

REVITALIZATION OF THE CEREAL CATEGORY: APPLYING BRAND REVIVAL
TECHNIQUES TO INCREASE SALES OF GENERAL MILLS' CEREAL

By

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	4
Statements of Purpose and Relevance.....	5
Introduction.....	6
Literature Review.....	6
Brand Sustainability and Revitalization.....	6
Nostalgia Tactics.....	7
The Snacking Occasion.....	8
Sustainable Packaging.....	8
General Mills Plans a Revival.....	9
Research Methodology.....	10
Results and Implications.....	12
Grocery Store Observations.....	12
General Mills YouTube Channel Videos.....	13
General Mills Brand Websites.....	15
Social Media.....	15
Pinterest.....	15
Instagram.....	16
Facebook.....	16
Twitter.....	17
Interview Results.....	17
Survey Results.....	20
Discussion and Recommendations.....	22
Limitations.....	23
Further Research.....	24
Conclusion.....	24
References.....	26
Appendices.....	28
Appendix A – Grocery Store Observations.....	28
Appendix B – Social Media Observations.....	31
Appendix C – Interview Informant Table.....	34
Appendix D – Interview Questions.....	35
Appendix E – Survey Questions.....	36

Abstract

In recent years, sales in the cereal category have been declining across major manufacturers' brands. Current literature depicts successful tactics involved in brand revival, however lacks information about the application of these strategies to an entire category. This study aims to analyze and apply these methods with a focus on General Mills' cereals in an attempt to make viable recommendations for the company to implement and increase overall sales.

By making naturalistic observations both in a grocery store and online via YouTube and General Mills brand websites, this paper identifies how General Mills currently positions cereal. Furthermore, through the examination of social media posts and the use of interviews and surveys, this report portrays what consumers perceive about cereal in regards to the four aforementioned areas. The results provide areas of opportunity for General Mills to expand upon moving forward.

Findings from this analysis indicate General Mills should focus on expanding nostalgia appeals, supplementing the snacking occasion notion, emphasizing cereal as an ingredient for others foods, and further researching the viability of reusable packaging for particular items.

Statements of Purpose and Relevance

The purpose of this analysis is to determine the most effective way to increase sales in the cereal category through the study of previous best practice brand revival strategies and current consumer trends. This report focuses solely on the cereal manufacturer, General Mills, to discern how to leverage their current presence online and influence the perception of their cereal brands effectively and responsibly.

This information will aid General Mills in remaining relevant in today's marketplace and will allow them to better fit the needs of their consumers. Over the last couple of years, cereal sales have been steadily declining as consumers iterate they have less time to eat breakfast and are becoming more health conscious. The cereal category is a major component General Mills' business and as such it's critical to continuously grow to meet the needs of an evolving society.

The age of technology presents greater opportunities for companies and consumers to interface, but must be leveraged properly to communicate the benefit and need for cereal. The following analysis of social media commentary, interview answers, and survey responses provides ideas for General Mills to influence the conversations about cereal and utilize successful brand revival techniques to reverse the declining trends of the cereal category.

Introduction

In recent years, cereal sales have been decreasing due to various consumer trends. In the latest quarter of business as of September 2014, sales of General Mills cereal plummeted 4%; however, certain brands are gaining market share. Cinnamon Toast Crunch rose 7% with added cinnamon and their new Cheerios protein product appears to be off to a good start. General Mills believes any losses are largely due to ineffective promotion and marketing tactics (Gasparro, 2014).

General Mills isn't the only cereal manufacturer experiencing losses. Cereal sales as a whole have decreased approximately 3% in the last year alone (Nassauer, 2014). Some believe consumers aren't eating enough breakfast, others believe cereal lacks differentiation in packaging (Perlberg, 2014). Also, people are concerned with new health trends such as high protein, anti-GMOs, and less sugars.

Large cereal manufacturers need to devise ways to reinvigorate cereal as a category to increase sales and remain relevant in today's market. In order to implement the best methods to spark a revival, it's important to understand current consumer trends and opinions about cereal.

