

Case Study: Category Exploration Leads to Optimization Success in Hamburger Buns

Objectives



Our client in the baking industry desired to conduct a category analysis of hamburger buns to determine how they compare to the competition, identify areas of optimization that may exist to maintain competitiveness, and execute on those optimizations to provide consumers with an improved product.

Methodology

Phase 1:
Category Exploration

4 products
Evaluated Plain
Client
Market Leader
2 Additional Competitors

Phase 2:
Optimization Validation

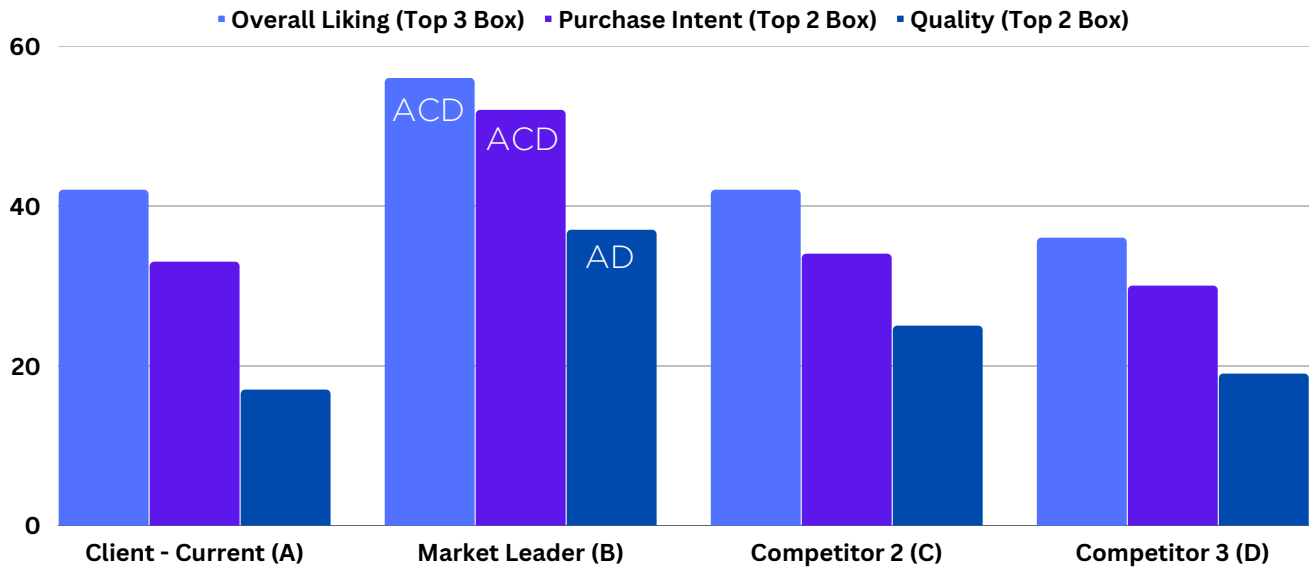
3 products
Evaluated both Plain and with a Hamburger
Client Original Formulation
Client Optimized Formulation
Top-Performing Competitor from Phase 1

CLT: 2 markets
n=100 past month users of hamburger buns

The two phases were executed months apart, after the team was able to take action on the recommendations brought in Phase 1 and create an optimized product to test in Phase 2.

Category Exploration Findings

In the initial category analysis of hamburger buns, it was found that the market leader was advantaged over the client's product. Opportunities for a better hamburger bun offering exist within the category.



Significance tested at the 95% confidence limit; indicated by capital letters corresponding to the products that the referenced number is higher than.

Optimization Recommendations

Critical Optimization Opportunities



Appearance

Increase the yellow color. The outer crust is too light in color and the interior is not yellow enough.



Flavor Delivery

Overall flavor is too mild.



Adjust chewiness and ease of bite

The bun is too chewy and too tough. These adjustments should help with overall texture perceptions and improve the overall consumption experience.

Secondary Optimization Opportunities



Adjust softness, springiness and fluffiness

The bun is not soft. springy nor fluffy enough.



Adjust sweetness

The bun is not sweet enough.



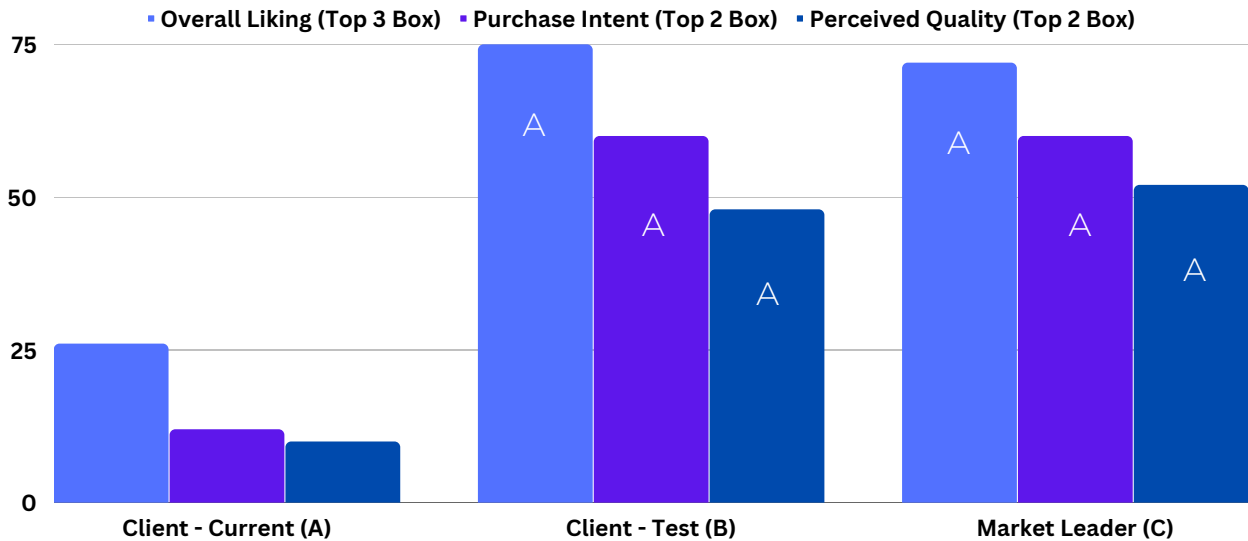
Adjust moistness

The bun is too dry.



Optimization Validation Findings

Improvements made to the hamburger bun recipe result in a stronger product offering and a better tasting product compared to the current recipe, and a product that is liked just as much as the market leader.



Significance tested at the 95% confidence limit; indicated by capital letters corresponding to the products that the referenced number is higher than.

The client trusted Blueberry's analysis and recommendations for critical optimization opportunities and delivered on all three -- appearance, flavor, and texture liking each increased significantly over the current in-market formulation. Flavor and texture now perform at parity with the market leader, including chewiness and ease of bite perceptions.

Secondary optimization opportunities were also addressed and improved -- perceptions of softness, fluffiness, springiness, and moistness intensities have all been brought closer to being just-right, and sweetness is better optimized than the market leader.

Conclusion

By completing a category analysis, the client was able to identify gaps in their own product relative to competition and rectify these shortcomings to create a superior product that performs as well as the market leader.

