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SIX WAYS TO USE IMPLICIT TESTING

Get better answers in a variety of applications using The Implicit / Explicit Test™: a unique, patent-pending market research methodology from InsightsNow. Read on to discover new and better ways to approach claims testing, build new products, perform effective message testing, evaluate concepts and more!

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Why Use The Implicit / Explicit Test?

By studying implicit and explicit reactions in market research, researchers are able to gather the insights needed to impact future consumer behavior—either by nudging current behaviors along or disrupting behavior to drive new choices.

The InsightsNow Implicit / Explicit Test™ is a patent pending approach to assess whether each person's reaction is implicit or explicit—and in which direction. It is unique in that it provides a calibrated classification for each person each time they complete the test. This gives you the ability to see the exact percentage of people who are reacting a certain way, allowing a quantifiable way to move forward in the best way possible with products, projects and plans.

By digging into accurate insights regarding implicit reactions, researchers, product developers and marketers can make better decisions to monitor and set goals against behavioral change— and create realistically achievable metrics for all key stakeholders and for the supply chain.

There are six major applications of The Implicit / Explicit Test™ that we will explore in this eBook:

1 Claims Testing to Achieve Behavioral Impact, p6

2 Ingredient Scoring to Build Clean Label Products, p8

3 Ingredient Benefit Associations for Functional Product Design, p10

4 Message Testing for Media Targets, p12

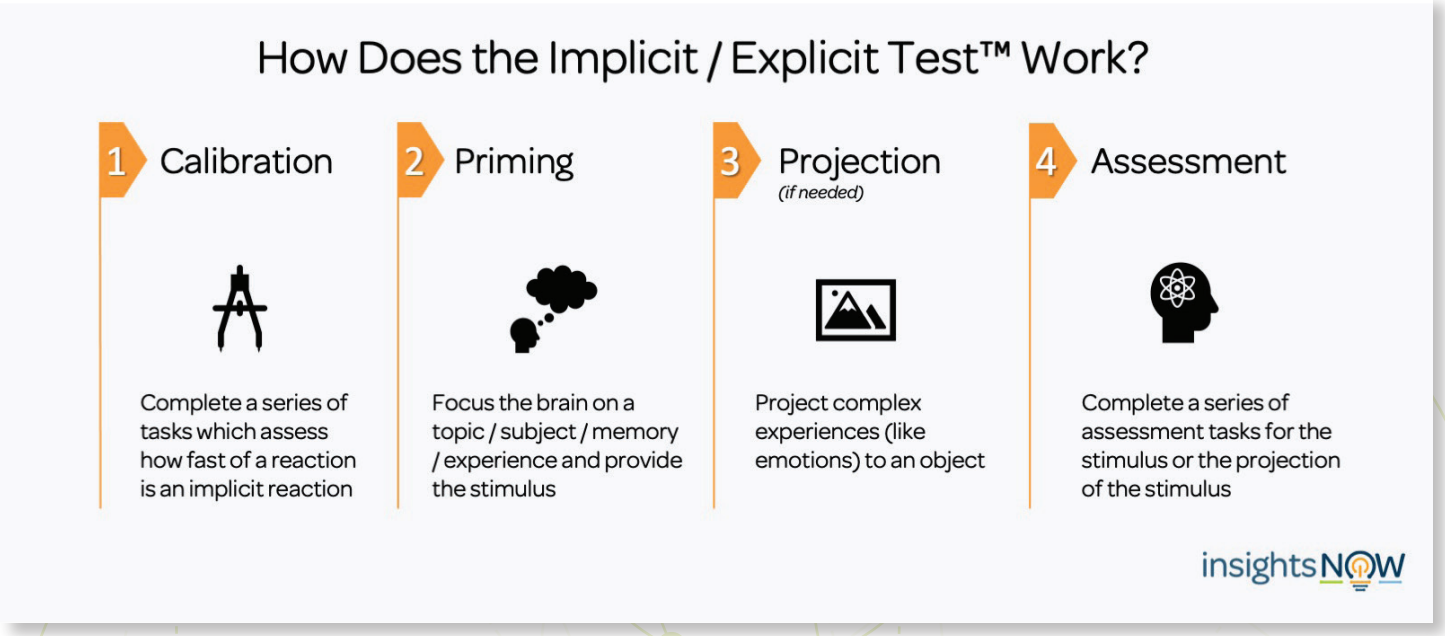
5 Emotions Testing to Understand Product Experience, p14

6 Concept Scoring to Uncover Category Lift, p16

How The Implicit / Explicit Test Works

Study participants begin with a calibration exercise. This exercise both familiarizes them with how the questions work, and identifies where to set a cut-off time to identify an implicit response from an explicit response for each participant. Then, priming prepares the brain to have associations and context at the ready to allow you to measure whether the association or memory is implicit or if the brain is working to solve an incongruency. Typical priming examples include storytelling, presentation of concepts, product experiences and videos.

After priming, researchers can use projection—this is typically used when the cues, associations or reactions you want to measure occur quickly or in a context where it is not possible for the person to complete the usual reaction test that takes place during the assessment. In the assessment stage, the primed question is shown and a series of words, phrases or pictures are flashed quickly. The participant simply selects the positive or negative response. The moment they make a selection, the next word appears.



