

# The Emotional Quotient of Soup Shopping

Campbell's Taps 'Neuromarketing' Techniques to Find Why Shelf Displays Left Some Customers Cold  
By ILAN BRAT

The bowls are getting bigger and steamier, but the soup spoons are going away.

Those are among the biggest changes Campbell Soup Co. is making in decades to the iconic labels and shelf displays of its condensed soups—the company's biggest single business, with more than \$1 billion in sales.

The changes—expected to be announced Wednesday—will culminate a two-year effort by Campbell to figure out how to get consumers to buy more soup.

Condensed soup has been a slow-growing category in which budget-conscious consumers have little tolerance for price increases.

In the hunt for a better connection with consumers, Campbell Soup Co. is relying on new neuromarketing studies to guide the redesign of its condensed-soup packaging.

The research looks at physiological responses -- such as perspiration and increased heart rate -- to marketing.

The problem: It's not easy to know what prompts people to buy soup, except for something warm to eat on a frosty day. When asked why they eat more soup or not, people tend to "say they don't think of it," says Doug Conant, Campbell's chief executive.

The company hopes the label and display changes will help shoppers connect on a deeper level to the products and boost its condensed soup sales by 2% over the next two years.

For two years, Campbell researchers studied microscopic changes in skin moisture, heart rate and other biometrics to see how consumers react to everything from pictures of bowls of soup to logo design.

This "neuromarketing" approach is a fresh attempt among consumer-

good companies to understand how consumers really respond to marketing and advertising.

Technological advances have made the research cheaper and faster, making it accessible to more companies. Scientists also better understand how near-instant brain and body responses relate to how people generate meaning from new information, says Robert Barocci, president of the Advertising Research Foundation.

For years, Campbell's researchers asked consumers whether they remembered an ad and whether it made them more likely to buy a product. But a 2005 Campbell analysis revealed that, overall, ads deemed more effective in surveys had little relation to changes in Campbell sales.

Robert Woodard, Campbell's vice

**New and Improved . . . Labeling!**  
Campbell Soup used biometrics to analyze consumers' response to their label and changed the packaging to reflect their preferences revealed by the study.

**Old shelf label** (left): Shows the traditional Campbell's Condensed Soup label for Cream of Potato soup, featuring a spoon with soup.

**New label** (right): Shows the redesigned label for Cream of Potato soup, featuring a bowl of soup with steam rising from it. The label includes a "CLASSIC FAVORITES" banner at the top and the Campbell's logo at the bottom.

Annotations on the new label:

- CLASSIC FAVORITES banner:** The different varieties of soup were color-coded to help consumers distinguish them more easily.
- Steam:** Steam was added because people indicated they felt more emotionally engaged if the soup looked warm.
- Spoon:** The spoon was removed. People thought it was unnecessary and had little emotional response to it.
- Bowl:** The bowl was updated.
- Logo:** Eyetrack studies showed when the logo was placed at the top it drew too much attention and the red background also made all the labels look too similar.

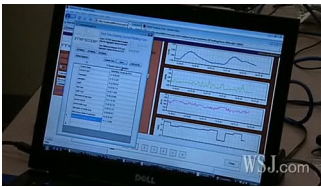
Source: the company

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president of global consumer and customer insights, says the traditional interview had limited usefulness because people's words didn't fully capture their unconscious responses. He says Campbell needed approaches that would help it understand the neurological and bodily responses to an ad rather than how people thought they'd reacted.



By 2008 Mr. Woodard settled on the biometric tools combined with a different type of deep interview to more accurately gauge which consumer communications worked better. Campbell then hired Innerscope Research Inc., a Boston company that measures bodily responses, and other firms to help conduct research. To be sure, neuromarketing techniques have their doubters. And biometrics tell only if a person reacted to something, not whether they liked

or disliked something, and sample sizes tend to be small.

Carl Marci, an Innerscope founder, says his tools can't pinpoint what emotions a person feels. But if all the biological metrics move simultaneously in the same direction, the subject is likely to be emotionally engaging with something.

Campbell began dissecting its condensed-soup marketing that summer, around when executives had started considering how to refresh the product line.

Researchers interviewed about 40 people at their homes and later in grocery stores. The team also clipped small video cameras to the 40 testers at eye level and had them later watch tape of themselves shopping for soup. Vests that the testers wore captured skin-moisture levels, heart rate, depth and pace of breathing, and posture. Sensors attached to the video monitor tracked eye movements and pupil width.

The researchers found that warmth and other positive attributes people associated with Campbell's soup at home evaporated when they faced store shelves.

Typically, consumers show simultaneous blips in most of their biological metrics when they decide to buy something. These indicate the emotional reward they feel for making a choice and may help drive future purchases, Mr. Marci says.

But the array of condensed soups so overwhelmed many participants that they would quickly scan the category and select soups while evidencing little biometric response.

The people who spent more time exploring varieties showed more

and bigger simultaneous spikes in biometrics—and tended to put more soup cans in their baskets.

The Campbell team figured it could boost sales by triggering more emotional responses in stores and prompting more people to focus on more soups.

Another round of research showed that Campbell's large logo at the top of shelf displays draws more attention than necessary. At first glance, the logo's bright red background makes all varieties of soups—from the classic chicken noodle to the jazzier Italian Wedding Soup—seem to blend together, the company learned.

In interviews, participants also said the soup pictured on the can and shelf labels didn't look warm. And the big spoon holding a sample of soup on each label provoked little emotional response.

Shoppers will begin seeing changes in the Campbell section of supermarkets this fall. Among them: Condensed-soup varieties will be sectioned into four, color-coded categories such as "taste sensations" in orange and "classic favorites" in light brown. The company's logo will be smaller and moved lower so it's not as prominent. Campbell's three biggest sellers—chicken noodle, tomato and cream of mushroom, the soup can labels immortalized by Andy Warhol—will remain the same. But on other labels, steam will rise from larger, more vibrant pictures of soup in more modern, white bowls. And those unemotional spoons will disappear.

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