in Time” learning. Plus, the ability to be flexible was a bonus for this particular project. The client determined that two simultaneous qualitative sessions, each with its own moderator, would be ideal so we were able to select those who preferred one concept to attend qual sub-group one and those who selected another concept to attend qual sub-group two. The client received double the learning from this Hybrid Quant/Qual session. Rachel further explained, “In a short amount of time, we were able to see the data and hear the consumer insights behind the numbers to make an informed business decision very quickly.” And since there were a number of clients observing this research, the team split up to view each qualitative session and compared findings in a debriefing at the end of the qualitative sessions.

## **Instant Reporting**

Immediately following the quant session and while the moderators were beginning their respective qualitative sessions, the hard copies of the data recaps and reports from the quant session were produced and made available to the client. After the second and third groups, cumulative data was available from the merged results.

## **Outcomes**

The data from the quant session delivered real time, gut reactions toward the concepts and packaging so that the client and moderator knew exactly where each concept stood. To achieve more “focused” qualitative sessions, the clients took full advantage of the ability to hand pick the best 8 respondents based on their quant answers and demographics for the qualitative session. These focused qual sessions can now probe deeper emotions and mine greater insights. Albert explains, “It provides the moderator with a tremendous head-start and allows me to quickly hone in on the key issues.” The immediate delivery of the quant reports together with the top line debrief of the qualitative groups meant the client had the information right away.

### *About Albert Sanchez and Market Focus*



**Albert Sanchez**, President of Market Focus Corporation ([www.mkt-focus.com](http://www.mkt-focus.com)), founded the qualitative research company in 1995. He has developed innovative marketing research programs for clients in the packaged goods, advertising, and service industries. In addition, many clients have capitalized on Albert's ability to conduct research with the general market, as well as the Hispanic market.

### *About Owen Jones and Better Decisions*



**Owen Jones** is the founder and President of Better Decisions, Incorporated of Baltimore MD and Better Decisions for Business, Inc. of Toronto, Canada. Better Decisions specializes in Hybrid Quantitative / Qualitative studies, a methodology that compiles the kind of data that unlocks insights and enables analysis that will yield informed decisions. Prior to launching Better Decisions, Owen was a Senior Consultant in Strategic HR and Change at KPMG Management Consulting, an Associate with a specialized consulting firm, and spent 16 years in the financial services industry.

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