**Branded Product Test (BPT)**

**April 2013 v1**

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*ASU30*

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# Overview – Branded Product Test:

BAT has traditionally conducted majority of product testing in un-branded blind format – however this testing is best suited to test the pure product performance in isolated context. When consumers interact with products in the marketplace this happens always in branded format and in a total offer setting where the taste is likely to be influenced by branding factors.

With BAT’s focus into differentiated blends, unique product experiences and the desire to understand the holistic product and quality experience there was a clear need to develop a branded product test into our methodology portfolio.

The *Branded Product Test (BPT)* will enable us to test our product performance in the real life environment in order to get a good understanding on the quality of the products and their impact on Brand Equity. It allows us to test the holistic product experience including any innovative features and concepts.

There are also cases where it is not possible to mask the products to conduct an un-branded blind test – typically we have these issues with Menthol products and with products that have very specific tipping or filter design. For such situations the Branded Product Test offers a way of testing the products and understanding our performance against the competitors.

Branded Product Testing will be used in two different ways within BAT:

1. **Brand Monitor Programme** – a replacement for the previous MASQ programme - a list of brands that are tested on yearly basis against competitor benchmarks in branded format. This is an on-going monitoring initiative and the results will trigger product improvement projects.
2. **Ad-Hoc testing** – as part of the product/prototype development programme the BPT can be used to test new prototypes.

Both are based on the same underlying methodology and will contribute to the new Branded Product Test Normative Database.

In principle all the new BAT products need to undergo first through an un-branded UPT test before moving to branded testing. Therefore at the moment the Branded Product Test (BPT) does not replace the un-branded testing – but complements it by further assessing Brand Equity uplift, Consumer Quality Index and Preference Share. The biggest difference to the past is that going forward our performance against competitors will be mainly judged using the branded test.

*The extent to which un-branded testing will be used in the future will be re-assessed later once we have a sufficient experience with Branded Testing and a rich set of norms. For the time being both BPT and UPT play an important part in our product testing plans.*

The product testing plans are governed by the GPSG and the Regional Product Groups.

Any deviations from the protocol require a sign off from Global SP&I – Global Oracle Manager.

# How to set up a Branded Product Test?

BPT is a quantitative study where we place each product with the respondents for 4 days home placement. The products are placed in branded format, with real packs and any relevant product/concept information is shared with the respondent in advance.

## Research Design:

The design is dependent on the following factors:

* *Number of prototypes being tested*
* *Number of brands being tested*
* *Target group used (Own – SOB – both)*

The following basic principles need to be followed:

* *Sequential Monadic placement* within a panel can only be used when testing one brand. Other brands (such as competitor benchmarks) need to be placed in separate matched panels.
* When using *sequential monadic* placement – only the product should change and the other variables should be kept constant. For instance all the prototypes need to be placed in the same pack design and carry the same stick design. Please note that BPT is strictly a product test – if the task is actually to test different mix combinations then the right test may be in fact a 4Tune or a 4Cast.

*Certain exception to the above can be made for cases when the specific product change is communicated through the pack (like having the ORT logo on the pack for ORT products). These need to be reviewed case by case.*

* Visually differentiated products cannot be tested sequentially in the same panel. They will have to be separately tested in *matched monadic panels.*
* Products need to be always fully rotated to remove order bias.
* All products need to be treated equally and carry an alpha-numeric product code just like in the un-branded product test. If we are testing a current product against new prototypes there should not be any possibility for the respondent to visually recognise the current product.
* Only 4 products should be tested by one panel in a row – if there are more products to be tested there are two choices how we can do that within one project.
  1. The products can be divided into matched panels that can do the testing simultaneously. In such case we need to ensure that the design is balanced with an equal amount of products in each panel.
  2. After 16 days (4x4) the respondent is given a 7 day gap to reset their taste pallet and overcome fatigue with product testing. Depending on how many products there are in general to be tested the products need to be divided as equally as possible across the batches.

