

A hand holding a pen over a document with charts and tables. The document features a bar chart with five bars of varying heights, a line graph, and a table with columns labeled 'n/n', 'Мониторинг', and 'Инвест'. The text 'STRATEGIC TRACKING' is overlaid in large, bold, blue letters.

STRATEGIC TRACKING

BENEFITS OF STRATEGIC TRACKING

Strategic tracking of brand health and perceptions over time helps companies understand which marketing initiatives are successful and where future efforts may be focused to improve market positioning.

W5 ON STRATEGIC TRACKING RESEARCH

W5's approach to tracking research goes beyond measuring brand and advertising awareness to explore a changing marketplace, bringing depth and context to consumer behavior and attitudes. Companies need to not only understand their relative brand health, but also determine their perception and fit within the marketplace.

W5 believes exploration of a wide set of metrics over time helps companies understand which initiatives are successful and where future strategic thinking can be focused to improve positioning.



INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC TRACKING

Measurement of business and industry-specific metrics over time allows for evaluation of growth and progress. This leads to decisions based on analysis of trends, evaluation of past activity, and predictions for future activity. Strategic tracking provides an opportunity to proactively track changes in the environment from one measured period to another.

W5 believes in developing robust and customized tracking studies customized to fit each client's individual needs. These studies are typically conducted on a quarterly, bi-annual, or annual basis to monitor business performance and the success of advertising initiatives.

STRATEGIC TRACKING RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Strategic tracking initiatives should address a variety of topics. Brand equity, advertising effectiveness, areas of business growth, new business decisions, and press coverage are all candidates for tracking. A comprehensive strategic tracking study may be structured as follows:

Brand Health

- How successful is the overall brand?
- How do consumers interact with the brand?

Brand Perceptions

- How is the brand perceived?
- How is the brand performing compared to the competition?

Advertising Effectiveness

- Are consumers aware of advertisements for the brand?
- How effective are the advertisements at improving brand perceptions and interaction?

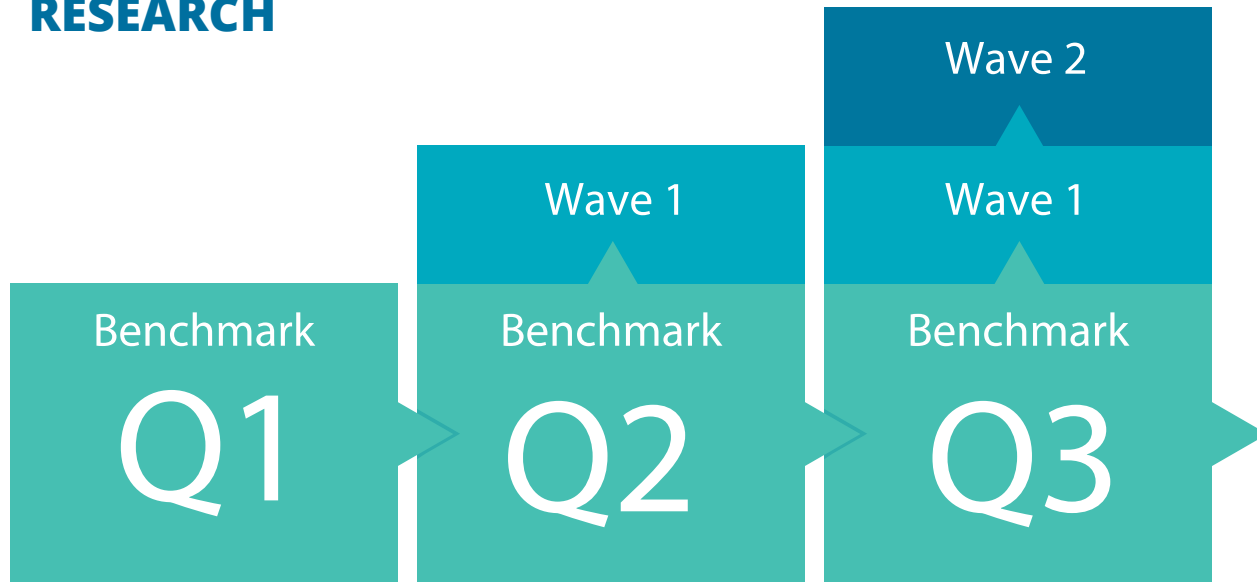
Consumer Needs and Motivations

- How is the market changing over time?
- What are consumers looking for in a brand and product category?
- What is causing changes in consumer attitudes?