In fact, the key to a successful cereal revival lies in cereal manufacturers' abilities to combine previous best practices of revitalization and current consumer trends. Therefore this paper focuses on the application of concepts from previously successful brand restorations to a fruitful cereal category revival based on current consumer opinions and commonly discussed topics. This analysis will provide insights into influencing buyer behavior and ways to improve sales of cereal. The research focuses primarily on General Mills and ways they can influence cereal sales.

To positively influence consumer cereal trends, General Mills should apply successful brand revitalization tactics and current consumer trends to the cereal category. The four primary areas General Mills should focus include:

1. The Nostalgia Approach
2. The Snacking Occasion
3. Re-positioning Cereal as an Ingredient
4. Packaging and Re-usability

General Mills and other cereal manufacturers are already utilizing some of these tactics, but they could benefit from doing more.

Literature Review

Brand Sustainability and Revitalization

Companies that brand both the corporation and the product are likely to have greater brand association (Sinha, 2010). In order to sustain either type of brand, research indicates that companies should employ either a fortifying strategy or a leveraging strategy. For the purpose of this analysis, it's important to understand the latter. Leveraging strategy refers to a brand remaining in its current position, but rebranding itself with a contemporary depiction of the times (Medabesh, 2011). Essentially this means finding a different use for the same product or simply

portraying a new perception about that product. In order to successfully sustain a brand over a period of time, it's pivotal to rejuvenate it and help it remain current.

According to the article "Revitalizing Mature Packaged Goods," successfully revitalized brands are 1) moderate to premium in price, 2) under-advertised, 3) widely distributed, 4) established in heritage, and 5) distinctly different. The authors of this article examined 84 brands, half of which were successful in their rebranding efforts. The brands that were successfully revitalized possessed at least three of the five aforementioned qualities and began by targeting loyal users of the brand. Understanding the connection a customer has with a brand allows managers to reposition the brand in a new, more profitable light. A majority of the campaigns these brands utilized were attempts to trigger nostalgia, create new usage situations for the brands, or encourage a category substitution. Other approaches that can aid in regaining consumer interest in a product include placing a limit on the number of items a person can buy, storage of items in an open space, and use of larger packages. Larger packages, especially, make consumers feel like they're getting a bargain (Wansink, 2001).

Implications. Overall, previous studies examine successful techniques for brand revival, but the current literature lacks an assessment of effective category revitalization strategies. This paper aims to apply some of the above successful brand strategies to the cereal category overall, with an emphasis on General Mills products.

Cereal as a category fits three of the five components of a successful brand: widely distributed, moderate to premium pricing, and established in heritage. Cereal is common to all grocery stores, convenience marts, superstores, etc. It's also priced slightly higher than other breakfast food options, but is still not the most expensive. It has legacy and has been around for a long time. This is good news for cereal as a whole as it possesses key characteristics necessary in revival.

More specifically, General Mills also employs other tactics seen in the above best practices. They regularly limit the availability of their Halloween cereal brands and produce large family sized boxes of cereal. Recently they also released more nostalgic appeals and are currently encouraging the consumption of cereal at a time other than breakfast, suggesting a different usage situation.

The next step in the process of cereal revival is to truly understand the connection consumers have with cereal. In order to understand these connections, it's vital to study social media boards and conduct interviews and surveys. Utilizing these primary research avenues will help strengthen General Mills' current revitalization efforts, as well as shed light on possible new ones.

Nostalgia Tactics

One approach to rebranding is making appeals to nostalgia. A recent study published in the *Journal of Consumer Research* in 2014 analyzed how advertising exposure in childhood affects people in adulthood. Results from a sequence of four studies indicate that childhood exposure to advertisements leads to stronger biased product evaluations and perceptions in adulthood. The findings indicate that participants who were likely exposed to two advertisements of

presweetened cereals in childhood evaluated both as equally healthy. However, those exposed to only one of these ads in childhood perceived the one they recognized from childhood as healthier. In reality, both cereals contain the same amount of sugar and are equally as healthy. Therefore, resources invested in child-oriented advertising provide benefits to the brand long after the audience has grown up because these biases persist (Connell, 2014).