*For example if there are 6 products to test the recommended design would be 3 products – 7 days gap – 3 products. This gives a balanced testing experience to the consumer. Naturally all products need to be fully rotated within and across the batches.*

## Example Design Scenarios:

Scenario 1 – *Testing 2 new prototypes of a single brand against current (no competitor benchmark):*

If there is a clear objective to improve the BAT product on the base ratings compared to what is currently available there may not be a need to include a competitor benchmark. This might also be a situation where the competitor product has already been tested earlier so we have a clear benchmark in the database whilst we have been working on improving the BAT product.

The design in this case would be a *Sequential Monadic Test* with 3 products (2 new prototypes + current). The test would include 4 visits with the respondent in each panel as illustrated below.

Product 3

Evaluated

Pre Placement Evaluation

Product 1

Evaluated

Product 2 Evaluated

Product

Placement

Product

Placement

Product

Placement

The testing is done separately amongst *Own Franchise (OWN)* and *Source of Business (SOB)*. There may be cases though where the BAT brand is so small that it is not possible to setup the OWN panel – in such cases the testing may be done solely amongst the SOB.

Scenario 2 – *Testing new BAT prototypes against competitor benchmark (multiple brands):*

When we test several brands in one test it is not possible to place them within the same panel with *sequential monadic* placement. The reason for this is a brand bias and order bias which cannot be eliminated through any kind of rotating. Therefore the basic rule is always that different brands need to be separated to their own panels.

*For example – if we add one competitor benchmark to the previous design then the setup would be:*

*2 matched panels - one will test the current + prototypes as in the previous example. The second panel will test the competitor benchmark.*

The panels need to be matched based on demographics, geographic, smoking behaviour and likely product expectations. On top of standard variables like age, gender, geography, the panels should also be matched on *Average Daily Consumption* and *Regular Brand Disposition*.

In addition the following rule needs to be followed in order to maintain a balance across the test panels:

*The amount of test products across the matched panels should ideally be equal.* If in one panel people know they will be testing 4 products in a row versus another panel knows they will only test 1 product – this may impact the ratings given. *(The theory is that the panel testing 4 products may be tempted to “hold back” ratings for the first couple of rounds to save better ratings for later .. versus the panel who knows they will only test one product can freely give that one product their honest rating)*

To avoid this sort of bias – we should avoid un-balanced designs and in the above case the competitor benchmark should be placed at least twice to mitigate the impact of a single product. Also to keep things equal in the beginning of the survey both panels should be told that they are testing equal amount of products.

## Sample Size and type:

The basic sample size for a BPT test is 150 smokers per panel. If any sub-group reporting is needed the sample size for each group needs to be 150. A standard test has 150 OWN and 150 SOB smokers.

Sampling should be quota based sampling. It is also possible to use pre-requited smokers – it can be through formal consumer panels or through re-contact of respondents recruited for previous tests. The new guideline for re-contacting respondents is to keep a gap of 3 months after a previous tobacco interview. This has been shortened from the previous guideline of a 6 months gap.

BPT testing will be built on a normative database that will allow us to monitor our products performance over time in the market place and against competitors. In order to do this in a consistent manner the target groups that will be used for the testing need to be defined for each market and held as constant as possible over time. Unless the target group definition is kept constant – it will not be possible to do good quality testing against the normative database.

## Rules around target group setting:

For the Brand Monitor:

**OWN panel:** The target group should cover 80% of the Current Franchise of the particular SKU in order to qualify for a standard OWN panel.

