

Case study:

How Mars leveraged consumer focused insights to arm itself with strong arguments that challenges retailers' views to improve its position in the market

MARS

Mars is an American global manufacturer of confectionery, pet food, and other food products, and a provider of animal care services and is one of the largest privately held companies in the United States.

Within the Brazilian market, Mars started in 1978 with the acquisition of a rice mill in Eldorado do Sul and the participation of 30 associates in the business after which Effem do Brasil was created. By the end of the 80's, it started a Pet food business and soon after, by the end of the 90's, its Chocolate business. In the beginning of 2000, they extended its Food segment, starting up the production of sauces. Today, they have more than 2.300 associates in eleven units, including five factories which produces some of the most popular brands in the world, including M&M'S®, TWIX®, RÁRIS® and the products for pets PEDIGREE®, WHISKAS® and ROYAL CANIN®.

TRYBE PACKAGE:

- _ Brand & Category Tracker
- _ Product Feedback

PRODUCT(S):

- _ M&M'S® Tubes (30g)

VERTICAL:

- _ Nondurable goods (FMCG)

Background

The M&M'S® Tubes range is a widely known and well-liked brand within the Brazilian market. In fact, it was the best-selling chocolate item within the M&M'S® portfolio for quite some time until the brand made some subtle product changes. However, these changes also meant a slight price increase for the product and ever since then, it saw a decrease in its sales. The sales decline also caused the product to lose its strong in-store placements with key retailers as retailers argued that the product changes made had impacted its sales.

In an attempt to increase its sales numbers and get to the root of the challenge, the consumer insights team at Mars then turned to Trybe in order to gather concrete supporting evidence. The team felt that by acquiring such insights it would greatly help them support their claims and win additional listings during their future retailer negotiations.

The Challenge

The team at Mars were looking to understand more about the impact of its product changes in the eyes of its consumers. They wanted to take a deep dive into consumer perceptions, overall product feedback, awareness sources and its key competitors. In doing so, they wanted to understand what barriers were hindering growth and how they were doing compared to their key competitors.

Additionally, they wanted to gather enough insights on its consumer profile and uncover who was purchasing the products, who was not purchasing it and its ease of availability in stores. The key focus of the research was to gather actionable insights in order to validate their own hypothesis about the impact the product changes have had on their sales numbers in order to make a case during their next round of retailer listing negotiations.

The Approach

By combining Trybe's Brand and Category Tracker and Product Feedback package, Mars was able to get a full overview of its own brand funnel and that of its competitors. From a product point of view, this gave the team an opportunity to study its consumer profiles, the source of awareness for its product, brand perceptions and to generate the product's overall general liking and Net Promoter Score.

This presented Mars with an opportunity to gain a better understanding about its consumer base and to analyze the drivers and barriers to conversion of its own product mapped against its key competitors. This was also a credible way for the team to also validate its own hypotheses and put some of the arguments retailers had made with regards to its product placements, consumer profiles and pricing options to rest.

// KEY INSIGHTS

- _ Debunked views shared by retailers with strong supporting evidence further highlighting consumer preference for the product
- _ Identified significant barriers for growth by analyzing its barriers for conversion, while at the same time identifying ways to address these barriers
- _ Gained an in-depth understanding of where it could most easily source new consumers from along with a full competitor overview

“The Trybe team showed professionalism and engagement during the entire research process. They understood our brief and delivered the insights that we were looking for. The research helped us to prove some assumptions we had and also busted some myths. It has helped us in many ways to create an action plan that will allow us to seize new opportunities and expand our footprint.”

Felipe Faria
- Consumer Insights, Mars Brazil