Tracking these areas alone or in combination allows for a broader understanding of brand health and the category as a whole.

By combining multiple areas of exploration into one study, the tracking study is well-rounded and more effective in informing future strategy.

STRATEGIC TRACKING RESEARCH





BRAND HEALTH AND PERCEPTIONS

A well-structured brand tracking system may act as an effective business tool yielding quantitative, market-representative data to support strategic decisions and define areas of opportunity and unmet needs.

W5 often uses brand funnels (see example) to illustrate the relationship amongst different brand health metrics ranging from awareness to specific shopping behaviors. This can be helpful to understand the movement of consumers through levels of brand engagement. For instance, this funnel can help determine how many consumers aware of the brand actually use its products.

As we track these metrics over time we can understand how brand health and consumer interaction evolves. To the right is an example of how brand funnels can be used to visually represent brand health metrics over time:

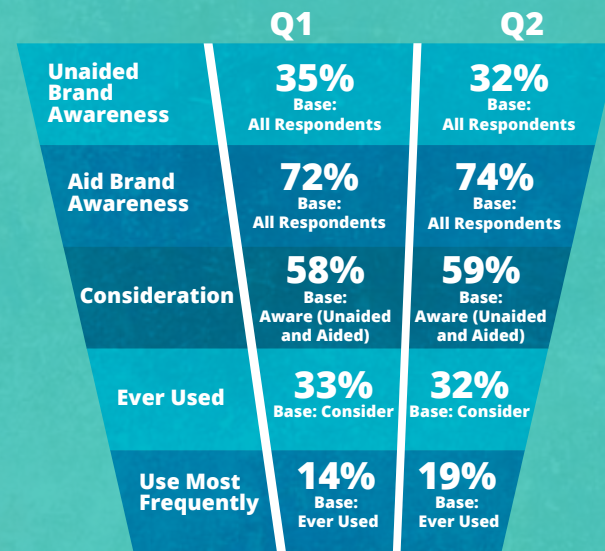


Figure 2: Example Brand Funnel

CONSUMER BEHAVIORS AND MOTIVATIONS

While tracking brand health and advertising is helpful, it is also important to understand what drives consumer behaviors and decision making. Tracking provides a solid basis to understand current consumers, predict their needs, meet their expectations, and follow their purchases as well as their behaviors and attitudes about shopping in general, specific to a category, and particular brands.

Tracking category attitudes and behaviors along with brand attitudes, clients can determine whether perceived success is based solely on brand performance or overall category success. These measures can determine whether a brand needs better positioning, products, or new products to fill in category gaps.

Strategic brand assessment does not end with a simple set of brand health statistics. A successful strategic tracking initiative also incorporates perspective on perceptions of the brand and key competitors in the market. Understanding how the brand is perceived and viewed in relation to competitors is valuable in communicating a comprehensive view of the category and market evolution.

ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS

Advertising campaign tracking (sometimes structured as “pre/post testing”) monitors an advertising campaign’s performance across many metrics including brand and ad awareness, product trial and usage, perceptions of campaign executions, and attitudes about the client’s brand versus competitors. The purpose of advertising tracking is to assess the combined effect of media and spending level, effectiveness of media buy, or targeting and quality of the advertising campaign.

Some recent forms of advertising campaign tracking focus on the relative performance of the brand’s ads versus competitive ads launching at the same time. As new advertising is introduced, tracking can be an important source of feedback for strategy evolution, advertising improvement, and evaluation of media placement. Additionally, campaign tracking can be structured and analyzed to monitor the relationship between brand image and media investment (ROI).

Advertising Awareness

- What advertisements have consumers seen/heard?
- Where have consumers seen the advertisements?

Call to Action

- Does the advertising improve consumers’ consideration?
- Are consumers likely to visit or purchase more because of advertisements?
- Are consumers more likely to recommend products or services as a result of the advertising?

Advertising Perceptions

- Does the advertising resonate with consumers?
- Do they find the advertising appealing?
Eye-catching?
- Do the advertisements relate to them and their lives?
- Do the advertisements elicit positive or negative emotions?

