

Consumer Testing for the Local Food Start-Up: Update

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Abstract

A self-executed consumer test protocol for food entrepreneurs has been designed and tested in Portland, Oregon. The protocol (Durham and Colonna, 2016) includes an Excel workbook that uses user-supplied cell entries to develop a single-sheet ballot and a data-entry sheet. Once the data are entered, the spreadsheet automatically produces useful tables and charts from the survey data. Videos demonstrate ballot creation and survey data entry. The workbook is accompanied by a manual that describes how to run a consumer test. These materials are available free of charge, but access to the workbook requires completion of a survey.

The survey template begins with standard consumer test questions assessing concept and liking (nine-point scales), followed by sensory attribute Just-About-Right questions. The second page begins with a set of priced purchase intent questions. A price range including six prices is listed vertically, and consumers are asked to indicate their willingness to pay for the product at each price. The results for these purchase intent questions can be used to produce a pseudo-demand curve.

The purchase intent question is followed by a question about the quantity they would buy per year at a specific price. This provides a means by which total annual demand for informed buyers could be estimated. Two check-all-that-apply (CATA) are next. The default CATA offerings include a question providing a list of possible locations where they regularly shop for food and a question about production and ingredient preferences relevant to the product (for example,

organic and gluten-free). In combination with the purchase intent questions, these could provide a convincing sales presentation to a retailer or to be included in a business plan. The ballot ends with four multiple choice questions.

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References

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