How to Interpret Implicit Scores

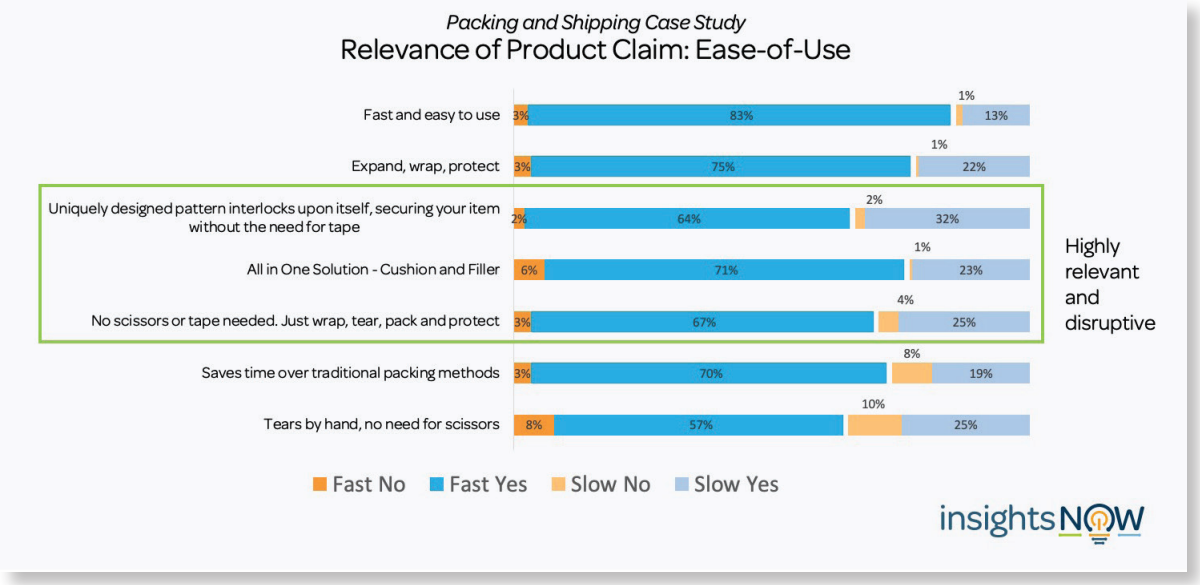
The implicit behavioral score is a calculated score based on the speed (fast or slow response) and the positive or negative reaction from a study participant. The score can range from 0 to 100, where zero means the attribute is intuitively NOT experienced, and 100 means it is a completely intuitive connection. Scores above 50 mean there is a positive connection, and scores above 75 mean there is a strong positive implicit connection.

1 Claims Testing to Achieve Behavioral Impact

The InsightsNow Implicit / Explicit Test™ is invaluable when making decisions on what claims to communicate about a product or service. With the test, you determine what claims are most relevant and impactful to your target consumers. The insights gained identify what moments of consumer use are most relevant for which claims, and also show which claims will nudge behavior and which will disrupt.

Recently, we tested different packing and shipping product claims to understand which claims were more relevant and disruptive. Three claim areas rose to the top during testing: Ease-of-Use, Protection and Sustainability. The participants were asked: "For each, indicate if that statement would be RELEVANT to you when considering a packing and shipping product. Please select YES or NO." Below, we can see that the Ease-of-Use claim bundle has a high percentage of Fast Yes and Slow Yes responses—indicating these claims are not only perceived as more relevant, but also more disruptive.

The higher the percentage of slow responses, the more disruptive the claim's association. A higher percentage of slow scores indicated more people had to stop and think about their answer—which means the claim made them take a short pause and give a more explicit, thought-out answer.



For this project, we used the summary of implicit behavioral scores from the implicit testing methodology to provide potential on-pack claim bundles for consideration. Shown below are some of the claims and claim combinations that could be chosen to drive desired consumer behavior, whether that is to nudge, both nudge and disrupt, or to disrupt behavior.

Packing and Shipping Case Study

Combinations of Claims to Drive Consumer Behavior

More Likely to Nudge	Balance of Nudge and Disrupt	More Likely to Disrupt
Proven protection	Uniquely designed pattern interlocks upon itself, securing item without the need for tape	All-in-one solution – cushion and filler
Fast and easy to use	A sustainable alternative to plastic cushion wrap	No scissors or tape needed – just wrap, tear, pack and protect
Expands for 20% more coverage than a 30ft roll of plastic cushion wrap	Expands for 20% more coverage than a 30ft roll of plastic cushion wrap	Superior protection with less material
A sustainable alternative to plastic cushion wrap	Expands for proven protection	Made with 100% recycled paper