PLATFORMS FOR CONDUCTING STRATEGIC TRACKING

There is no universally correct way to conduct tracking. One challenge with standardized tracking studies is they are not designed with the client's specific goals or strategy in mind. A "one size fits all" research approach does not provide enough detail to adequately determine success. W5 has a range of methodological options so each study offers the best approach for the client's research objectives. These typically include combinations of quantitative and qualitative research approaches and web-based and mobile accessibility.

ONLINE QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

W5 believes conducting strategic tracking over equally spaced periods of time – **pulsed tracking** – is typically the most effective way to monitor brand health and perceptions. The approach is strategically focused, fielded in "waves" (e.g., months, quarters, bi-annual, or annual periods) mapped to schedules for marketing initiatives, and reflective of expected periods of market change.

Though W5 normally conducts strategic tracking by waves, tracking studies can also be conducted successfully through **continuous interviewing**. These studies are fielded incrementally week-by-week, with data processing, analysis, and reporting "rolled up" at specified intervals. Determining the best approach is dependent upon the research objectives and the expected rate of marketplace changes, for example, the launch of a new advertising campaign. W5 believes both types of measuring strategies have merit and should be considered and customized for each tracking study.

METHODOLOGY BENEFITS

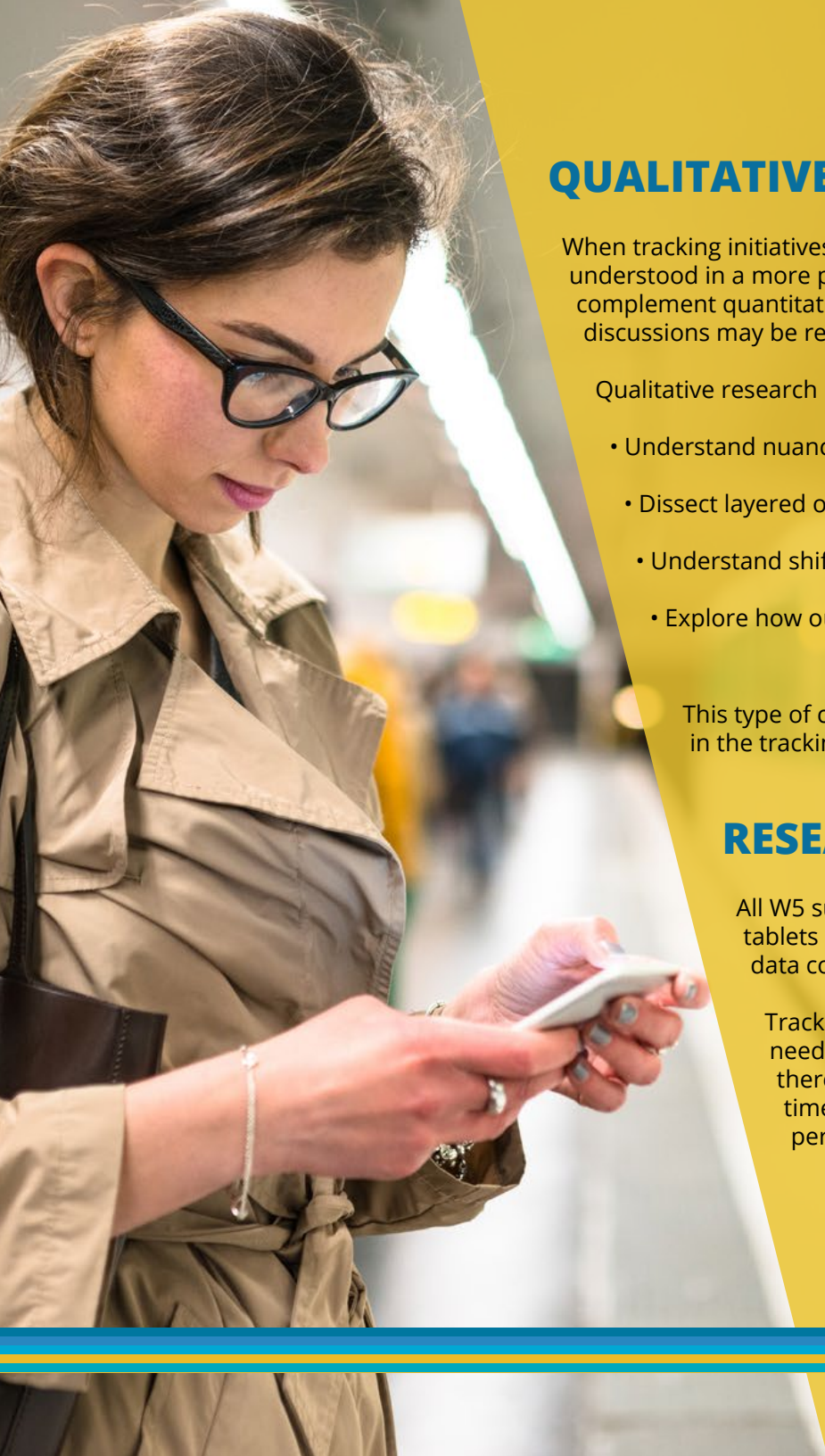
Pulsed Tracking

- Provides concentrated insights in a short time interval to provide highly precise pre/post measurements for specific flights of media advertising or to coincide with media schedules
- May be strongly biased if something negative occurs just as a wave of interviewing is conducted
- Potentially offers a somewhat less expensive option

Continuous Interviewing

- Provides a complete record of measurements over time with no gaps or missing time periods in the data
- Evens the effects of short-term disturbances such as adverse publicity, product introductions, bad weather, etc.