Implications. One can conclude from this research that nostalgia appeals could be effective in revitalizing the cereal category as a whole, not just a specific brand of cereal. Instead of focusing on simply targeting children with commercials, General Mills should also produce commercials similar to those aired 15-30 years ago to remind adults why cereal is the best choice for breakfast and appeal to their nostalgia.

The Snacking Occasion

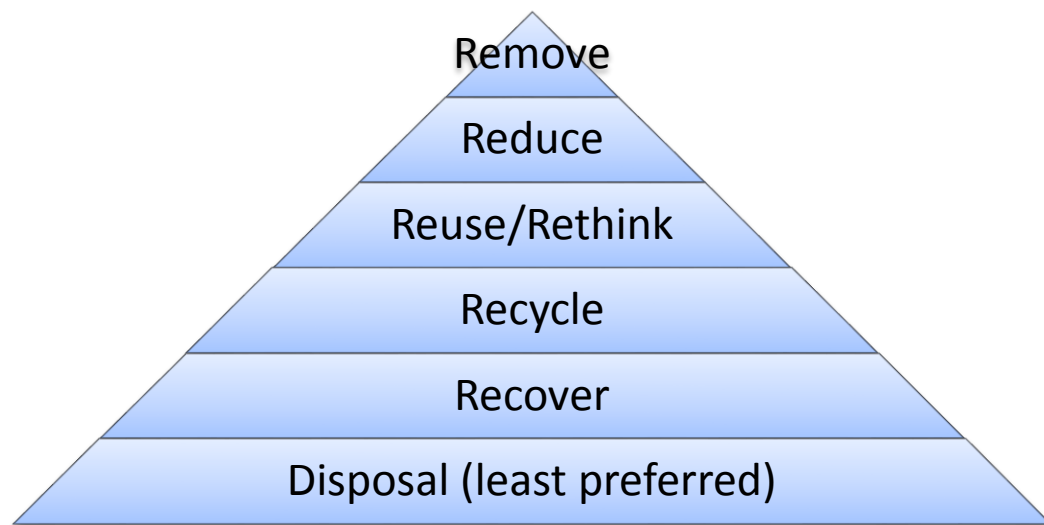
Another two revitalization strategies discussed earlier were creating new usage situations and encouraging a category substitution. Re-positioning cereal as a snack that one can eat at any time of day fits these ideas. In fact, this notion of the snacking occasion is already starting to take off within the cereal category. The article, “Pitching Cereal for Dinner and Late Nights,” published in the *Wall Street Journal* in June of 2014 indicates that General Mills’ new Lucky Charms commercial conveys an actor walking around while eating a bowl of cereal. This suggests that even if one doesn’t have enough time to sit down to have a bowl of cereal, they can still enjoy this quick delight standing up. This same advertisement features the actor wearing clothes rather than pajamas, suggesting that he’s not eating cereal for breakfast, but perhaps as a snack, lunch, or dinner. The President of the Big G Cereal Division within General Mills, Jim Murphy, indicates that approximately 20% of cereal eating occurs outside of breakfast. However, some people feel guilty about eating cereal at other times of day, so “there is an opportunity for [General Mills] to alleviate some of the guilt” by giving people permission through advertising (Nassauer, 2014).

The article also signifies that sales of sweetened cereals are still outpacing others and that cereal is still the most common food people eat for breakfast, although cereal sales declined about 3% in the last year alone. Adults are eating sweet cereal in place of other late night snacks such as cookies or cake because they feel less guilty about cereal (Nassauer, 2014).

Implications. While General Mills currently fosters the idea of the snacking occasion, it’s important to turn to social media, interviews, and surveys to determine what consumers think about the concept and whether or not they partake in eating cereal at various times a day besides breakfast.

