

CASE STUDY



Testing Advertising Online Gives Client Access to Wider Community Feedback



CHALLENGE

Conduct an online quantitative survey to measure community awareness and test advertising concepts to guide St. Joseph's and its agency in their rebranding and positioning efforts.

OUTCOME

The MSR Group was able to provide statistically reliable information regarding public perceptions of the hospital's market position, plus in-depth commentary about proposed advertising concepts and name alternatives for pediatric services at St. Joseph's. The research identified opportunities for the client to differentiate themselves from their competition.

METHODOLOGY

Online Concept Testing Featuring Trade-off Intensity Scale Analysis.

OVERVIEW

St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix and its advertising agency, Prairie Dog | TCG, wished to understand the hospital's relative perception compared to other hospitals in the market, specifically Phoenix Children's Hospital, as well as to test potential name alternatives and positioning concepts for St. Joseph's pediatric program.

METHODOLOGY

Traditionally, awareness and positioning research is conducted utilizing quantitative methodology such as telephone or mail while advertising concept testing most frequently utilizes a qualitative approach, such as focus groups with the target audience. In this instance, however, Prairie Dog | TCG and St. Joseph wanted to ensure that the results of both the awareness and concept test would be representative of the entire Phoenix target audience. Given the two-fold needs of the clients, The MSR Group recommended an online quantitative survey with a section specifically designed to test advertising concepts.

A random sample of 400 Phoenix area consumers was recruited to complete the survey. Participants were women aged 25-45 with children ages 15 or younger. In addition, St. Joseph invited its pediatric services employees, hospital board members and pediatric-specialty physicians to complete the portion of the online survey which dealt with name alternatives and positioning concepts.

The awareness and positioning portion of the survey was designed utilizing

a series of five-point scale questions. The concept testing section offered the opportunity for participants to view four positioning concepts. The concepts were first judged on their ability to capture attention and deliver important information. Then, respondents were asked to rate the appeal of the concepts. Finally, respondents ranked the four concepts in order of overall preference. In addition, participants were able to provide feedback through open-ended comments.

A trade-off intensity scale analysis was used to evaluate five alternative name options for St. Joseph's Children's Health Center. In the survey, one name was placed at the left and another at the right of a 21-point continuum. The center point was titled "neutral," while the points under each name were titled "much more appealing." By selecting a point along the continuum, respondents indicated both their preference and the intensity of that preference. This was repeated for all possible name pairings, producing trade-off intensity scores for each name option.

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JERRY HOBBS
Executive Vice President at Prairie Dog | TCG

RESULTS

The MSR Group was able to provide statistically reliable information on the hospital's reputation and position in the market along with capturing in-depth commentary about the advertising concepts through open-ended responses provided by survey participants.

The survey revealed that in terms of overall reputation for pediatric services, Phoenix Children's Hospital was perceived as being the best. However, the study showed a significant lack of awareness regarding what differentiated Phoenix Children's from St. Joseph's pediatric services. Of those who did feel comfortable making a comparison, most respondents rated St. Joseph's to be "About the Same" as Phoenix Children's. This information identified specific opportunities for St. Joseph to capture portions of the pediatric services market.

The trade-off intensity analysis identified a clear winner in terms of a preferred name for pediatric services at St. Joseph. In addition, the research revealed St. Joseph had a unique qualification to deliver on a compelling point of differentiation in the Phoenix market. Survey comments and rankings revealed a highly relevant and emotive issue for mothers that could be used in the hospital's re-branding and positioning efforts. Finally, the survey results offered clear direction on target audience preferences and compelling messages.

"The most powerful part of the study was the ability to test the concepts online," said Jerry Hobbs, Executive Vice President at Prairie Dog | TCG. "Using this methodology we were able to quantify the concept most preferred by our target audience without sacrificing the value of qualitative research because we were still able to collect verbatim comments."