**SOB panel:** Standard SOB panel should cover 80% of the expected SOB in the market to qualify. The following things should be considered when designing the “expected SOB”:

* Clear format rejecters should be left out – it is not feasible to test the product amongst people who refuse to smoke it. Format acceptance should be confirmed in the recruiting phase.
* The target group for a particular brand should be carefully defined considering current market interactions and strategic objectives. This target group definition should be maintained for all subsequent product tests for the particular brand. As conditions and offers will change in the market place the main thing is to ensure that in relative terms the target group definition is comparable over time.
* The target group should be a mix of relevant SOB brands and not a single brand *(unless there is a special situation that one large brand represents nearly the entire SOB).*
* A minimum sample of 15 of any brand family (Not SKU level) is required to be eligible for the SOB panel.

*For Example: if we have Kent HD blue 20’s, Kent HD Blue 25’s, Kent HD Silver 20’s, Kent HD Silver 25’s, Kent Nanotek in market – and only Kent HD Blue and Kent Nanotek are relevant SOB brands for the Brand Variant being tested then we need to have a minimum of 15 sample size for Kent HD Blue (20’s and 25’s combined) and Kent Nanotek*

* Please note that the weighting factor needs to fall within the range of 0.7-1.3 – therefore very small brands should not be included as part of the SOB panel. It is very important that a good balanced and constant SOB definition is established for all of our key brands in each market – please make sure this is carefully reviewed with the research agency before testing starts.

*For Example: Let’s look at a brand that is 4% of the SOB target group. From 150 smokers this brand would get 6 smokers as per the normal allocation. However we need to have minimum of 15 sample size representation for any brand. If we boost this brand smokers up to 15 smokers – we need to later apply a weighting factor to bring down the weight of these smokers. In this case the weighting factor would be 6/15 = 0.4 which is outside the permissible range. Therefore either we would need to leave out this small brand from the SOB target group or then the overall sample size needs to be increased to enable all the brands to be within the permissible weighting range.*

It is possible to add *single brand boosters* to the SOB panel – however the standard SOB panel should always be the starting point and is going to be the requirement for the Brand Monitor programme. If there is a business requirement to add a single brand target group that can be arranged as an additional reporting head by boosting the sample.

## Guidelines for selecting a benchmark brand:

The basic objective in including a competitor benchmark brand in a BPT is to understand what the distance is between BAT brands and competitor brands in the market. From objectives setting point of view this can mean the following scenarios:

1. *The objective is to test where we are against the benchmark product (baseline testing)*
2. *The objective is to improve our position against the benchmark product (decrease the gap between BAT product and the competitor product)*

Branded product testing requires a completely different consideration on the objectives and benchmark setting than the un-branded testing. In un-branded form the normal objectives of parity of superiority can be tested without a bias from Brand Equity or size of the brand. When we test branded products the following things will have an impact on the actual results:

*The size of the brand in the market: Imagine that you are testing a relatively small BAT brand of 2% share against a major brand in the market which has 50% share. It is unrealistic to set a target amongst the SOB that our small brand should have a higher Preference Share than the large competitor brand. In this case what is realistic is to measure first the distance between the brands and then set targets to narrow the distance over time.*

Due to this it is very important that the objective and the benchmark are carefully reviewed before the testing starts to ensure that our objective is technically realistic. Please note that the objectives for un-branded blind testing will be different and the outcome measures will also look very different from the branded results.

The main use and main action standards of the BPT should be set in measuring and narrowing the gap to the benchmark brand.

Action Standards within the OWN panel should be always set between the current and the new prototypes.

## Stimulus materials and requirements:

The Branded Product Test requires a full set of branded materials:

* *Branded Packs – with test codes*
* *Price either on pack (if that is the norm in the market or presented separately)*
* *Branded Sticks*
* *Any product / concept related communication*
* *SAS attributes booklet*

It is very important that each product is equal in terms of the quality of materials included and that the only changing variable within a panel is the product itself.

