

## NEUROMARKETING and VEGETABLES FRUIT (July 2019)

*Which elements can improve the purchasing process in the **fruit and vegetable** department?*

More and more often you hear about well-being and proper nutrition with a growing awareness on the part of consumers of the importance of a balanced and correct diet as a fundamental factor in the conduct of a lifestyle healthy.

The recommendations by the institutions to increase the consumption of fruit and vegetables are daily. According to some research conducted on consumption habits emerges that the impact on the consumption of these products is not so strong. The department of the fruit and vegetables is the one considered more “cold” which entices and attracts less consumers than the others, as demonstrated in the United States.

**BrainSigns** in collaboration with Agroter, a consulting company specializing in the marketing of fresh food products, has already conducted a study to investigate the purchasing dynamics of the fruit and vegetable category and to better understand what can help promote sales and to make it a more immersive experience. In 2016, it was the first study applied with **neuromarketing techniques in Italy**.

The participants, equipped with a shopping cart and a shopping list, visited some departments of a supermarket in Rome: biscuits, detergents and fruit and vegetables. During the test they wore sensors for the acquisition of the electroencephalographic signal (**EEG**) and for the detection of the point of sight (**Eye-Tracker**), then short interviews were conducted with the participants.



The use of these technologies allowed to measure the **emotional's level, cognitive involvement and focus attention** of participants in different departments, and in exposure conditions of layout, packaging and presence of promoters at the entrance of the store.

In order to better understand the behavior of the consumer in a real situation, it is important to conduct the experiment in a direct sales environment.

The sample consisted of 20 participants.

Agroter, focusing on the fruit and vegetable sector, was aware of the real decrease in consumption of fruit and vegetables despite the opposite is stated on the basis of data collected from traditional research.

According to the Agroter Fruit and Vegetable Monitor, in eleven years of interviews to responsible of purchase, the perception of having increased consumption had the upper hand. For this reason it was decided to investigate this phenomenon through **neuroscientific technologies**.

By comparing the purchase phase of fruit, vegetables and wafers, it could be verified that the purchase of the sweet snack generated high values of a brain response indicator that returns information on the degree of “positive or negative cognitive interest/approach” towards a stimulus. The battle to bring fruit and vegetables to competitive levels with other snacks in consumer preferences is actually very challenging.

How can we progress in this direction?

Research with neuromarketing has given interesting indications pursuing the **following objectives**:

- explore the effect of the **visual attention** elicited by **different apple’s packaging** on consumer behaviour
- understanding how **different strategies of product placement** on the shelves, can affect the consumer behaviour
- study the **impact of promoters** outside the store

### **Attention to PACKAGING can improve the instinctive perception of fruits and vegetables**

The study was conducted to measure the **effect of packaging on consumer behaviour**. During the research, among the several products on the shopping list, the sample has to **buy an apple box**.

The promotion of a Golden apple box was included in the supermarket fruit and vegetables department. It was presented in three different graphic versions: **one completely Havana colour version** (to evoke the naturalness of the product) **the second with a white background with the words “Golden apples”**, while **the third presented the design of the faces of the producers and landscape images of apple orchards** in production.



The positions of the three versions were randomised to prevent the purchase was influenced by the flow of department.

**What was the most purchased apple box?** 60% of the sample bought apples with the pack that reported the faces and landscapes and through this research it is possible to confirm that the reason for this choice is in the unconscious part of our brain.

In fact, the results of the questionnaires compiled by the sample after leaving the supermarket, show that only a few customers spontaneously remembered the presence of faces or landscapes when it was asked what they remembered about the apple box. Although the participants consciously failed to mention the presence of such graphic elements, the face of the farmers on the packaging attracted more looks, **determining an unconscious effect**: essentially, it turned out that those who chose this version had a more cognitively pleasing experience and they were more attentive than those who purchased apples in the other two types of packaging.

### **The arrangement of the products can improve or worsen the perception and then the purchase of the salads**

In addition, two types of exhibition layout were proposed, during the day of survey inside the supermarket, to verify how **different shelf product positioning strategies can affect consumer behaviour**. The first layout was guided by the logic of the daily operation and promotions in progress, the second was thought based on category management with verticalization of product families.

The sample had to buy a mixed salad. The participants' gaze was concentrated in a different way during the purchase, it was possible to verify by eyetracker technology. In the case of **the classical disposition there has been a greater dispersion of the looks**, correlated with the difficulty to reach an objective in short term employing a remarkable amount of cognitive resources. On the contrary, **in the case of the verticalized family display there was a greater visual focus**, correlated with lower values of use of cognitive resources and with an easier purchasing experience. It was therefore possible to verify how the arrangement of the products influences the customer's behaviour during the purchase.

### **The interaction with a manufacturer at the entrance of the supermarket enhances the emotion in the perception of its product inside the store**

Finally, to understand **the role that a promoter could play in a point-of-sale**, half the sample interacted, outside the store, with a farmer that spoke about his story, the production and values of its products, in particular a quality of tomato (torpedino). Participants who had this prior meeting made higher percentage of purchase and reported higher neurometric values (greater involvement) during the purchase of the advertised product.



Therefore **innovative packaging, simplicity, display clarity** and the element **“reassurance”** can do much to improve customer satisfaction. Managers and communication experts will be able to consider these aspects of research for a future relaunch of the fruit and vegetable department.

The promotion of fruit and vegetables is certainly a challenging and very complex issue but this **neuromarketing study** has shown clearly that it is possible to get better. It has shown with a short experiment some **key elements** not detectable only with traditional analysis techniques that they take more time.