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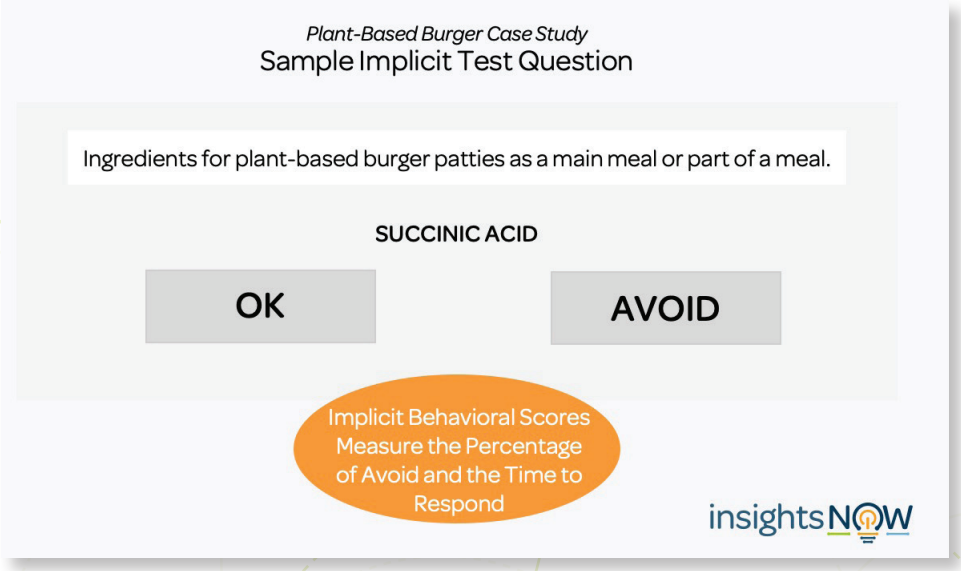
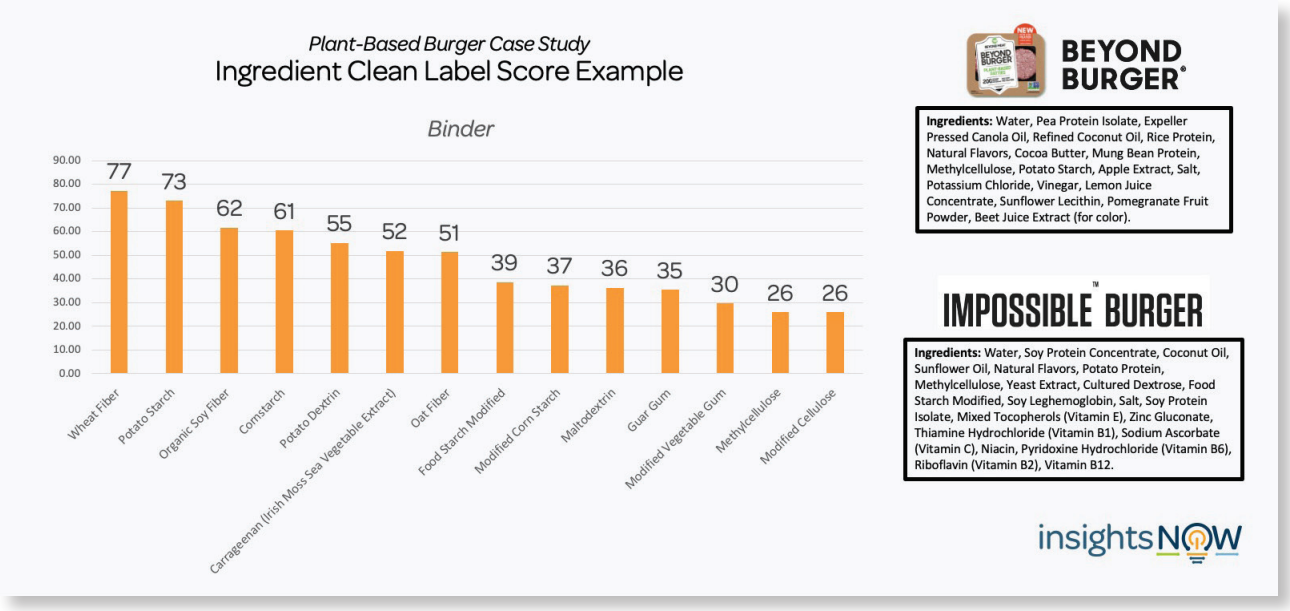
2 Ingredient Scoring to Build Clean Label Products

What is the behavioral reaction to seeing an ingredient on a product label? Using The Implicit / Explicit Test™ allows you to compare and contrast consumer reactions to ingredients. Comparisons can be made for the overall score, or for any component.



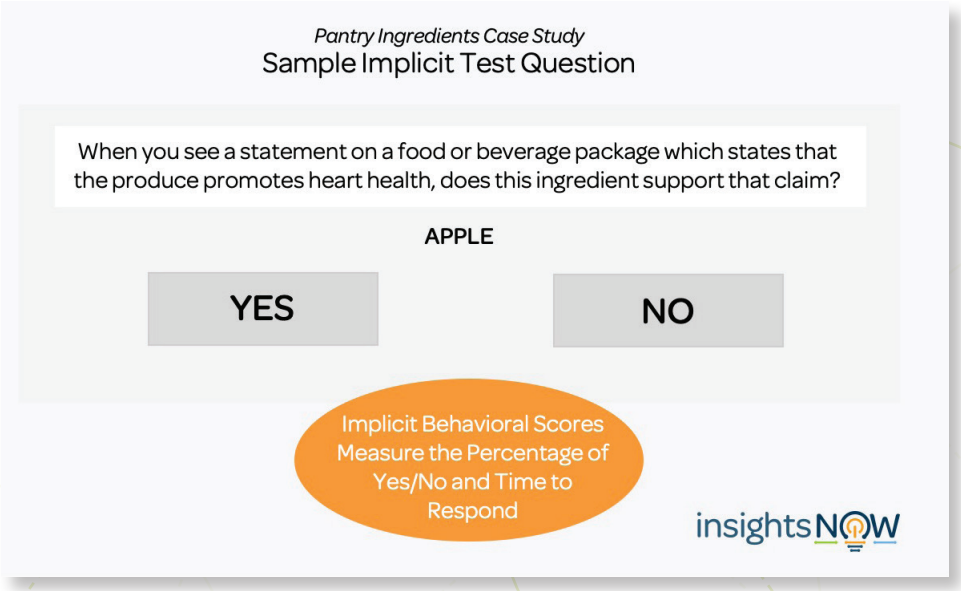
The ingredient presented earns implicit scoring for fast and slow OKs and fast and slow AVOIDS, resulting in an overall (in this case) Ingredient Clean Label Score™. After presenting a number of ingredients, you can compare and contrast reaction scores to find the best ingredients to include and exclude in your product.