*There can be some exceptions to this – for instance if one of the prototypes tested has a special concept such as ORT – it would be permissible that the packaging has an ORT logo on it. However it is very important to hold onto the principle that this is strictly a product test and the consistency across the branded mix elements of the samples is critical.*

Amount of stimulus materials needed:

* Each test product will be needed for 4 days placement
* Number of packs placed per test offer would depend on the Maximum Daily Consumption of the respondent
* We should always reserve an extra buffer of 10% for each test product

*For Example: Average Daily Consumption of target group is 19.8 sticks per day. Sample size is 150 smokers. The amount of products needed: 19.8 x 4 x 150 = 11880 sticks – divided by 20 to get 594 packs.*

*Additional buffer of 10% added to this – 594 packs x 1.1 = 654 packs.*

*As we can only include full packs it is good to also make the calculation the other way around to ensure enough products. If in doubt it is better to increase the buffer up to 15% rather than risk running short of products.*

Please note that all the stimulus materials need to meet the local legal requirements and have a sign-off from local legal before starting the fieldwork.

# The Interview and Questionnaire flow

BPT is a multi-visit test that is done with pre-recruited consumers. Typically the consumers are fist recruited by using various methods and quota sampling. Product Testing Consumer panels are also an option especially in markets that will conduct a lot of product testing.

Interviews are normally conducted at respondents home or chosen location. It is mandatory that the first interview is conducted face to face – however it is possible to administer the follow up interviews on telephone or on-line.

The test products are given to the respondent always one product at a time and any excess products are collected back. If face to face interviews are used the interviewers are usually the ones to deliver and collect the products. If the follow up interviews are conducted via telephone or on-line the product delivery needs to be arranged with a courier. The number of visits in a test depends on the number of products tested.

## Visit and Interview flow:

**VISIT 1:**

EXPOSURE OF TEST OFFER 1

Pre- Smoking ratings: Brand familiarity & other key information areas

Placement of TEST OFFER 1 for 4 days

**VISIT 2:**

POST SMOKING - RATINGS OF TEST OFFER 1

EXPOSURE OF TEST OFFER 2

Pre- Smoking ratings: Brand familiarity & other key information areas

Placement of TEST OFFER 2 for 4 days

**VISIT 3-5:**

Same process repeats for all test offers up to 4 products tested. A 4-product test would have 5 visits in total. If there are more products to test then either after the 4th product there needs to be a 7 days gap before placing further products – OR a matched panel will be testing simultaneously another batch of products.

## Questionnaire flow:

**VISIT 1**

**EXPOSURE TO OFFER 1**

|  |
| --- |
| **PRE-SMOKING** |
| Brand Familiarity |
| Overall Likeability |
| Purchase Intention |
| Brand Equity & other brand Image statements Pre smoking |
| Product Perception statements Pre-Smoking |

**PLACEMENT FOR 4 DAYS**

**VISIT 2**

|  |
| --- |
| **POST SMOKING – RATINGS OF THE OFFER PLACED** |
| Taste Familiarity |
| Overall Likeability |
| Spontaneous Likes/ Dislikes |
| Purchase Intention |
| Brand Equity & other brand Image statements Post smoking |
| SAS Attributes |
| Overall Pack & Stick Quality |
| Specific Pack & Stick Quality Elements |
| Any defect faced with Tested Offer |

**SAS ATTRIBUTES:**

The basic core questionnaire for Branded Product Test remains the same for all different types of products – however the SAS attributes list has been adapted to different product types.

The following SAS attribute lists are available:

* *Conventional Non Menthol product*
* *Conventional Menthol product*
* *Menthol Boost*
* *Menthol Switch*
* *Switch Capsule with other flavours*
* *Boost Capsule with other flavors*

A master questionnaire has been developed for each different type listed above.

It is very important to specify in the beginning of the test what types of products are tested as this will have an impact on the test design and the questionnaire.

## SAS+ attributes – local translation and validation:

The SAS attribute list is the core of the BPT questionnaire. A list of sensory attributes that is kept constant throughout the studies and stored in the normative database.