- Provides a good monitor of competitive information, since the interviewing is ongoing and not biased to the media schedule of one brand or campaign

As each tracking study is unique, employing a calendar-based timeline (e.g., yearly, quarterly, monthly, etc.) is not always appropriate. It is important to map timing and methods of data collection and analysis to brand marketing initiatives.



QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

When tracking initiatives focus on complex behaviors or a target audience who needs to be understood in a more personal or day-to-day context, qualitative research can be conducted to complement quantitative tracking. For example, live-moderated text interviews and online bulletin board discussions may be recommended, depending on objectives.

Qualitative research methods may **complement quantitative tracking** in the following ways:

- Understand nuances in consumer behavior
- Dissect layered or complex interrelated behaviors and processes
- Understand shifts in drivers and motivations, including new, emerging products or competitors
- Explore how outside forces act upon consumer attitudes and behaviors

This type of collaboration of qualitative and quantitative research can be conducted for each wave in the tracking process or as a one-time preface or follow-up to a quantitative survey.

RESEARCH WITH MOBILE DEVICES

All W5 surveys are **mobile-optimized**, as many respondents elect to complete surveys on tablets or smartphones. Our flexible survey design provides key benefits, including rapid data collection, high response rates, and relevant respondent experiences.

Tracking surveys also may be designed for mobile devices. This is useful where there is a need to elicit responses while consumers are participating in everyday activities (or shortly thereafter). For example, consumers can react to new television advertising in real-time or provide their opinions during or post-shopping to reveal shifts in brand health, perceptions, and behavior.

ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

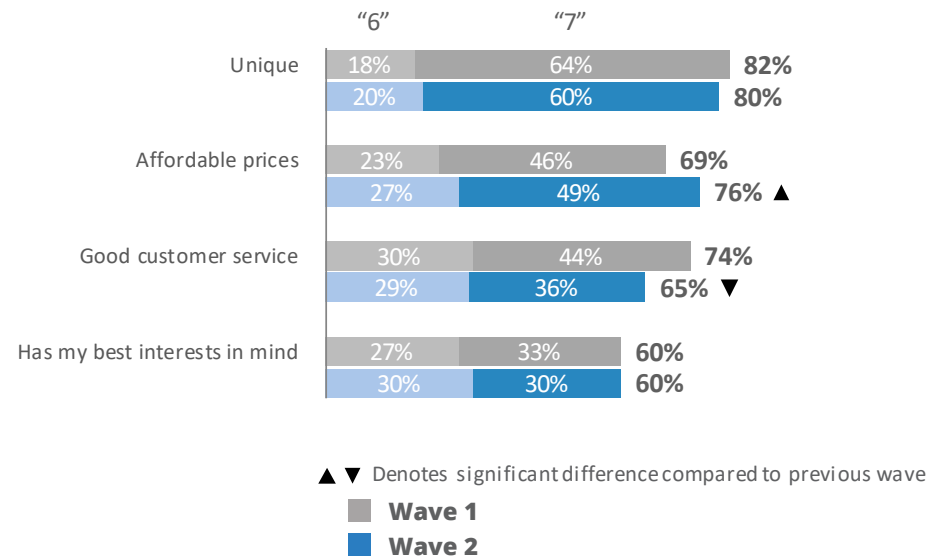
Visualization of tracking data is an effective way to understand and explain large amounts of information collected over time. Examples of different types of visual tracking reporting W5 produces are shown below:

BRAND AND COMPETITOR AWARENESS

Below is an example approach to tracking brand awareness of three different brands by quarter and month. This approach not only presents important data, but also explores different relationships. Featuring competitor scores on the same chart provides a depiction of the overall marketplace. Including data from multiple quarters makes it possible to explore how different strategies put forth throughout the year affect awareness levels.

CLIENT BRAND		COMPETITOR BRAND			
		12	3		
Unaided Brand Awareness:	Wave 1	<i>of total</i>	34%	27%	32%
	Wave 2		33%	30%	30%
Aided Brand Awareness:	Wave 1	<i>of aware</i>	75%	70%	66%
	Wave 2		76%	70%	67%
Consideration:	Wave 1	<i>of aware</i>	61%	58%	56%
	Wave 2		62%	60%	55%
Ever Used:	Wave 1	<i>of aware</i>	35%	30%	28%
	Wave 2		35%	29%	31%
Preference:	Wave 1	<i>of those who have purchased</i>	38%	18%	9%
	Wave 2		37%	20%	8%

Performance across brand attributes is one of the many ways W5 communicates performance of brands across multiple brand attributes per wave. By showing both ratings used to calculate Top 2 Box scores (6 and 7 on a seven-point scale), it is possible to visualize and monitor both Top 2 Box scores over time as well as "extreme" Top Box ratings (score of 7 on a seven-point scale).

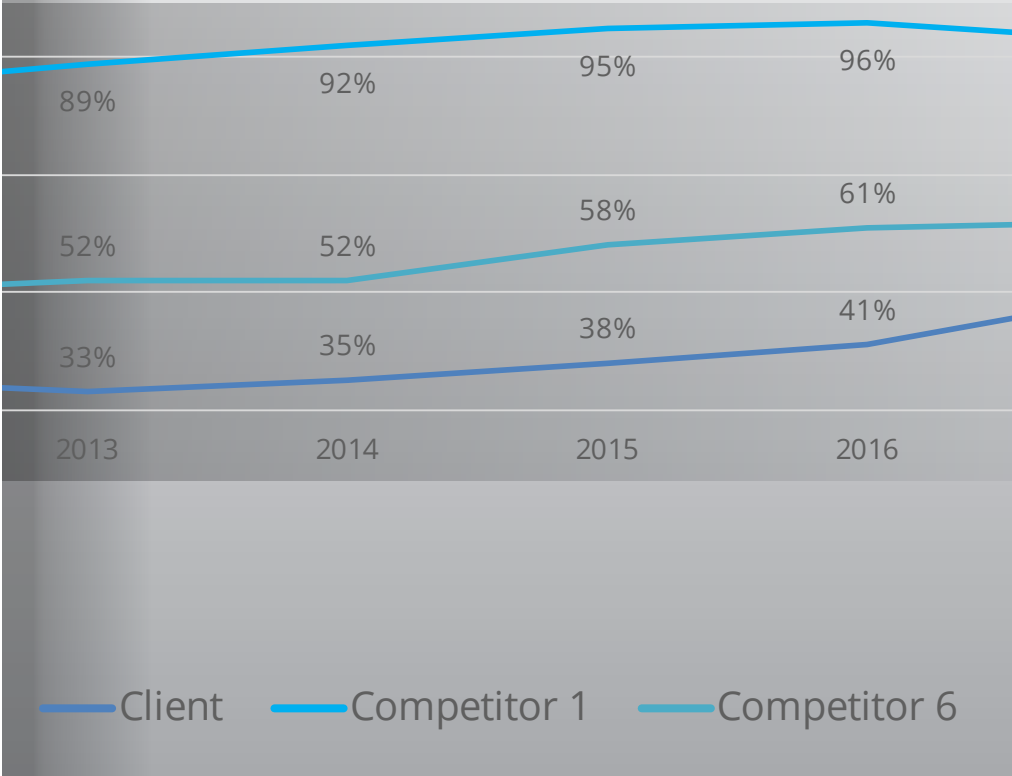
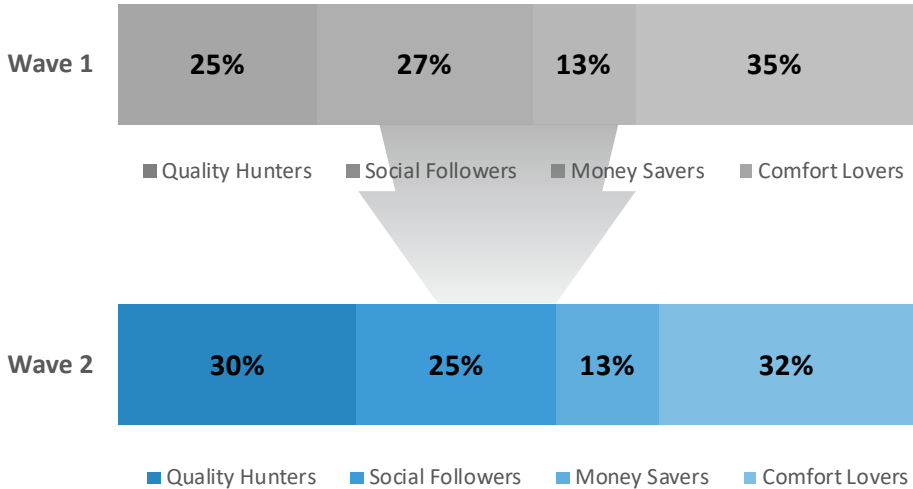