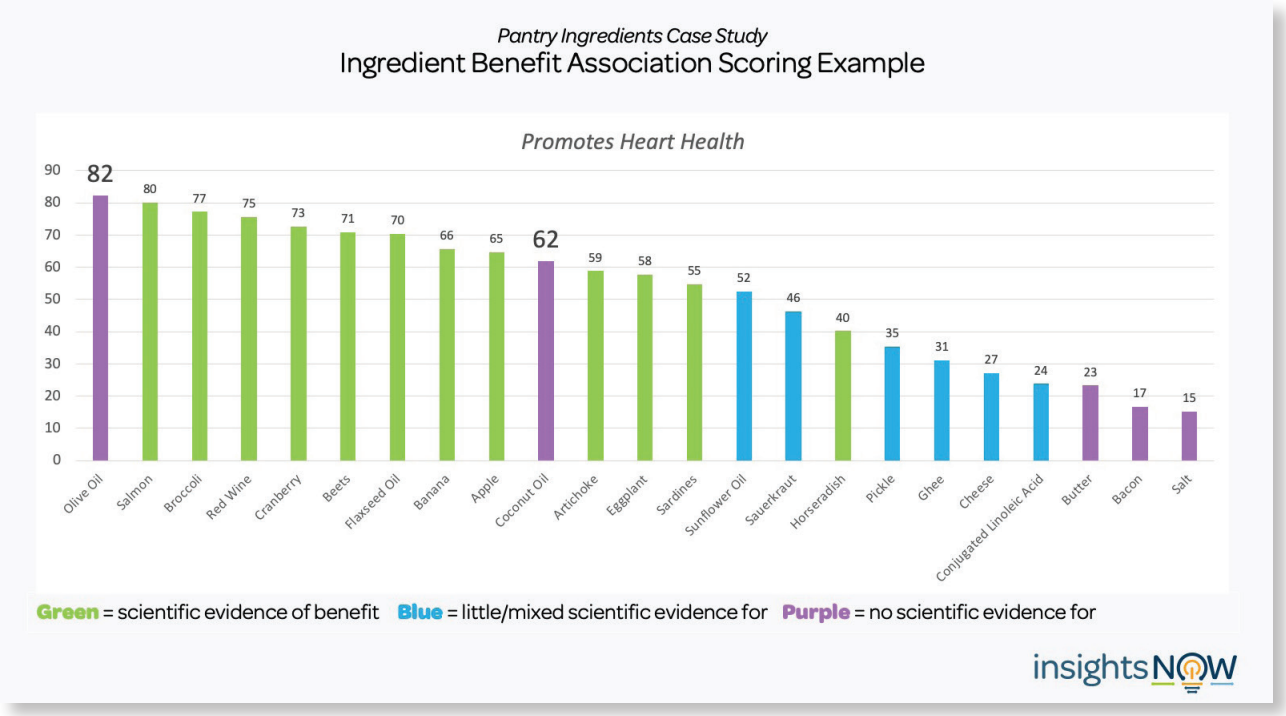
For example, InsightsNow conducted a study with our proprietary Clean Label Enthusiasts™ (CLE) research community—forward thinking consumers who care about the ingredients in foods. The study looked at a variety of plant-based burgers, using The Implicit / Explicit Test as a basis for the results—which gave insight into what consumers are looking for in plant-based burgers. On the next page, you see the Clean Label Ingredient Scores for different binders found in plant based burgers. These scores allowed product developers to identify ingredients which could be changed in order to improve the clean label perception for their products.

3 Ingredient Benefit Associations for Functional Product Design

For consumers, perception is reality. As more and more shoppers look to the back of package product labels to substantiate product claims, it is important to know which ingredients need to be implicitly associated with your claim or brand positioning—including knowing what to name ingredients. Benefit associations go beyond functional health and wellness claims to the broader set of claims associated with social benefits, sensory benefits and psychological benefits that lift and alter the state of mind.



In a benefit association project, we tested more than 100 pantry ingredients using The Implicit / Explicit Test™. We wanted to understand the benefits implicitly associated with each ingredient. In the figure on the next page, you see the associations between some common pantry ingredients and the benefit of promotes heart health. These overall implicit behavioral scores show which ingredients are more intuitively associated with heart health and which are not.



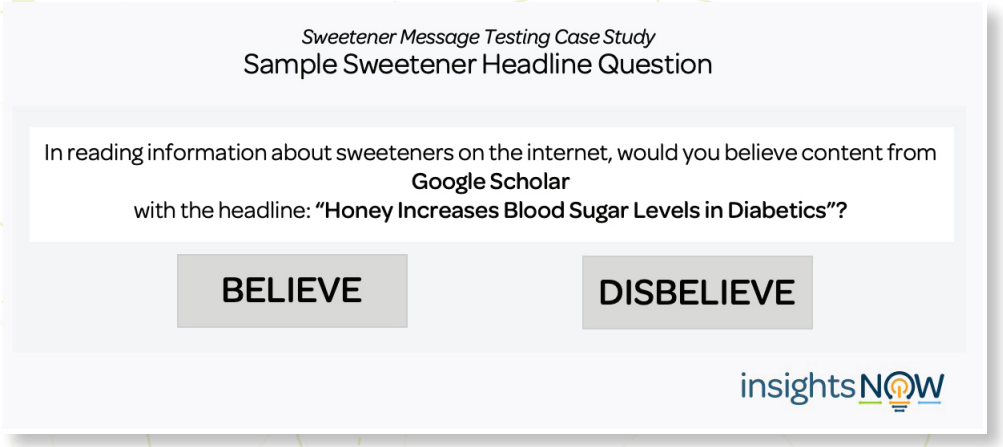
Interestingly, this study uncovered some key takeaways that consumers had some misconceptions about ingredient benefit associations—as they indicated that, for example, coconut oil (62%) and olive oil* (82%) promoted heart health, but there is no scientific evidence for this. This type of benefit association information allows marketers and developers understand what benefits consumers intuitively believe they will receive when they notice that ingredient is on the label and in the product.