Whilst the global list has been defined and validated in English – before a market uses the list (or any new attribute) in a study the following two things need to be done:

1. **Translation of the attributes to local language(s).** The most important thing is to capture the meaning rather than try to translate directly from English word by word. Once you have translated into local language is very important to ask a third party to perform a “back-translation” to English to check that your local translation truly is reflective of the English attribute.
2. **Validation with local consumers**. The translated attribute list needs to be tested with consumers to check if they understand the attributes and their meaning in the way that we intended. There has to be a clarity what consumers understand when looking at the attributes. Validation can be done by testing

Please make sure that the SAS+ list is properly translated and validated for your market. Never use an attribute in an UPT unless it is validated and it is clear how consumer understands it.

## Questionnaire length:

The actual questionnaire length varies by market and Target group however we can roughly say that:

Visit 1 = 10 minutes

Visit 2 & Subsequent Visits = 15-20 minutes

For Menthol product add 5 minutes to visit 2 & subsequent

For Capsule product add 5 minutes to visit 2 & subsequent

For face to face interviews some additional time has to be accounted for the basic meeting and greeting.

# Key Metrics and Analytics

## Key outcome measures:

There are three ‘hard’ outcome measures for BPT. These key metrics quantify different aspects of the product performance in the branded form:

* ***Preference share*** *measures the overall potential of the offer*
* ***Brand Equity Uplift*** *measures the impact of product experience on Brand Perception*
* ***Consumer Quality Index (CQI)*** *measures the Product Quality with a composite score index*

### Preference Share:

Preference share measures the potential of each of the test products versus a benchmark which may be the current product or a competitor product. It is important to note that this is not the same as Market Share potential. The Preference Share is measured in a limited context within a particular sample that does not cover the total market and it assumes 100% awareness, availability, and noticeability in perfect conditions. The preference share is based however on a proper share modeling exercise.

Preference share will give an indicative idea of the size of impact of a change so it is a very powerful indicator however it is important that it is interpreted in correct way.

*For Example: 2 new prototypes are tested against the current product among SOB smokers. The preference share output might look as follows:*

*Current: 2.1%*

*Prototype A: 2.7%*

*Prototype B: 1.9%*

*Here the interpretation would be that the Prototype A has potential for a higher share if deployed properly whilst the Prototype B is not an improvement against the current product.*

As a rule of thumb greater than 10% change over current can be considered as an increase in potential.

### Brand Equity Uplift:

The Brand Equity Uplift score measures the effect of the product performance on the offer brand equity. This means that the Brand Equity is initially captured before product placement and then again post product placement and the question is whether any uplift happens between these two.

Key questions and attributes required for Brand Equity:

* *Appeals to you more than other brands*
* *Is a brand for someone like me*
* *Is a brand that is setting the trends*
* *Is a brand that meets my needs*
* *Offers something different from other brands*
* *Is a brand that I have a higher opinion of*

Brand Equity uplift (= Brand Strength Score) is measured as the percentage difference between the pre and post offer equity scores and finally tested for significant difference. Over time the Brand Equity scores will be collected into the normative database and we will be able to assess the absolute Brand Equity score against norms. This capability will be added once we have collected a sufficient amount of norms – if in doubt consult Global SP&I team.

Equity Uplift Calculation:

The calculation of Brand Equity score requires the relative weights for the above six dimensions (statements) to be established via a Brand Strength Score (BSS) calculation. Ideally the weights are established via a broad based representative study such as Consumer Segmentation, GCS or KLT. In the absence of this weights will be initially built within the BPT study. Weights must be kept stable across BPT studies within each market to ensure they will reflect real changes over time. IMRB International will be the agency managing the weights for each market.