Sustainable Packaging

Another potential source of category revitalization is packaging. Packaging can be a source of competitive advantage if leveraged properly. It can also help increase a company’s social reputation and create public good if produced properly. Researchers indicate that “being ‘green’ is no longer an option. It’s good for the environment, fortunately, it’s also good for business” (Holdway, 2002). A study published in the *Design Management Journal* analyzed the power of eco-design and packaging. From the analysis, the authors concluded that there is a waste minimization hierarchy, as follows (Holdway, 2002):



Implications. Currently General Mills operates at the recycle level of the pyramid as their cereal boxes are made from recycled materials and have been for quite some time. However, to appease the eco-friendly consumer, General Mills could seize an opportunity to climb to the reuse/rethink level. General Mills could perhaps introduce a durable, re-useable, single-serve cereal cup that can easily be used as a portable snack container for children and remain more environmentally friendly than the throw-away cups currently offered. The adults using this cup would hypothetically buy the regular size box of cereal to refill the snack container for their child. The cups could be sold individually or packaged with the regular box of cereal. To understand consumer thoughts on the subject, it is also good to include this information in the primary research.

General Mills Plans a Revival

In July 2014, *Bloomberg Businessweek* wrote an article about General Mills and their plans for revitalizing the cereal category. The company remains hopeful as Americans are still eating 80% of their breakfasts at home and the share of consumers who skip breakfast has recently dropped. Furthermore, children, older adults, and Hispanics consume more cereal than average and these demographics are currently growing in the U.S. To execute a cereal category recovery, General Mills will focus on 1) utilizing current food trends like protein, gluten-free, and fiber, 2) adding more flavor, 3) capitalizing on adult nostalgia, and 4) continuing online advertising (Wong, 2014).

Implications. While General Mills chooses to focus their revival strategy on four main components, only one prong of the approach addresses the strategies that are successful in brand revitalization, nostalgia. Unofficially, General Mills is also looking toward the snacking occasion for answers. To strengthen the stimulation of the cereal category further, the company could also consider adding elements of reusable packaging and the re-positioning of cereal as an ingredient for other foods to develop more usage situations for cereal. The primary research will aim to address the potential benefits all these strategies could have directly on the cereal category.

Research Methodology

Objective

The objective of the following primary research is to determine if the secondary research information about rebranding can be applied to the revitalization of the cereal category to improve the overall health of cereal sales.

Approach

I conducted observational research both in the grocery store and via social media. This research is qualitative, while my interviews and surveys are both qualitative and quantitative. The interview questions I created were open-ended and helped to develop close-ended survey questions. The following methodology is broken into observation, interview, and survey information.

Observation

Grocery Store. I visited a local Fry's Grocery Store (Tucson, AZ) and observed General Mills cereal boxes. I snapped 117 photos of all the General Mills cereal boxes on display. I took pictures from the front, back, top, and side angles to determine packaging differences between brands. Aside from the traditional boxes of cereal, I also captured the single-serving cereal cups, mini Cheerios Protein boxes, and multi-pack cereal snack servings in the aisle. For photo examples, please see Appendix A.

Social Media. After walking through the grocery store, I turned to social media. First I evaluated the General Mills YouTube channel to observe cereal commercials. This included watching 66 videos on the channel that pertained to cereal and/or recent General Mills initiatives. Then I read through the comments pertaining to the ads to gauge consumer perception. Next, I examined General Mills cereal sites and blogs. Specifically, I analyzed each of the major General Mills brand sites for cereal (Cheerios, Total, Kix, Wheaties, Chex, Fiber One, Lucky Charms, Lucky Charms Tumblr, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, and the Trix Silly Channel) and blogs (For the Love of Cereal and Taste of General Mills) to determine how General Mills frames and conveys these brands to consumers. Lastly, I looked at Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to discern what people were saying about cereal via these online portals (Appendix B). My analysis examined a year's worth of posts about cereal and General Mills initiatives. On Pinterest I searched the key terms *General Mills cereal*. On Facebook I combed through popular brand pages (i.e. Cheerios and Cinnamon Toast Crunch) and on Instagram I reviewed General Mill's official page. For Twitter I utilized the hashtag, #cereal, and a separate search for #cereal #generalmills.