**Following this research (2019), supporting scientific evidence has been shared that Olive Oil may Promote Heart Health*

4 Message Testing for Media Targets

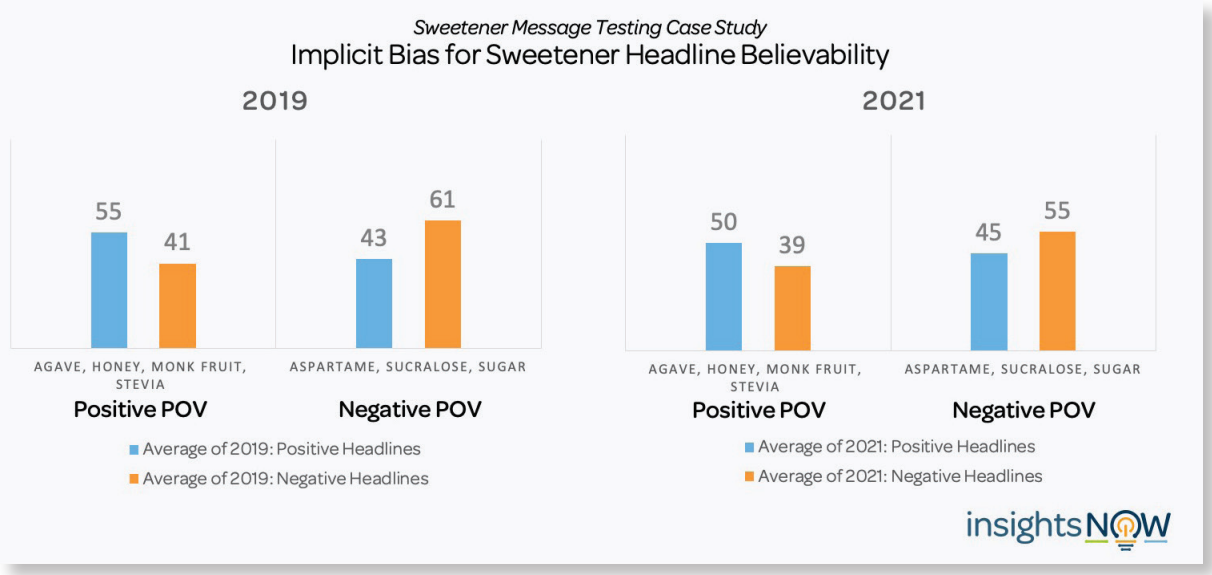
Message testing has some unique challenges in that different messages vary in word length and time to read. Therefore, the calibration of The Implicit / Explicit Test™ factors in the time it takes to read messages of different lengths. The Implicit / Explicit Test is well suited for message testing—it provides a gauge into how the message, and the respective media source, interact to achieve an implicit or explicit believability response. If a message is designed to nudge shoppers or consumers to take action, then the ideal message and media combination is one that elicits an implicit (fast) believability response. If the message is intended to disrupt, then the best is one that elicits a slow believability response.

