

Tips For Designing A Proper Shelf Test

Contributed by Kirk Hendrickson, CEO of EyeFaster
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The highest quality research, and the most actionable insights, begins with a good test design. Over the years, EyeFaster has provided clients advice on this subject, particularly related to eye tracking methodologies, and have found that successful projects keep a few simple things in mind.Â

Key considerations for fielding shelf tests research.

1. Include all partners in the methodology and design Understandably, clients are often guarded about their concepts but experience teaches us that any partner involved in the research design can add invaluable guidance to a project.

2. Design a planogram and stick to it

One of the biggest mistakes researchers make is changing tests on the fly. Making design changes in field can muddle findings. Field conditions are hectic and changes create inconsistencies that make consumer responses difficult to measure.

3. Thoroughly script instructions to ensure that test conditions remain consistent. Inconsistent instructions can introduce bias that affects shoppersâ€™ performance in the aisle.

4. Get as much out of your test by leveraging relationships When testing a new product or planogram, make sure to reap the full benefits of often costly, in-store or mock-store shelf tests. Be sure the supplier understands key areas of interest, including products, brand blocks, attention to price and signage.

5. Donâ€™t do to too much

While itâ€™s important to get all the data possible from each test, donâ€™t overdo it. Introducing multiple variables to shelf-tests can make it difficult to ascertain causation. Was it the vertical brand blocking that improved product visibility or the new concept packaging?

6. Document everything. I mean everything

Over-document the entire test process, everything from where interviews take place, to photographing the shelf throughout the day. Prior to arriving for the shelf test, make sure all suppliers have proper documentation of what is being tested.

Shelf tests may seem â€˜old hatâ€™ to experienced brand managers but keeping in mind key considerations can ensure that tests are optimized to provide actionable results.

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Kirk Hendrickson, CEO of EyeFaster, a leading provider of shopper research, developed his expertise in eye tracking and shopper research while leading worldwide field operations for EmSense Corporation and product management for MarketTools, Inc. Kirk holds a patent for conducting surveys on mobile phones and was twice a finalist for the EXPLOR Awards. Kirk holds an MBA from the Amos Tuck School of Business Administration, Dartmouth College, and a BS and MS in Mechanical Engineering from Stanford University.