

In-store sampling serves as the launching pad to long-term value, beyond event day

As shoppers, we've all had those moments where we intended to go into the store and strictly follow our shopping list. We checked off each item as we went through the aisles, and as we turned the corner we were greeted by a smile and a gracious offer to try a sample. Of course, we couldn't say no—it was free, new and would only take a second and, suddenly, we placed a box of that tasty snack in our cart.

For brands, there is no denying that in-store sampling increases sales the same day or even within the same minute a product is sampled. In fact, we have seen average product sales and unit lifts upward of three times on in-store sampling days (compared to four weeks prior). However, brands and retailers will point to the limitations of in-store sampling as a tactic that drives return based on

an inability to measure the long-term impact of in-store sampling beyond same-day trial and sales.

Though it fundamentally would seem that in-store sampling can (and should) drive long-term impact, the industry has struggled with proving the tactic's long-term value. As leaders in the space, we've seen results that have proven time and time again that there is immediate, undeniable power in these sampling days as drivers of behavior change, unit movement, basket size and category growth. Now, leveraging a unique, data-centric "proof of concept" analytical approach, we're uncovering trends to challenge misconceptions about sampling's long-term impact. Based on our analysis, what follows is strong directional guidance helping to dispel some of the most common myths about in-store sampling.

Common In-store Sampling Myths

(And What We Found from Our Study)

MYTH #2:

The adult beverage category is not a trip driver for grocery and mass retailers.



REALITY:

Adult beverage in-store sampling helps drive change to shopping behavior, creating a new opportunity for those retailers to capture category share over time. From our analysis, **61%** of shoppers who purchased an adult beverage product (beer, wine) on sampling day were new to the category, and **84%** of those shoppers purchased again at that same retailer within one year.

MYTH #3:

The impact of in-store sampling is felt only by the brand or product being sampled.



REALITY:

Beyond same-day product sales, retailers holding in-store sampling events are also benefitting from category conversion, in both the short and long term. In the retailers we studied, **49%** of product dollars on sampling-event day were from shoppers new to the overall product category, and these shoppers showed a **60%** repeat purchase rate in year one following the sampling event.



MYTH #1:

In-store sampling is a “one-and-done” tactic to increase event day sales.



REALITY:

In-store sampling drives newly converted shoppers to repeat purchase, setting the stage for brand loyalty. From our analysis, **88%** of product dollars on sampling day were from shoppers new to the product. These shoppers had a **78%** re-purchase rate within the next 12 months, which and accounted for **68%** of the product’s 12-month dollar sales spent by sample-day item buyers.

MYTH #4:

In-store sampling is really only beneficial for new products.



REALITY:

In-store sampling can reinvigorate sales of well-established products by re-engaging lapsed purchasers, providing an opportunity to experience the product again and add it to their ongoing consideration set. In one example, **88%** of sampling day shoppers of a popular, category-defining snack had not actually bought the product in the 18 months prior—and nearly **20%** of them re-purchased it within the next 12 months.

What does this all mean?

As we’ve long hypothesized (and now our preliminary “proof of concept” data supports), in-store sampling delivers more than a simple, one-day sales impact. It can drive conversion, loyalty and continued sales for products sampled—as well as help retailers grow categories. The true magnitude of an in-store sampling event will continue to increase when factors such as halo effect, post-event first-time purchase and increased awareness are added. In the long run, brands and retailers will see tangible value and ROI that goes beyond sampling day. Advantage plans to continue to monitor and analyze these findings as we help dispel some of the common myths around in-store sampling.