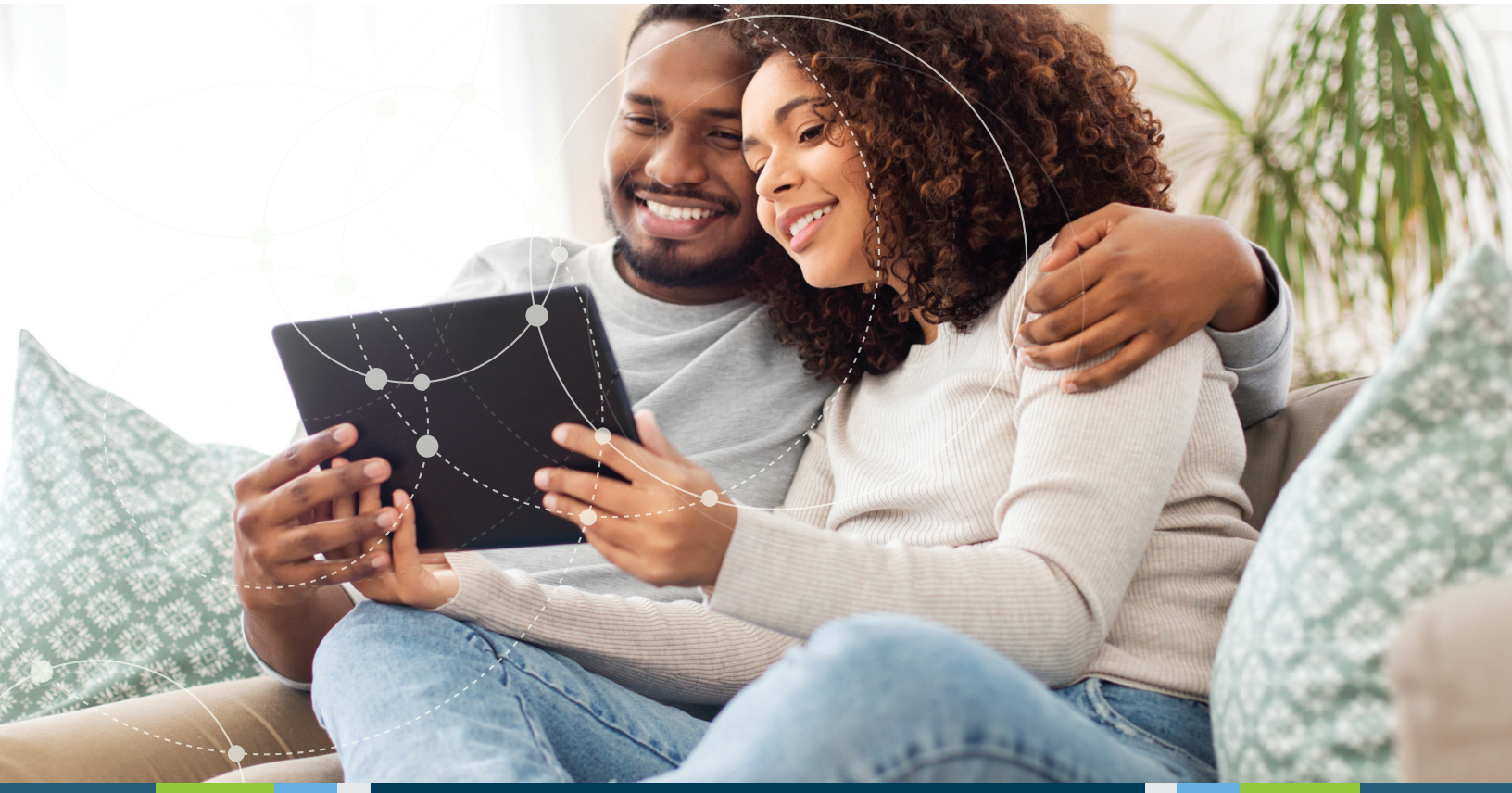
In 2019 and in 2021, we ran a study looking at headline messages about sweeteners. This study examined the implicit believability among shoppers based on their inherent positive point of view for a sweetener (honey, agave, monk fruit and stevia) or negative point of view (aspartame, sucralose and sugar). Further, we wanted to understand the influence of media source on believability by different target audiences that have different levels of trust of the respective media sources. We tested 28 different headlines (positive or negative) about seven sweeteners from 14 different media sources. An example headline from "Google Scholar" media source for "honey" was as follows.



This study was run using our proprietary community of Clean Label Enthusiasts™, shoppers who make product choices heavily influenced by ingredients and regularly inspect labels. Between the study in 2019 and 2021, we saw change in implicit bias regarding headline believability.

Approaching message testing with implicit testing will give you the full picture of perception, not only for headlines but also for media sources—giving marketing teams what they need to reach target markets effectively.



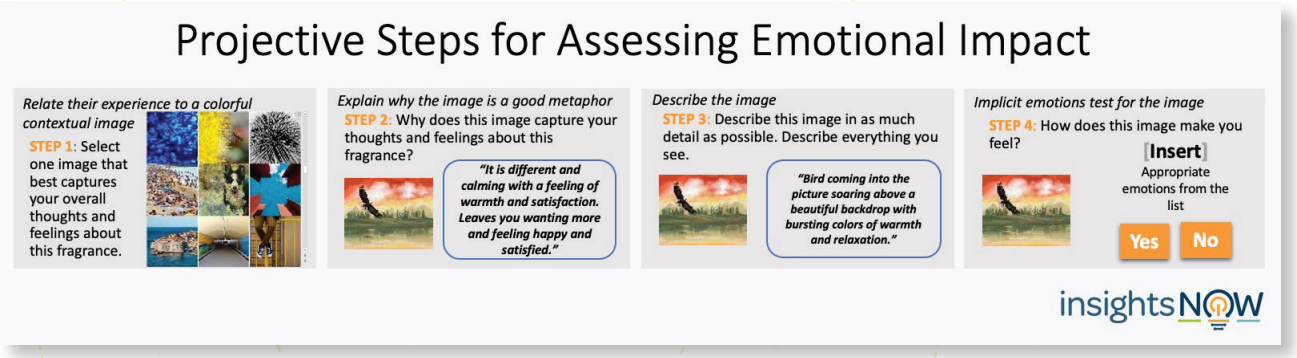


5 Emotions Testing to Understand Product Experience

Emotions are fast, fleeting and complex. Therefore, they are difficult to measure. Emotions are projected on objects such as products (like or dislike or enjoy a product), but also are projected on ourselves (to feel pride or shame) or projected on others (to feel hatred or admiration or anger toward someone) or entities that we have relationships with (to love a brand).

Emotions are easily associated with words, images and metaphors that are triggered by immediate experiences, recalled past experiences or even imagined future outcomes. For these reasons, a special class of implicit techniques using an indirect prime response is ideally suited to accurately measure emotions. This technique has the participant select an image as a metaphor for the fleeting emotion(s) felt and projected on a respective object (e.g. a product experience) in the context of an eliciting condition (e.g. expected experience outcome). This image is then scored on its associations to words describing feelings (e.g. enjoy, disappointed, surprised) using The Implicit / Explicit Test™.

Below you can see the steps of how we get to the implicit test from this visual metaphor approach.



Beyond Burger Emotions Testing Case Study

Discrete Emotions Scoring Example

Beyond Burger delivers a Calm, Relaxed and Satisfied experience like their current plant-based burger.

