

Case Study

Validating Investment: Using Customers to Drive Decisions

Background & Client Objectives

A national fast food chain was looking to implement a new design and needed to quickly validate the concept at pilot locations. Specifically, they wanted to understand how customers perceived the new design relative to traditional locations in order to determine if the new design was worth the investment required to implement it.

Program Development & Methodology

Since customer intercepts allow businesses direct access to customer expectations and experiences at the point of influence, TrendSource Trusted Insight determined this methodology would be the best tool to achieve the client's goals. **Field Agents** were

positioned to intercept both drive-thru and dine-in customers at a total of six locations across the country—four new display concept locations and two traditional. A market research program was designed to capture customers' perceptions of the new concept as well as answer several questions



that measured satisfaction at the new design and traditional locations. These questions included:

- Does the new design encourage drive-thru customers to become dine-in customers?
- How does the new design shape perceptions of the client's restaurants as "hip" and "cool"?
- Do customers at new locations feel more valued by employees than they do at traditional locations?
- Does the new design influence customer's perceptions of the food as safe and high-quality?

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Analysis

Customer intercepts unambiguously revealed that the new concept was well worth the required investment, quickly validating the pilot strategy and suggesting the client should begin deploying the new format.

- Overall, 97% of customers at the new design locations were satisfied with their overall visit.
- Drive-thru customers at the new locations were significantly more likely to indicate a desire to go inside for future visits, and dine-in customers at new locations were significantly more likely to indicate that the restaurant's atmosphere made them want to stay longer. Such extended visits were very likely to increase the average check size and indicated the new concepts are part of a winning strategy. Along those same lines, the results further indicated that customers were more likely to bring a companion to a pilot location, with the average total party at 1.9 vs. 1.5 at traditional locations.
- Additional results continued to validate the new concept, particularly in terms of customer perceptions of coolness, quality, and customer service.

Grouped together, these indicators gave the client a green light, validating investment in the new design and inspiring confidence in their strategy and its future results.