BRAND AWARENESS OVER TIME

SEGMENTATION PROPORTION COMPARISON

Because tracking is not only limited to awareness and brand perceptions, the chart below illustrates how tracking can be performed for any type of study. The charts represent relative sizes of different clusters of consumers defined by a segmentation study. This visualization clearly identifies shifts in segment sizes to understand how the market is changing over time. This information can then be used to reevaluate targeting and future strategies.

SEGEMENTATION TRACKING



PERCEPTUAL MAPS

Perceptual maps help visualize how brand perceptions relate to one another across a variety of metrics. The perceptual map to the right illuminates how a brand is perceived across attributes relative to their perceived importance. With tracking, these results can show progress over time and determine the success of current efforts. Mapping provides a good way to report results but also helps analysts extract meaningful insights.

This example communicates the relationship between attributes pertaining to a retail store and how they may vary in **importance** or how consumers perceive the store is **performing** across these attributes over time.

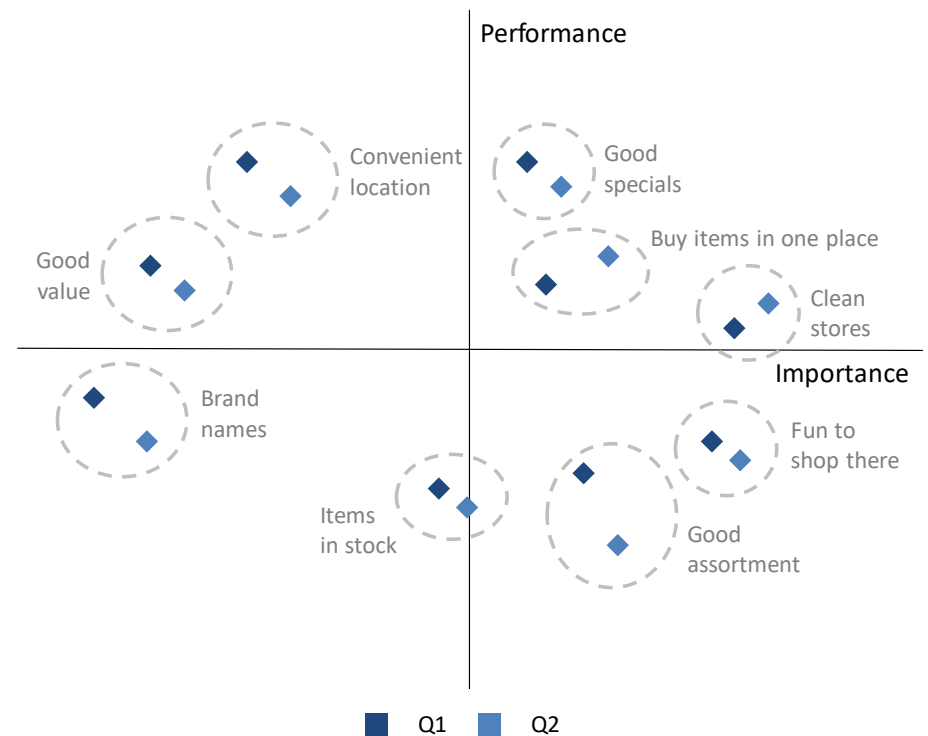


Figure 2: Example Perceptual Map by Quarter

SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis provides a framework that allows clients to focus on brand strengths, minimize weakness, and take advantage of opportunities while warding off potential threats. This information, along with perceptual maps, can reveal consumer perceptions and how they perceive competitors in the marketplace relative to each other.

The SWOT analysis addresses questions such as those in the following table:

<p>STRENGTHS TO LEVERAGE</p> <p>What are your competitive advantages? What relevant resources do you have? What do consumers see as your strengths?</p>	<p>OPPORTUNITIES TO MAINTAIN</p> <p>What are good opportunities to pursue? What trends provide new market opportunities? What weaknesses in the market can be exploited?</p>
<p>WEAKNESSES TO MONITOR</p> <p>What do consumers believe you do poorly? What promises are you seen as not delivering? What pitfalls do you need to avoid?</p>	<p>THREATS TO IMPROVE</p> <p>What obstacles do you face? What is your competition doing well? Do perceived weaknesses threaten market share?</p>



Conducting multiple waves of tracking research illuminates changes over time to provide invaluable context and applicability to SWOT insights. As brand perceptions or advertising change over time, impact on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats can be proactively monitored.