Beyond Burger is unique in its delivery of greater Happiness and Excitement.

More importantly Beyond Burger delivers much better on the subtle negative emotions which can hinder repeat purchase.

Emotions Score Summary N = 81	Current Product	Beyond Burger
Calm	68.2	72.8
Relaxed	66	64.8
Satisfied	59.9	66.7
Happy	**57.4 B**	**73.8 A**
Hopeful	55.2	60.8
Pleasantly Surprised	**44.8 B**	**61.1 A**
Energetic	41.7	48.5
Excited	**40.1 B**	**58.6 A**
Proud/Full of Pride	38.9	49.7
Relieved	36.4	44.4
Amused	31.8	42.6
In Love	28.4	36.7
Unsatisfied	**25.0 A**	**13.9 B**
Bored	**24.4 A**	**10.2 B**
Disappointed	**23.5 A**	**9.6 B**
Tired	**20.4 A**	**8.0 B**
Sad	17.3	10.2

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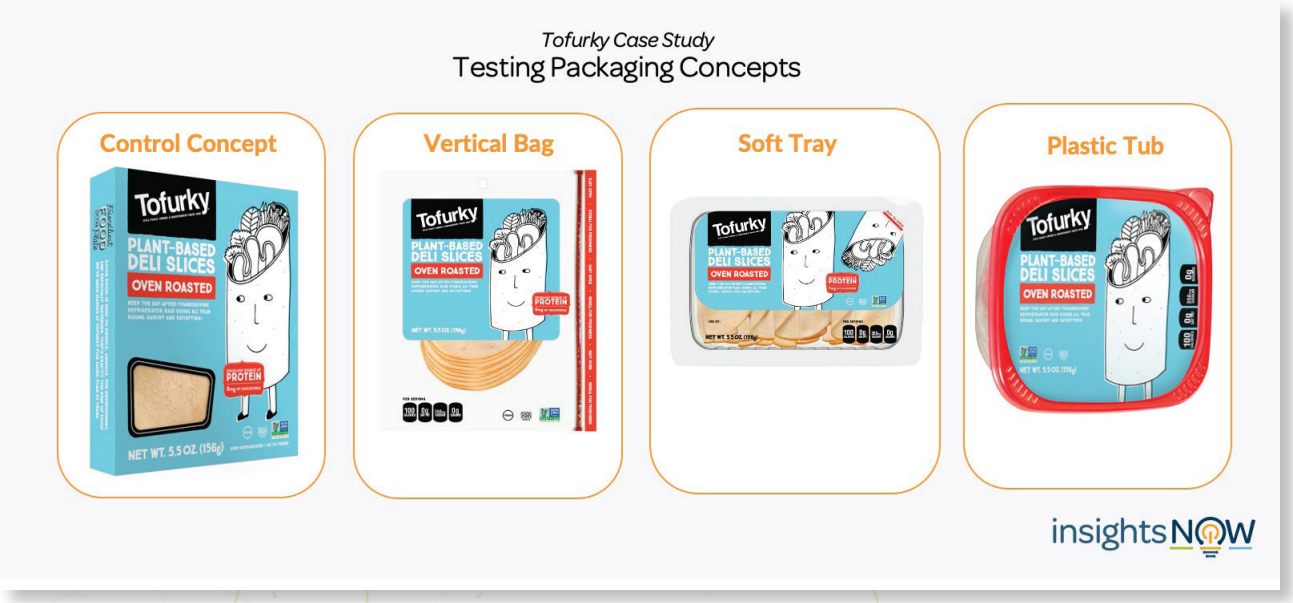
The insights gained through assessing human behavior using this approach go beyond "liking" to understand consumer emotions—telling a deeper story about choice and preference.

You can expand an emotions testing study to include qualitative feedback, collecting verbatim responses from study participants that give even greater insights into the best path forward for your product.

6 Concept Scoring to Uncover Category Lift

The Implicit / Explicit Test™ is also very effective in early market research such as concept testing. The test allows you to understand the motivational drivers underlying category choice. This is particularly important the during concepting stage where it is essential to know which concepts have the greatest potential disruptive impact and also why.

For Tofurky, we used a combination of implicit techniques and related these metrics to what we call "category lift." Lift is based on differences in choice for concepts designed to improve or replace an existing product in shelf sets against competitive sets. In this example, we helped Tofurky test three alternative packaging concepts and a control to identify which would generate the greatest emotional impact and perceived benefit while driving choice over category competitors.