Results Analysis. I used naturalistic observation to verify what General Mills is currently doing in regards to trying to influence cereal sales via both packaging and online forums. I also utilized non-participant observation to explore consumer thoughts on social media pertaining to their perceptions about cereal overall as well as their notions about General Mills specific cereals. These observations narrowed the field of topics I wanted to discuss with my interview subjects.

Potential Limitations. My packaging analysis primarily revolves around observations made in one grocery store, so if a different store stocks a different brand of cereal, my analysis won't capture its packaging. Furthermore, reviewing social media trends and comments only allows me to analyze the thoughts of consumers who post about cereal online. This could potentially exclude a large portion of the population who doesn't actively discuss cereal comments via social media or YouTube comments.

Interview

I interviewed eleven cereal consumers over the course of two weeks (64% female). The interview protocol (as seen in Appendix D) consisted of 15 open-ended questions aimed to gather opinions to help develop a survey. The questions targeted the topics of breakfast overall, the snacking occasion, nostalgia approaches for cereal, sustainable packaging, and the uses of cereal as an ingredient. The consumers I interviewed ranged from 18 years old to 82 years old. I chose this convenience sample of known subjects because they offered a wide range of age perspectives and the familiarity of our relationship allowed them to speak freely about their answers.

Results Analysis. I analyzed the results of the interviews through qualitative observation, identifying common themes of responses. The common open-ended answers to various interview questions allowed me to compile popular close-ended survey response options. The answers I gleaned from the interviews helped me develop a feasible survey that consisted of primarily close-ended questions which provide more accurate data for statistical analyses.

Potential Limitations. My interview sample consisted solely of familiar cereal consumers. This excludes the possibility of random sampling. As such, my interview results are not representative of the population.

Survey

Two hundred fifty-six people (68% female) participated in the survey via Qualtrics. The survey (as seen in Appendix E) consisted of 12 questions. These survey questions aimed to decipher usage occasions, buying habits, nostalgia approaches, and primary storage areas of cereal. The sample frame of survey takers consisted of a convenience sample of people who have at some point eaten cereal in their lifetime. I primarily sent the survey to various University of Arizona faculty and students. I also disseminated it to people I'm connected with via Facebook. The first survey question acted as a screening question to determine whether or not the participant has ever eaten cereal. If the answer was no, s/he skipped to the demographic questions. Of the 256 survey participants, 96% belong to Generation Y. I recorded responses from February 11th – March 11th, 2015.

Results Analysis. I analyzed the results of the surveys by utilizing statistical analyses tests such as cross-tabulation and correlations. Cross-tabulations provide numbers and percentages about themes of answers amongst different questions. On the other hand, correlation tests are important to distinguish the relationship between usage variables and buying patterns. This helps validate the information discussed in the secondary research section of this report as potential strategies for category revitalization.

I ran all statistical analyses via the software, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). I performed both bivariate and partial correlations. Bivariate correlations determine basic relationships between data points, while partial correlations help correct for any potential correlation hindrances from a third, related variable. When running correlation tests, I used the 95% or 99% significance levels. Once the software completed the analysis, a table output indicated the Pearson Correlation Coefficient for each relationship, as well as its significance level. The significance level conveys how likely it is that the two data points are correlated with each other. It indicates that the relationship between the two variables is not likely due to chance. The software utilized the Pearson Correlation Coefficient to determine the significance. The closer to 1 or -1 the coefficient is, the stronger the correlation.

Potential Limitations. My analysis primarily revolves around people classified as Generation Y. These shoppers have different habits and buying patterns than members of Generation X or Baby Boomers. As such, these conclusions may not be generalizable to age groups outside of Generation Y.