For example, this example SWOT analysis could be used to track attributes of consumer interest when choosing a retail store. By using SWOT analysis, it is possible to understand perceived areas of strength and opportunity and explore movement from one area to the other.

<p>STRENGTHS </p>		<p>OPPORTUNITIES </p>	
<p>Wave 1</p> <p>Convenient locations</p> <p>Good value</p> <p>Good assortment</p>	<p>Wave 2</p> <p>Good specials</p> <p>Convenient locations</p> <p>Good assortment</p>	<p>Wave 1</p> <p>Items in stock</p> <p>Clean stores</p> <p>Good specials</p>	<p>Wave 2</p> <p>Good value</p> <p>Buy items in one place</p> <p>Advertising</p>
<p>WEAKNESSES </p>		<p>THREATS </p>	
<p>Wave 1</p> <p>Fun to shop there</p> <p>Buy items in one place</p> <p>Items in stock</p>	<p>Wave 2</p> <p>Helpful staff</p> <p>Brand names</p> <p>Fun to shop there</p>	<p>Wave 1</p> <p>Quality products</p> <p>Brand names</p> <p>Helpful staff</p>	<p>Wave 2</p> <p>Advertising</p> <p>Quality products</p> <p>Clean stores</p>

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

While perceptual maps and SWOT analyses help visualize relationships between brand metrics, W5 often explores these relationships further using **predictive multivariate analyses**, such as regression. In a strategic brand tracking context, regression analyses may be conducted to explore the strength of the relationship between an overall brand perception metric and several related, more specific perceptions. This analysis can be helpful in identifying the key drivers of overall perception, based on derived factors rather than just stated survey response.

Implementing this analysis over multiple waves of tracking can help clients ascertain how changes in the market can affect their brand's position in the marketplace. For instance, a retailer may use insights from this analysis to determine and follow which store improvements satisfy shoppers most. This analysis provides focused tracking of consumers' behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes.

W5 explores tracking data in-depth to uncover where clients' efforts should be concentrated, how market perceptions change, and where new opportunities lie. An example featuring retail store brand attributes is shown below:

Through W5's comprehensive approach to strategic brand tracking, insights can highlight changes in sales and purchasing, determine efficacy of new brand and marketing efforts, and inform decisions for future strategies.



CASE STUDY

REVEALING & TRACKING ATTITUDES & BEHAVIORS

A leading CPG company partnered with W5 to better understand the state of the category and how to best position its products. The study explored attitudes and opinions about the brand, category, and products, and examined purchase behaviors. The following year, a subsequent tracking wave of research was conducted to assess how the market had shifted and expanded.