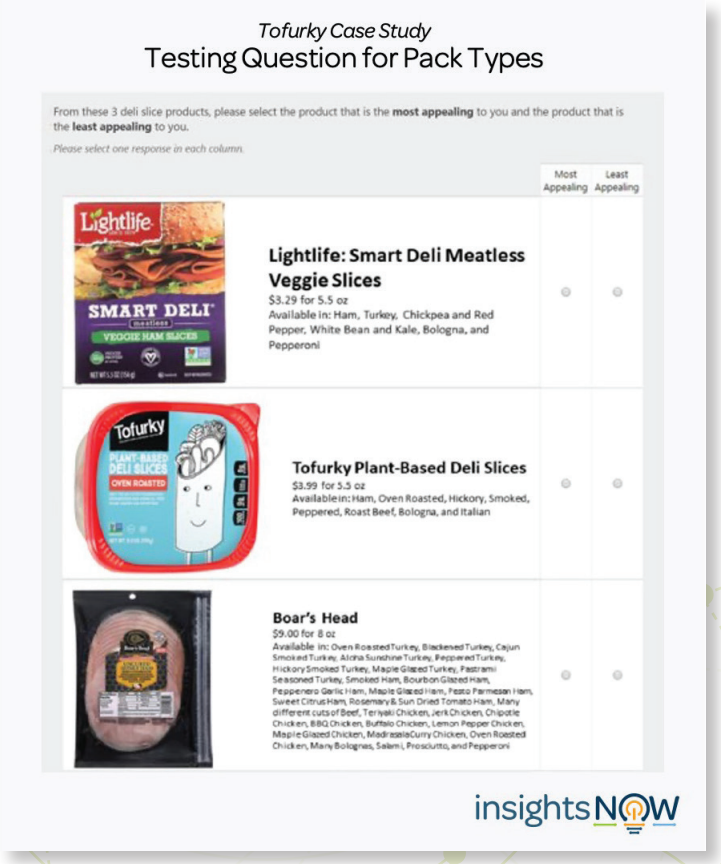


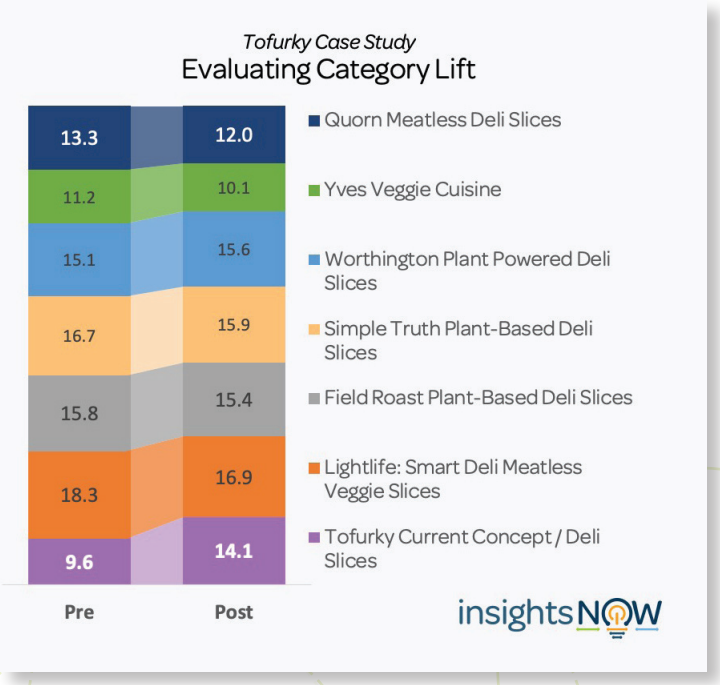
We used The Implicit/Explicit test to measure the impact on anticipation emotions created by seeing the package. We found the new Tofurky package concepts all should some improvement over the control—specifically more Hope, Intrigue, and Surprise. This allowed quick identification of the emotional impact created when seeing the new package.

We also used The Implicit / Explicit Test to measure implicit benefit associations, as shown in section three. This part of the study found that the Soft Tray concept was over delivering as compared to the Control for most of the anticipated benefits, in areas such as Healthy, Organic and Flavorful. Then the packaging concepts were compared to the whole category of both plant-based deli meats and other sliced deli meats.

Category Lift is measured through a Max/Diff approach, where sets of three alternative category choices are presented with a category shopper selecting the best and worst. During Pre-Category Max/Diff, you get a baseline consumer choices in the current category. This Pre-Category selection presented the Control Tofurky package design against the category to establish a baseline Max/Diff score.

Then participants completed the Post-Category Max/Diff exercise for one of the packaging alternatives replacing the Control (shown in the example on left). The difference in the resulting Max/Diff scores is the lift and forms a predictive measure of increase or decrease in category share for each package.





Category Lift, after adjusting for the Control, suggests that Tofurky could see up to a 58% increase in their current share depending on the concept they choose to develop for market. As shown below, the Soft Tray concept shows that it would have a great chance of succeeding with different in-store placements, and the Plastic Tub concept would give the greatest lift when placed in the deli products section.

Tofurky Case Study

Category Lift Results

Current Product	Concept		Lift when Shelved with Plant-Based Meats	Lift when Shelved with Deli Meats
		Vertical Bag	+26%	+9%
		Soft Tray	+36%	+40%
		Plastic Tub	+7%	+58%

The Soft Tray shows greatest opportunity for retail shelf placement in either the plant-based alternative meat and deli/sandwich sections.

The Plastic Tub shows largest lift opportunity for deli/sandwich.

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By incorporating Category Lift into your research, along with The Implicit / Explicit Test, you gain additional insight into not only how concepts compare to each other, but which ones could earn their place in retailers against competitors in the category.

Implications for Market Research

The Implicit / Explicit Test™ has a wide range of applications, even beyond what we've explored here, to give you better, more actionable insights. To add deeper behavioral information to claims testing, or explore ingredient reactions or ingredient benefit associations, or get the messaging just right, adding implicit testing give researchers a greater depth of understanding, which translate into the right approach to product development or innovation, and marketing and messaging. Brands can nudge current consumer behaviors and habits, or choose to disrupt behaviors, based on the information gathered using implicit testing techniques.

About InsightsNow

InsightsNow, an award-winning behavioral research firm, partners with companies across a wide array of industry verticals to accelerate marketing, branding and product development decisions for disruptive innovations achieving a cleaner, healthier, happier world. Insights are provided via custom solutions and collaborative tools based on proprietary behavioral frameworks to help find answers faster, improving your speed-to and success-in market.

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