The algorithm for Brand Equity Calculation is based on following principles:

1. Compute the aggregate means for the 6 statements for the pre and post measures
2. Multiply each mean (pre and post) by the corresponding coefficient from the BSS regression
3. Sum the product (pre and post separately)
4. Uplift Score % = (post sum - pre sum) / pre sum

The Brand Equity Uplift score is based on a weighted sum of the pre-post differences in the six dimensions. The Uplift score is represented as a % improvement in equity:

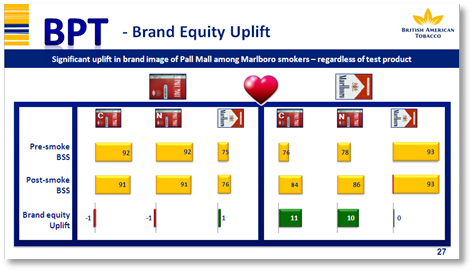
Brand Equity Uplift Score % = (post sum - pre sum) / pre sum

Brand Equity Uplift outputs:

Both pre-and post-experience Brand Equity Uplift scores in the BPT test are reported as mean scores for the dimensions, collected on 1-5 scale and later converted to 100 point scale. Brand Equity Uplift is reported as a percentage, reflecting the difference between Pre-Post experience ratings relative to the Pre-smoke experience.  The Brand Equity Uplift scores may vary from zero to 100, and can be either positive or negative.

Significance levels are contingent upon sample size and the distribution of scores (e.g. standard errors). As a result, the threshold for significance will vary across tests.

Example: Brand Equity Summary:

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### Consumer Quality Index (CQI):

Consumer Quality Index is a one number (index) measure of the overall holistic product quality. CQI is derived from several individual quality measures for *Taste, Packaging, Filter and the Brand Quality Perception.*

The weights for these individual product quality elements are obtained through a *Driver Analysis (Structural Equation Modeling)* which calculates the importance of each of these elements as a driver for the overall Offer Likeability.

The index is a sum of the weighted quality elements. The maximum possible score for CQI is 100.

*For Example: CQI for a current product is 75 and the CQI for the new prototype is 85. The new prototype is significantly higher in Quality Perception and this will be confirmed by a significance test.*

**Diagnostics:**

In addition to the 3 numerical measures, BPT has also a rich set of diagnostics:

* *Pre-Trial perception of the offer*
* *Drivers for offer Likeability (Structural Equation Modeling)*
* *Performance on Sensory Quality of tested products – analysis of the SAS attributes on Magnitude and Just Right Scale*
* *Performance on Packaging and Filter Quality elements of the tested offers (overall Packaging and Stick Quality and specific elements)*
* *Performance on Purchase Intention of the tested offers*
* *Any defects possibly experienced during product experience*

## ACTION STANDARD SETTING:

Action standard setting for the Branded Product Test differs completely from the action standards with un-branded product test.

The unit that should be used for the Primary Action Standard is the Preference Share. The Action Standards in this case are not based on significant difference but rather the percentage change.

*For Example: Preference Share of the new prototype among SOB should be 10% higher than the current offer.*

As explained earlier in this manual the BPT is used for 2 different purposes.

Continuous monitoring of BAT brands/products against competition *(Brand Monitor)* and also for Ad-Hoc purposes where we are developing new products and want to ensure that the new prototypes are performing better than the current in the branded format.

Action Standards for the Brand Monitor are published yearly with the plan and governed by the GPSG. This programme will replace the earlier MASQ programme and will require an initial baseline measurement for each brand in the BPT to establish the benchmarks. After this the yearly measurement will show if we are managing to improve our position and equity versus the competitors and targets for this will be setup for the individual brands. The Brand Monitor has panels for OWN and SOB as per the earlier defined definitions for them.

For Ad-Hoc purposes the percentage improvement target of the preference share versus current needs to be set on individual basis depending on the business objective and expectations.

In addition to the Preference Share – a secondary action standard can be set on the CQI or specific sensory attributes if needed.

# Research agency for BPT

All Branded Product Tests (BPT) are coordinated and analysed by IMRB International. IMRB International will also manage and administer the normative database. Please note that the normative database does not yet contain branded norms – each BPT test that we conduct will contribute to the database.