



Online Community of Energy Supplement Consumers

CASE STUDY

Background and Objectives

- ❖ We worked with an innovation company and its quantitative research partner to provide the in-depth qualitative exploration for the launch of a new energy dietary supplement.
- ❖ Key Research Objectives:
 - Determine the best positioning/messaging to use to appeal to various target groups
 - Identify relevant attitudes and behaviors of dietary supplement users
 - Determine what claims can be used in the new product descriptions to maximize purchase intent
 - Identify gaps in the market that the new product can fill
 - Assess the barriers to usage of the new product
 - Detail shopping habits (where consumers shop for these types of products)

Note: Due to the proprietary nature of this study, this case study provides generalized information to protect the sponsor's business interests.

Methodology: Online Community



The community was comprised of 102 consumers of products used to boost energy. Respondents were active in the community for 8 days.

Each day new topics, tasks and polls were published. A masking feature was employed so that participants had to provide their response to each daily topic before seeing other's responses.

Highlights of Tasks/Activities/Topics:

- ❖ Day 1 When and why you need energy?
- ❖ Day 2 Expose two positioning statements
- ❖ Day 3 Expose two more positioning statements
- ❖ Day 4 Expose last positioning statement
- ❖ Day 5 Expose 14 benefit statements, and gauge intent to purchase
- ❖ Day 6 Explore reactions to multi-pack serving sizes
- ❖ Day 7 Rate and rank the 5 positioning statements
- ❖ Day 8 Describe the product to a friend

Key Findings

- ❖ **Dietary supplement users experience a lag in energy at specific times of the day.**
 - When the slump hits they want a fast way to reverse their energy slowdown.
- ❖ **Reaction to all positioning statements was positive overall by communicating:**
 - A solution for the energy slump; its equivalence to familiar energy stimulants; it has health and flavor benefits; and it's better than current alternatives.
- ❖ **The positioning statements also performed well with a strong positive skew across the board.**
- ❖ **Intent to purchase was very high.**
- ❖ **Multi-serve pack size preferences skewed slightly toward smaller packs.**
- ❖ **Reactions to pricing options were split down the middle, but were not polarized. Most tipped slightly positive or negative.**
- ❖ **The only barrier to trial and/or usage of the new product was cost for some.**

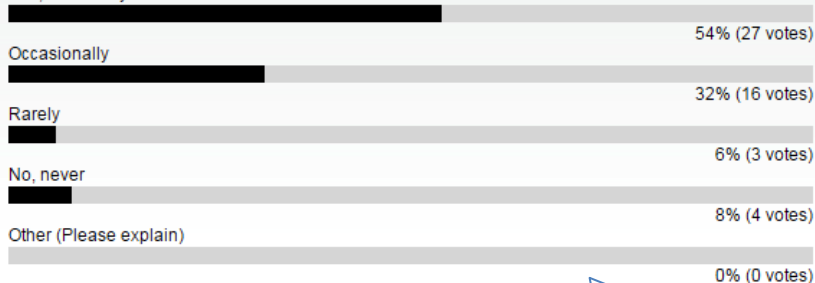
Detailed Findings: when, what and why

When, what and why they consume energy supplements

- ❖ Many seek an energy boost in the mid-morning but most need a boost in the afternoon.
- ❖ Coffee, energy drinks, chocolate, tea, soda, and snack/energy bars are their go-to sources.
- ❖ A few mentioned running/jogging, napping, yoga and just getting up and moving around as energy boosters.
- ❖ The top reasons they gave for seeking an energy boost included: being a busy mom, student, night shift worker, insomnia, to keep up with other people, and to get in a good workout.

do you have a 2 o'clock energy slump

Mon, 11/03/2014 - 00:39 | Submitted by Deb



Total votes: 50

"I generally need an energy boost first in the morning and then in the afternoon. In the morning I have a coffee. In the afternoon a piece of candy."

"It gives me the energy that I need in order to have a successful workout."

"Mid morning my energy starts to sag the most I think. I do a variety of things to boost my energy, there is nothing I do at a certain time or day. Some days I reach for a candy bar, some days I reach for a soda, some days I grab green tee, some days I grab a bag of almonds, others I just try to walk around to boost my energy."

Detailed Findings: top three positioning statements

Three of five positioning statements shown clearly resonated with these consumers, and the other two were only slightly less popular:

