

Case Study

Fast Casual Restaurant Chain Honors In On New Design

Background & Client Objectives: A fast casual restaurant developed new store formats and was looking to understand customers' perceptions of a new location concept for their brand, as well as how customer perceptions change over time.

Program Development & Methodology: TrendSource Trusted Insight determined customer intercepts would

best provide answers to these research questions. Additionally, it was recommended that intercepts be performed at both traditional restaurant formats as a benchmark (control) and at the new concept locations (test). Intercept questions were crafted to identify



differences between how customers perceived the client based on the type of location they visited. Specific questions were uncovered that needed to be addressed:

- How do customer perceptions differ between benchmark and concept locations?
- How do customer perceptions shift over time after the launch of a new concept restaurant?
- How do preferences differ across states?
- How do the perceptions compare based on visitor frequency?
- How do perceptions drive an increased intent to spend?

The client identified four regions of particular concern and TrendSource Trusted Insight sent Field Agents to survey departing customers at two locations within each region, one benchmark and one concept.

Case Study

Analysis: When asked about the uniqueness of restaurant designs, respondents at concept locations across all markets were more favorable than at benchmark locations. Overall, customers were 16% more likely to view concept locations as unique, and in three of four locations respondent likelihood to return was the same or more favorable at concept restaurants. Yet customers nonetheless preferred certain benchmark elements such as the menu design and group seating availability. Additionally, the concept locations overall received their most favorable scores in the week after their debut, but excitement quickly waned as three out of four locations received their least favorable responses in week two.

Concerning customer perceptions and visitor frequency, light visitors were motivated by the opportunity to try new food, and most favorably responded to friendliness of staff and cleanliness of the restaurant. Yet priorities and perceptions varied among more frequent guests—medium and heavy visitors both cited value as their primary motivation for eating out, and were most likely to return based on the restaurant’s flavors and ingredients/quality.

Recommendations to Client: Based on the immediate availability of the intercept data, TrendSource Trusted Insight offered the following recommendations to the client. These recommendations provided rapid insights to allow the design team and store locations to pivot elements of their design within weeks of the store opening. This rapid knowledge resulted in a successful new concept launch that was positively received by consumers in these markets.

- As the menu at the benchmark locations was more favorably perceived, incorporate elements of the menu board from the benchmark locations into the concept locations
- Implement more innovative approaches to group seating to support differentiation with other segment restaurants
- Ensure that core requirements such as cleanliness and friendliness of staff are met in order to drive increased visitor frequency among light visitors
- Provide samples to introduce light visitors to new flavors, maintain excitement and positive customer perception, and ultimately drive customer loyalty
- Maintain the new color palate at concept locations to drive perceptions of uniqueness