

HOW MARKET MAPPING HELPED A PICKLE MAKER SELL MORE PRODUCT

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Pickle manufacturers know the pickle will never be the star of any meal. But pair it with a toasted sandwich, pile it high on a juicy burger, deep fry it, or dress it up as a market vegetable appetizer—and it becomes a killer sidekick.

Over the past five years, the classic deli-style coleslaw and pickle accompaniment has fallen by the wayside as salads and new side dishes have stolen the spotlight. Our client, a major food manufacturer, was in a pickle: its product line was in decline, and it needed to know where it should focus its product development, selling, and marketing efforts.

Should it push its kosher dills to restaurant operators or grocery retailers? Did out-of-home lunches or backyard barbeques lend themselves best to its sweet gherkins? Should it market its pickled vegetables as versatile sandwich trimmings or stand-alone menu items? The client turned to us for answers.

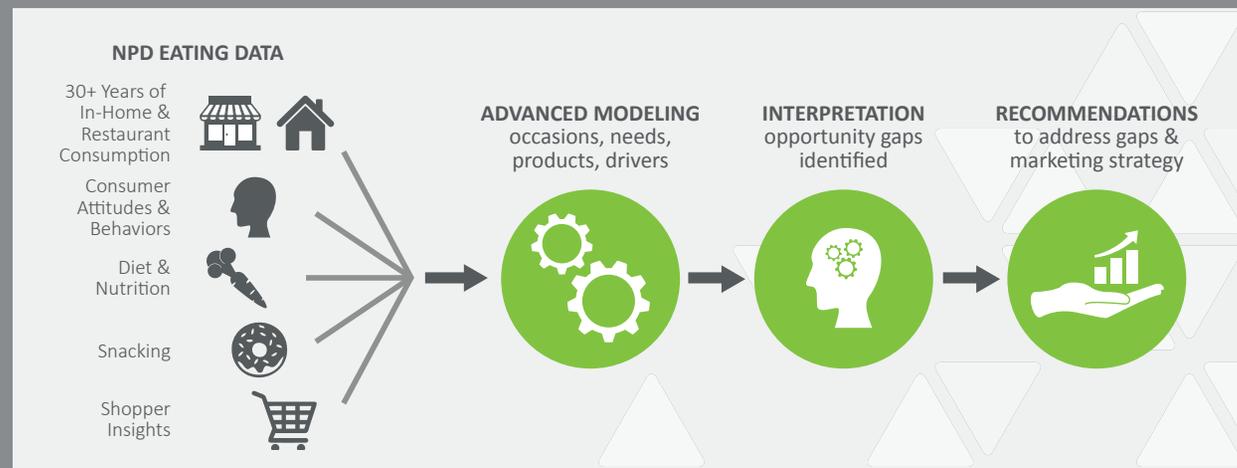
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HOW WE HELPED

After numerous on-site sessions with the manufacturer’s consumer insights team, it became clear that our market mapping solution was just what it needed. The solution would produce a comprehensive roadmap of promising opportunities. Harnessing our 30-plus years of continually tracked in-home and away-from-home eating behaviors, we referenced data on restaurant and grocery purchases, attitudes and motivations (the why behind the buy), diet and nutrition, and snacking. We compiled this data into a statistical model that projected the situations in which consumers were most likely to eat pickles and the consumption drivers for those occasions.

HOW IT WORKS



This is an illustrative case study, inspired by our actual work with clients, but fictionalized to protect client confidentiality.

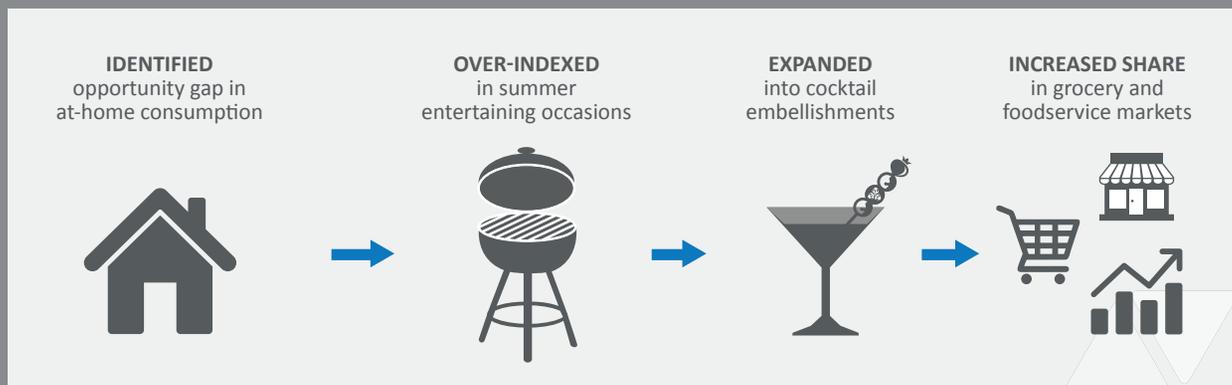
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WHAT WE RECOMMENDED

In addition to raw data files for the client’s own ad hoc analysis, we delivered a scorecard highlighting the top eating occasions for its pickle products. Among other findings, we identified an **opportunity gap** in at-home entertaining: the client’s pickled onion product—positioned as a sandwich fixing—over-indexed in summer entertaining occasions accompanying alcohol consumption. Simply put, customers liked to garnish their cocktails with brined vegetables—pickled onions, pickled okra, pickled green beans—you name it. Based on this finding, we advised our client to home in on this overlooked occasion and expand its offerings to pickled vegetables tailored specifically for cocktail embellishments.

Our client used these insights to inform its product development and marketing strategies and inspire higher-level engagements around beverage menus with top foodservice operators. Three cycles later, the client’s new pickle product saw consistent year-over-year share gains in both grocery and foodservice markets.

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