Approach



In addition to comparisons against a first wave of research, additional questions were included in a mobile-optimized online tracking survey to provide a holistic view of the marketplace and the challenges facing the brand. These questions included exploration of consumers' perceptions and expectations of the company, its competitors, and product locations in stores, as well as opinions of new packaging options. Through in-depth tracking analysis and reporting, W5 illustrated new trends in the marketplace and highlighted changes in consumer perceptions and expectations over time.

Results



Study insights guided branding and communications efforts to maintain leadership in the marketplace. The research became a resource for sales teams to inform communication with store management regarding product placement. Ultimately, products were moved to more intuitive sections to align with the brand's overall positioning.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I use tracking to better inform my segmentation?

By tracking consumer behavior over time, it is possible to utilize segmentation solutions to further understand key segments. Since segmentations are not conducted regularly, tracking segments can help highlight the changes in the marketplace and inform new strategy when communicating with each segment. It can also help clients determine when to conduct new segmentation research as a solution becomes dated.

Can I use an existing consumer segmentation to track movement of specific segments?

Existing consumer segmentations may be incorporated into W5's strategic tracking studies. When strategically appropriate, W5 adds questions and programming logic related to segment classification into the study screener. Ensuring waves of tracking research includes and tracks appropriate consumer segment samples allows clients to measure branding and advertising success among various target markets simultaneously.

Can W5 conduct strategic tracking that maps back to my past tracking data?

W5 is keenly aware of the importance of consistency and planning to bridge the transition between tracking methodologies and partners. Before initiating strategic tracking research, W5 recommends a collaborative, in-person Worksession that brings together various client stakeholders to discuss needs and expectations and is structured to reliably transition the tracking research from the previous study to the new design:

- 1. Review background and intended use of data** – An opportunity to provide W5 with valuable information on the tracking goals and develop a shared understanding of how the tracking results and insights will be used
- 2. Identify and prioritize tracking questioning** – Identify key brand health and perception metrics to be tracked with reliable consistency moving forward
- 3. Review key metrics** – Review key questions in detail to identify aspects that must be maintained, where flexibilities may exist, and if any concerns or questions remain. This may include a review of question language aspects; answer set aspects; question type, design, scales, piping; programmed survey aspects including look, feel, operation, logic, etc.
- 4. Examine data file and output** – Review past tracking research data files and reporting to understand structure, variables, and values to inform decisions on new study setup and the analysis and reporting plan

This collaborative and attentive review of past research and strategic needs provides valuable focus for the future while reliably linking back to historical data.

Can tracking data be mined for additional insight beyond that gained from periodic tracking analysis and reporting?

Think of tracking studies as a database that can be continuously used for evaluation and planning purposes. W5 is available for additional consultation to provide detailed data tables, cross-tabulations, and summary insight reporting for further analysis of research results. W5 often partners with clients between waves to examine survey response among specific sub-groups of the market sample targeted for a particular initiative or discussion.

Establishing a comprehensive and market representative study design for tracking enables opportunities for additional analysis and insight beyond the wave-by-wave tracking report.

Can I compare my strategic tracking results to norms?

W5 does not utilize norms when analyzing and reporting on data from custom research studies. For many reasons, W5 does not believe it is appropriate to compare data from our strategic studies to normative data, the most fundamental of which are:

Customization

W5 creates a customized strategic tracking questionnaire that addresses specific research objectives. Our studies are focused on unique research needs and category context, so it does not make sense to compare results side-by-side with data compiled from other studies. W5's approach to questioning is different than a flatter approach enabling calculation of norms – therefore results will not be directly comparable.

Target Audience

There are often vast disparities between samples used in normative studies and the sample obtained for custom, strategic studies. W5 believes in surveying a study-specific sample to address unique objectives and ensure appropriate representation of the target market. Normative studies, in contrast, tend to be based to very broad consumer audiences and therefore do not necessarily provide comparable – or actionable – results.

W5 is a boutique custom marketing research firm. We focus on answering who, what, when, where, and why people relate to products, services, and brands. W5 conducts full-service marketing research and research strategy services for Fortune 500s and leading advertising agencies.

**Want to know more?
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