



C + R Research: CPG Food Community

A global Food Manufacturer was able to connect with consumers, spark innovation and develop new products by using an ongoing Recollective community.



This project has been so successful that it remains ongoing almost a year later as the client continuously uses Recollective to tap into consumer feedback.

Faced with increasing pressure to innovate in a packaged goods marketplace where consumer preferences are shifting and non-traditional offerings such as meal kits and delivery services are thriving, a leading food manufacturer partnered with C + R Research to help them develop the foundation for a new innovation pipeline.

Using Recollective, the client was able to get into consumers' kitchens and understand their true pain points over a few months without the need for travel costs. Using a combination of journals, videos, discussions and more, the client was able to observe how consumers actually use their products and as a consequence could more deeply understand their needs and challenges. This approach led to the development of ideas and product concepts that truly fit with their consumers' lifestyles and needs

Background

The consumer packaged goods (CPG) industry in North America has historically been dominated by a few major food manufacturers. Recently however, shifting consumer preferences towards healthier, local foods and a growing desire for convenience has caused disruption in the industry. Smaller, local competitors and non-traditional rivals such as delivery services (eg; Uber Eats, Skip the Dishes) and meal kits (eg; Chef's Plate, HelloFresh) have led to an erosion of market share for traditional CPG food manufacturers. As a result, the pressure for larger manufacturers to offer something different continues to increase.

Challenge

The key challenge major food manufacturers are faced with is how to stay innovative and relevant in a space with growing competition from non-traditional sources and smaller players. This leading food manufacturer in the United States recognized that in order to grow their own portfolio, they first had to understand what was currently offered in the marketplace and identify gaps and segments that they could capitalize on through innovation.

To start, it was imperative to learn about the full competitive set and potential usage occasions on a broad level. From there, the client needed to connect with consumers in their own homes and discover all of the ways they were actually using these products in their day-to-day lives.

It was also important to reach consumers across the United States to gather a broad representation. The client wanted to track their overall habits and specific product usage over a few months to gain a true understanding of their experiences.





Given the desired approach, the client needed an all encompassing research solution that would enable them to reach a broad audience, whilst also providing the flexibility in design to address all aspects of the study in one central location.

But it wasn't enough to just have the functionality, the approach also demanded a user friendly, engaging environment to ensure participants would return to the study space and share their experience

month after month.

The food manufacturer partnered with C+R Research to conduct a multi-phase and longitudinal ethnographic study using Recollective platform because it was the only online qualitative platform that could meet all of their needs.

Recollective's asynchronous research capabilities enabled C+R to reach consumers across the country.

It ensured that the timing of responses coincided with their actual product usage. Not only could participants tell the researchers about their product use, but they could do it with pictures and videos to better illustrate their exact experiences and challenges.

The activity-based structure in Recollective satisfied the client's desire to conduct journals and discussions, while also incorporating other question types such as text responses, polls, multimedia, image reviews and fill-in-the-blanks as they saw fit. They also had the ability to change the structure, flow and design of the research at any time without the need to launch a brand new study which proved important over this long-term initiative.

Participant engagement was also a key concern for the client, but the fear was easily mitigated by Recollective's user-friendly and customizable interface. The platform resembled current social media platforms that the participants were familiar with, helping them to feel comfortable with answering questions and removing any burden associated to frequent visits to the study space. Recollective's customizable interface allowed C+R to change the look and feel of the site to make it feel more interactive and inviting to participants.

To solve the client's concern about costs, C+R purchased a long-term Recollective licence which gave them the option of turning the research on and off any time they wanted. This approach saved money for the client, while maintaining the same site links and consistent access to the research data and participants.



Recollective proved instrumental to the client achieving their goal of understanding actual product usage and developing a strong, innovative product pipeline of their own.

Using Recollective, the client was able to:

- **Understand consumer pain points within real life situations.** Instead of consumers simply describing their preferences and challenges, they were able to demonstrate them in real life situations using journals and videos. Plus, gathering insights over several months yielded a more accurate picture of the user experience compared to traditional research methods and led to a strong sense of empathy for their customers' challenges.
- **Build an ongoing and trusting relationship with its consumers.** By offering a user-friendly, comfortable and fun research space in Recollective, the client was able to ask in-depth and personal questions of its participants on an ongoing basis. Research continues to this day, demonstrating the benefit of keeping consumers engaged and feeling comfortable.
- **Save costs compared to a traditional ethnographic study.** Using Recollective, consumers brought C+R Research and the end client into their homes without the need for travel costs or people hours to observe their behaviours in real-time.

This project has been so successful that it remains ongoing almost a year later as the client continuously uses Recollective to tap into consumer feedback, build on their innovation framework and assess future innovation opportunities. The insights from this initiative have been used to develop a series of innovative product ideas based on solving real consumer pain points.

