TOP 200 BURGER CHAIN

A DATASSENTIAL CASE STUDY

Competing in the competitive casual dining space, successful innovation is critical to survival. Innovation comes into play not only when ideating new brand experiences and menu concepts for the consumer, but it is also how restaurants stay afloat when external threats like COVID-19 are disrupting literally every aspect of life.

SPOTLIGHT CLIENT

This Datassential client is a top 200 burger chain serving an innovative selection of high-quality gourmet burgers in a family-friendly atmosphere. Given competitive pressures and changing consumer preferences and tastes, innovation was one of the highest priorities for this chain. When the current Director of Innovation joined the company as the Senior Manager of Innovation in 2013, they were tasked with ideating and testing as many concepts as they could, with the hopes of launching at least one new product in each of this chain's promotional windows.

THE CHALLENGE

After working with a small concept testing vendor that this chain had partnered with for years, the Director of Innovation felt the process was too time consuming, inflexible, and expensive to meet their goals. Additionally, the vendor didn't provide a good way to benchmark their concepts against competitive offerings. They knew to thrive in their new role, they needed to find a new concept testing solution as soon as possible and took it upon themselves to do so.

THE SOLUTION

Upon researching alternative vendors, the Director of Innovation came across Datassential with its SCORES product, cutting-edge technology for concept testing designed specifically for the foodservice industry. They were immediately intrigued, thinking "If SCORES can do what it claims it can do, this will be a game-changer for our organization."

The sales representative they started working with was extremely responsive and helpful; he moved quickly to set up a true beta test for their team. Upon reviewing results, all the organizational stakeholders involved in the beta testing, including their business intelligence team, were blown away by Datassential's speed and accuracy.

The Director of Innovation was up and running on SCORES within weeks. Their first "wow" moment? How simple the product was to use. Not only did they become a power user with minimal training, but they were also able to train others on their team and within the organization, like the chefs, to become confident users and see the value of the product after a mere 30 minutes of training.

THE IMPACT

The innovation team went from being able to concept test 25 concepts per year with its previous vendor to churning out 100 tests per year with us for the same price. Not only was Datassential cost effective and far more efficient, but the launches were also unparalleled in their success. In fact, the chain has launched some of its most successful LTOs in the past decade by leveraging SCORES, exceeding even the most optimistic internal expectations.

Additionally, the software and customer support team empowered the Director of Innovation and their team to become better and smarter. For example, the data being collected via concept testing also began to inform their go-to-market strategy in terms of the best promotional windows, when to launch new products, how to launch new products, etc.

Since partnering with Datassential, this chain has been able to scale back on the amount of in-market testing of LTOs, leading to significantly reduced time to market and cost of product development. They also found tremendous value working with Datassential's custom projects team to prioritize new concept ideas, identifying those with the highest probability of success, which enabled this Datassential client to optimize its process even further.

WHY THEY ARE LOYAL DATASSENTIAL USERS

Every year, the Director of Innovation gets approval to include DS as a line item in the budget, no questions asked. However, there have been times when other vendors have tried to "win" them away. In one case, they challenged the vendor, who claimed to have a far superior product, to run a test. They selected 20 concepts that had proven successful in the market to see how they would score in concept testing. The result increased their confidence even more in Datassential - less than 25% of the products scored high enough in concept testing to move on to the next stage. In other words, had the Director of Innovation been using the other product, this chain would have missed out on some very successful LTOs and menu items.