

Fragrance product testing



Background

The client is one of the world's leading manufacturers of fragrances and flavours.

Swift Research, a specialist in fragrance market research, was engaged to carry out quantitative sensory assessment of a selection of prototype fragrances for the air freshener market.

The client had created six fragrances and required a strict protocol with each fragrance to be tested in separate rooms all of which had to be identical in size and furnishings and be neutral in respect of smell.

In addition, the prototypes had to be assessed against a market leading air freshener.

It was essential that the research measured overall consumer acceptance, appropriateness of product, fragrance characteristics and product expressions.

Swift Research Solution

The main challenge for this task was to find a building with identical rooms and furnishings - the Swift team identified a newly opened Days Inn Hotel on the A1 and booked out seven rooms for two days.

All use of cleaning agents was banned by hotel staff during this period and windows were left open to leave each room fragrance free.

Well in advance of the research a screening questionnaire was drawn up to select panellists. This would ensure the optimum panel would be selected

and ruled out anyone with specialist knowledge of fragrances and those whose sense of smell could be affected by colds or allergies. It also ruled out mums to be and new mums whose sense of smell can be affected by pregnancy.

The 70 strong panel was also forbidden to wear perfume on the day of the test, chew gum or to smoke and each person was individually checked to ensure they had complied.

The fragrance was placed in the same location in each room and identical air moving systems were used to ensure uniformity.

Each panellist tested the fragrance in exactly the same areas of each room and a sequential monadic testing system was used to gather opinions from each panellist.

Benefits

The attention to detail applied by Swift Research provided a neutral and uniform testing arena enabling accurate assessments to take place.

An analysis of the results showed all prototypes scored higher than the market leader used as a benchmark. In addition, the research indicated areas where the client could modify its offering to strengthen its customer appeal.

The research enabled the client to continue investing in developing the prototypes knowing there was a strong consumer attraction.