CONCEPT SCREENING

1. When screening early ideas how important is the "finish" of the concepts?

Quench is a refreshing new blend of fruit juice and gently sparkling spring water, with a full day's dose of vitamin C in every can.

Early stage ideas can be expressed in a variety of ways. The most basic might be as a simple written statement with no supporting visuals. The more complex concepts might feature polished pack designs with full branding and even target positioning.

It might be supposed that the scores would improve as the concept becomes more finished. However, the evidence does not support this. It would seem that consumers can imagine the un-stated aspects while more prescriptive concepts may limit appeal (e.g. if a positioning or target suggests a female focus then it may less appealing to men). Overall, we don't see a great deal of difference in performance between concepts with different levels of finish.

There always seems to be that time in the day when your energy supply is low and you definitely need something to pick you up, but most energy drinks contain artificial ingredients or taste a bit rubbish, plus caffeine and chocolate can't be the answer all the time!
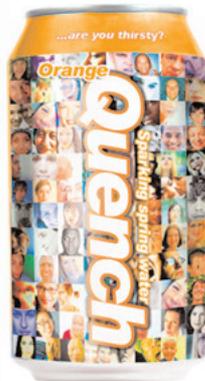
Our new drink Quench does give you a great natural lift because it has ginseng (for body and mind), gingko (for focus) and lemongrass (for zingy revival) in it, plus natural citrus fruit sugars which make it tasty, refreshing and uplifting

We would not recommend testing concepts with very different levels of finish with the same respondents. However, it is possible to compare the results of concepts tested with different levels of finish, tested with different groups of respondents.

2. Should early stage ideas be branded?

On average, the response to unbranded concepts is quite similar to branded concepts. This may seem surprising, but it would appear that people when faced with an unbranded concept, tend to make a positive presumption about the brand (i.e. view the concept in the light of a leading or their favoured brand). The actual brand may be more polarising.

BRAND vs NO BRAND

There are categories where it is necessary to reassure respondents about provenance/safety (ironically the original function of a brand). For example, if testing an over the counter pharmaceutical product or a pet food, it is particularly important to state it is made by a leading manufacturer (although less so for human food or drink!)

We would not recommend mixing branded and unbranded concepts with the same respondents. However, it is possible to compare the results of concepts tested with and without branding.

3. How do I know if my winning idea is genuinely good?

Most agencies use databases to create 'norms' for key metrics to highlight whether your ideas scores better or worse than their 'average'. This is a useful start point, but of course the value of comparing to that norm is only useful if you know the value of the norm itself i.e. what ideas are in the database itself. What is being used to create this average - what if the bulk of the ideas tested were rubbish? Clearly the value of the norm in this circumstance would be minimal.

Norms can be used to good effect when the people using them know how to use them well and have the common sense and ultimately the experience to get the most out of the database.

The other way of putting context around scores is to include a benchmark idea i.e. something that already exists that you consider to be successful. It could be your brand or it could be what you consider would be the main competition for your new idea. In this way, not only do you have a 'score' to judge against, but diagnostically it provides you with rich information about the potential advantages/disadvantages of your new idea compared to the benchmark. This could show whether you attract a different profile of buyer, have different usage occasion etc.

4. How many concepts can I screen?

Theoretically, you can test as many as you like. What dictates how many concepts any one respondent can test in one go is dictated really by how much we want to ask about each one. At the extreme, if you only wanted to ask purchase interest for each idea, a person could probably do at least 20 concepts. It is important that the ideas are different. Versions of the same idea cannot be shown to the same respondent.

In reality, most clients want to know more than just purchase intention so typically, respondents might assess say 5 ideas with a mix of scoring and diagnostic feedback. So, if you had 20 ideas and we wanted to get 100 ratings per idea, we would have each person test 5 and we would need a sample of 400 people.

There can be pretty much any variation on a theme. Ultimately, you can screen any number of ideas you may have. How you do it is dictated by the nature and extent of information needed, difference between ideas and, of course, budget constraints.

Our early idea tools such as prioritise and scope can help you when you many ideas and need an indication of which to focus and take further and our mix tool can help you when you have narrowed down the choice and need more depth of feedback