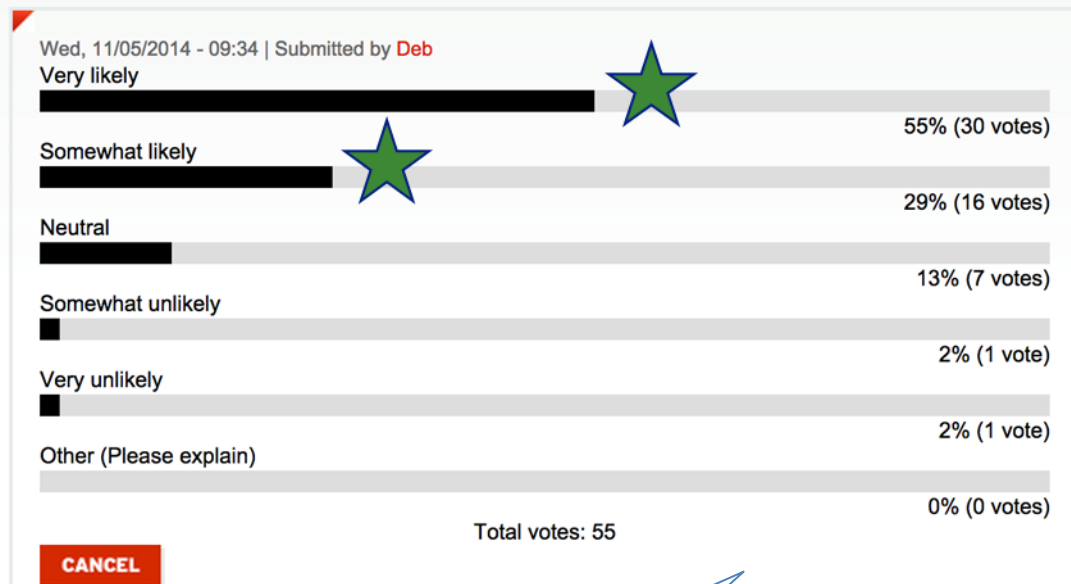
- 1. The statement that promised sustained energy plus health benefits**
 - Specific language in this statement that evoked comparisons to other energy products helped sharpen this version's ability to differentiate it in these consumer's minds
- 2. This statement emphasized a health benefit more explicitly**
 - However some of the specific language used in this statement struck a negative chord with several consumers
- 3. The statement that addressed cravings and quality calories**
 - This statement resonated for several because it addressed cravings and a better source of calories
- 4. The statement that emphasized avoiding coffee overload also surfaced as a valued positioning**
 - However this language focused too much on the morning usage occasion and limited its appeal
- 5. The statement focused on product portability was also a plus for many**
 - There were a few hypotheses about deficits in competitor products embedded in the language of this concept – those hypotheses were not supported by the data gathered from these consumers.

Detailed Findings: reactions to benefit statements

Statements	Overview of Reactions	+/-
1. Includes vitamin D for a healthy mental state	Vitamin D pops and adds a health benefit	33/19
2. One serving provides the same amount of caffeine as one cup of coffee or one Red Bull	Multiple mentions of not liking Red Bull which makes this a turn-off for them	47/6
3. Includes a compound, which helps support a healthy metabolism	Mostly positive reaction to the compound—many associate it with weight loss	39/13
4. Developed, formulated and produced in the U.S.	Made in the USA is a strong plus	46/6
5. Control your energy level by smaller or larger servings	Control is a strong benefit	44/7
6. Small and easy to keep on hand in your desk, pocket, purse or car	Convenience is a strong benefit – but some concerns about melting	46/6
7. A healthier energy boost that comes from caffeine and essential B-vitamins	The caffeine + B vitamins is a good combo conveying a strong health benefit	49/4
8. A low glycemic index so you can enjoy without a spike in insulin or blood sugar	Especially those with blood sugar issues relate to this and like it	39/14
9. Includes a natural compound found in green tea that smooths out the jitters	Strong positive reaction to “no jitters” and natural compound, but unknown compound	43/9
10. Provides an even level of energy without a spike	No spike – no crash is a strong benefit (goes with #9 & #14)	49/4
11. Low calorie, with only 45 calories per serving	Strong benefits, especially for calorie counters / weight watchers	47/6
12. No artificial colors, flavors or preservatives	No added junk or fillers is a big plus	46/5
13. Made with popular ingredient to satisfy your sweet craving	Familiar ingredient is a plus, enjoyable and could satisfy cravings, % purity may help	44/6
14. Caffeine from natural green tea extract	Caffeine coming from natural source is a strong benefit	42/5

Detailed Findings: high purchase intent

when is available, how likely are you to try them?



"I'm really interested in this product."

"I have tried protein bars, energy drinks, and all kinds of vitamins so I'm definitely going to be on the lookout for [them]. It doesn't hurt that I love dark chocolate though."

"I would like to try it to see how good it works."

Detailed Findings: price was the only stated barrier

The positioning statements shown resonated with most of the consumers in the online community. The claims were generally credible and motivated them to want to try the new product. The Multi-Serve Pack sizes made sense. But price was the one potential sticking point for about half of these respondents.

Many were surprised because their expectations were that the prices would be lower.

It's unclear to which other products they peg this new product when evaluating its price. But this should be examined using quantitative methods to ascertain more precisely how to price them.

NOTE: Many more detailed findings were gleaned from this 8 day online community, but those findings are proprietary. We present this to demonstrate how the online community can be utilized to gather highly specific, directional data which can be used by marketers to craft positioning and messaging for their products and brands.

