Beyond Meat: Changing Consumers' Meat Preference

BIT2002: Practice Case Study

Anisa Ahmed - 101143626

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Case Summary

Ethan Brown and Brent Taylor started Beyond Meat in 2009 in Los Angeles, California, as a producer of plant-based meat alternatives. Beyond Meat's goal was for consumers to be able to experience meat-like flavour and texture in their favourite meals while avoiding the chemicals used to produce traditional meat and lowering the number of animals slaughtered each year for meat production. Beyond Meat's plant-based meat substitutes are considerably superior to the vegan industry's meat alternatives. Vegan competitors like Garden Protein International couldn't compete with Beyond Meat simply because their products aren't the same as Beyond Meat's meat alternatives. Beyond Meat's products were described by many customers as having a texture that was almost identical to that of real meat.

Vegan meat was made in an easier way and required less energy to produce. It contained no saturated fats and saved animals which made Beyond Meat's production process very simple. The meat was created by mixing a powdered protein (soy in the case of chicken strips and pea protein in the case of beef) into a liquid mixture, which was then heated, extruded via a machine, and cooled. The trick was to get the heated/cooling sequence just perfect before applying the proper pressure through the use of the extrusion.

The value of the animal meat industry was estimated to be at $177 billion USD. By entering the market with meat alternatives, Brown aimed to take a piece of that pie within 50 years. He leveraged the organization's strategy, which campaigned for businesses to stock Beyond Meat's alternative meats alongside actual meat in grocery stores rather than vegetarian options like tofu. Brown also pulled off a brilliant marketing stunt by attending a New York Mets baseball game to give athletes a taste of the new beast burger. By employing that marketing tactic, he hoped to persuade meat-eaters in the United States to switch to vegetarian meat. Ethan Brown and Brent Taylor founded a company with the goal of reducing meat-related diseases including obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and heart disease while also preventing animal slaughter by developing a meat substitute that tastes like the real thing. Will consumers of all demographics allow this business to grow product sales?

Problem Statement

The younger generation, who are more health-conscious and environmentally sensitive, was Beyond Meats' largest consumer market. Beyond Meat's goal of obtaining a portion of the $177 billion animal meat business in 50 years requires a marketing campaign that reaches beyond the younger demographic in order to boost sales.

Alternatives

Ideas	Pros	Cons
Informing each age demographic about Beyond Meat's meat alternative through TV ads, newspaper ads, and social media ads. They will also be informed in places such as retirement homes, workplaces and universities.	We'll be able to target each age group through their preferred type of entertainment and frequented locations they are at.	Unless we keep attempting to reach them several times, which may cause annoyance, there is no guarantee that we will attract their attention beyond the commercials and visits allowing them to taste-test meat replacement products.
Identifying the favourite celebrity of each age demographic and paying them to advertise and tell their audience about our products.	Celebrities have the ability to effortlessly alter public opinion and change people's perceptions. Using their favourite celebrity to inform each demographic can encourage them to try and eventually enjoy our meat replacement products.	Because celebrity sponsorship varies, we would have to spend a lot of money on celebrities to promote our product to their audiences.

Recommendation Plan

There are a large number of meat-eaters in every demographic group. So, if carried out correctly, my recommendation plan will touch all people of all ages. The best alternative I chose was to inform each age group about Beyond Meat's meat alternative through TV ads, newspaper ads, and social media ads. After that, we will inform them in person by going to retirement homes, workplaces and universities. After we've informed them in person, our next goal is to convince large grocery stores to let us demo our products in their stores and have the product ready to be sold on their shelves.

- Short-Term (Immediate - 6 months): Distribute ads in television, newspapers, and social media
- Medium-Term (6 months - 1.5 years): Inform each age group in person by going to retirement homes, workplaces and universities
- Long-Term (1.5 year - 2.25 years): Allowing large grocery chains to demo our items in their stores and have them ready to sell on their shelves

Implementation

Short-Term (Immediate - 6 months)

In six months, we want to distribute enough adverts across a variety of media outlets. Beyond Meat's goal is to create a marketing campaign that reaches out to a wider audience in order to increase sales. What came to me initially was, in terms of media, what does each age demographic enjoy viewing on a regular basis? The answers I came up with are the following:

- For groups of age 55 and plus, they enjoy reading newspapers
- For groups 30-55, they enjoy watching television
- For groups 30 and younger (excluding kids) they enjoy social media sites such as Tiktok, Youtube, and more

I arrived at these conclusions by analysing the societies in which they were born and raised. For people 55 plus, they were either born in the 40s, 50s or 60s, meaning they were brought up reading the morning newspaper and listening to radios. I came to the same conclusion after observing persons of that age group myself. When I was a teenager, I used to work 6 a.m. shifts at McDonald's and had people of that age bracket approach me for newspapers to read. Because of the conclusions made, I would insert advertisements for Beyond Meat products in newspapers based on my observations of that age range.
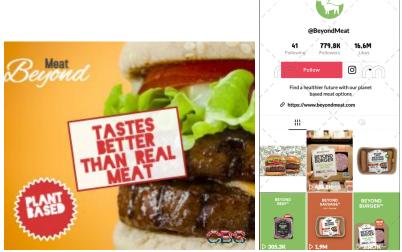
I got to the conclusion that people in their 30s and 50s enjoy watching television since they grew up and were raised in the television era (assuming they were born between the late 1960s and the early 1990s). I also know a lot of people in that age range who would rather watch TV than surf through social media on their phones. As a result, I would air Beyond Meat advertisements as commercials on popular channels such as ABC, CTV, CBS, and others.

Finally, I came to the conclusion that those under the age of 30 are more likely to use social media than other types of media. Being in that age group, I find myself checking the news

and weather on my phone, as well as using entertaining social media apps like Tiktok, Twitter, and Youtube. I could get the attention of those aged 30 and under if I ran Beyond Meat ads on all of these social media platforms.

Examples of Ads for each age demographic:

Medium-Term (6 months - 1.5 years)

After advertising to different age groups across different media platforms, our next step is to have them try our products. A question that came to mind was where we could locate people of all ages in person. For different ages groups I thought of different answers. People aged 55 and above are mainly found in retirement homes, while those aged 55 to 30 are usually employed, and those aged 30 and under (excluding kids) are still in School. Although I am generalising, I believe that a lot of people in that age range could be found in those areas.

We could simply sample our product by stopping by those locations. However, another concern arose: with so many retirement homes, companies, and colleges and universities to tour across the United States, which ones should we go to? In an article done by Jordan Burchette for CNN, he discussed the 12 best U.S cities for meat lovers. I decided to choose the top 5 cities which were Lexington, North Carolina, Austin, Texas, Chicago, Kansas City, Missouri, and New York (2015). We'll chose the top 5 most popular jobs, most popular universities/colleges, and top

5 best retirement houses in each city. We'll test our products in all locations where we think we'll see a lot of people of a given age group.

Long-Term(1.5 year - 2.25 years)

Once executing our short-term plan and long-term plan, we will allow for big grocery store to demo our Beyond Meat products as well as have it on their shelves to be stored. The goal of this strategy is for consumers to remember how our products taste if they've tried them previously, and to try them for the first time if they haven't. We will inform them that we are selling our items at that particular grocery store once they have tasted them. A question that came up was, with so many grocery stores to select from, which one would be the best? We concluded with 2 grocery stores, Walmart and Costco. These stores have a large number of customers of all ages and backgrounds, which can result in significant sales of our products.

Contingency Plan

If our advertisements and attempts to provide consumers with samples do not increase sales in our products within the first two years, we will have to enact our contingency plan. Our strategy is as follows: Celebrities have the power to easily influence public opinion and modify people's perspectives. Each age group can be encouraged to try and eventually like our meat replacement products by having their favourite celebrity to inform them about it. Us humans can be easily influenced. With that in mind, we can influence people by using the very person they admire. Depending on the age range, we'll look into 5 top celebrities who are still alive and well and try to contact them. Although we are confident that our original plan will enhance sales, we are also confident that our approach will convert meat-lovers into fans of our meat-replacement products. With all our plans in place, Beyond Meat will reach its goal of obtaining a portion of the $177 billion animal meat business in 50 years

References

Burchette, J. (2014, October 20). *12 best U.S. cities for meat lovers*. CNN. Retrieved September 24, 2021, from https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/u-s-meat-cities/index.html.