Results and Implications

Grocery Store Observations

In order to further positively influence consumer cereal trends, it's important to first understand what General Mills is already doing in respect to its cereal image via packaging and social media. From the grocery store observations it's easy to discern the different packaging styles between brands. For instance healthy, adult cereals utilize boxes that are simple in color, usually have fruit on the front and various health benefits printed on the side and/or back of the box. Examples of cereals that fit this pattern are Wheaties, Total, Cascadian Farm – Organic, Nature Valley Protein, Cheerios, and Rice Chex. However, cereals that contain more sugar and are typically classified as kids' cereals employ bright, cheery boxes with the cereal's character and games or promotions on the back of the boxes. For instance, Trix, Honey Nut Cheerios, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Cocoa Puffs, Kix, and Lucky Charms display similar variations of these devices on their packaging.

Also on the side panel of the Rice Chex and Honey Nut Cheerios boxes, there are suggestions of snack recipes using the respective cereals. This packaging indicates General Mills' push for using cereal as an ingredient in other foods, as well as suggesting that cereal can be eaten at various times of day, not just breakfast.

Additionally, Fry's sells the General Mills' individual cereal cups, Cheerios Protein mini boxes, and Breakfast Snack Packs. There are individual cereal cups of Cheerios, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Honey Nut Cheerios, and Lucky Charms. These cups are plastic and have a thin plastic peel-back top to open. The images of the various brands encompass the outside of the cup. The Cheerios Protein mini boxes contain single serving cereal amounts, however they're packaged in a regular looking box that is about 1/3 the size of a regular cereal box. Lastly, the Breakfast Snack Pack is a box of 8 mini-chip sized bags of various cereals. The cereals in the package are Lucky Charms, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Cocoa Puffs, Cheerios, Honey Nut Cheerios, Golden Grahams, Frosted Cheerios, and Trix. The outside of the box highlights the main cereal

characters for these brands and is bright in color. The packaging and branding of this value-pack portray the notion that kids can eat these cereals for snack and without milk, perpetuating the idea of the snacking occasion. For image examples of these various packages, please reference Appendix A.

Implications. General Mills currently communicates the notions of cereal as a snack and an ingredient with some of its packaging. Two out of the twelve different cereal boxes contain ingredient recipes and a label about cereal as a snack. There is an opportunity to expand these ideas beyond the Rice Chex and Honey Nut Cheerios boxes. This may mean developing more snack ideas using other General Mills cereals.

Furthermore, the Breakfast Snack Pack, Cheerios Protein Mini boxes, and individual cereal cups are packaged to position cereal as a snack. However, throughout my research, I haven't noticed any commercials or advertisements about these products via YouTube, nor have I seen a push for them on General Mills social media sites. There is an opportunity for General Mills to utilize these products to push the concept of the snacking occasion and leverage them as easy ways for parents to pack their child's school snack.

Additionally, to climb the sustainability ladder from recycling to reusability, General Mills could turn their plastic cereal snack cups into a reusable product that parents can send with their kids to school as a daytime snack. They would need to buy the regular-sized cereal box to refill the cup instead of throwing it away.

Lastly, the General Mills cereal boxes at Fry's did not utilize any nostalgia appeals. Should General Mills deploy nostalgic commercials, they could also use nostalgic packaging to supplement the advertisement and reinforce the reminiscent appeal.

General Mills YouTube Channel Videos

I began the social media analysis with the official General Mills channel to determine current strategies the company employs and consumer perceptions about these tactics. The vast majority of videos on this channel include campaigns and ads for various brands. For the purpose of this paper, I focused solely on those videos pertaining to the cereal category. This analysis will help gauge consumer thought about General Mills initiatives and commercials.

Some of the campaign videos on their YouTube site include: Lucky to Be (Lucky Charms), the Heart Project (Cheerios), the Family Breakfast Project, Outnumber Hunger, Breakfast for Kids, and the Cheerios Effect. One video in particular, "2014/Lucky to Be," received tremendous positive feedback and support. This video broadcasts a General Mills campaign celebrating diversity, equality, and individuality. Some commentators indicate that even though they don't like Lucky Charms, they're inclined to buy the cereal simply due to this campaign. These campaign videos illustrate General Mills' participation in Cause Marketing and consumers' positive responses to these various programs.

The YouTube channel also features ads for brands such as Cheerios, Honey Nut Cheerios, Lucky Charms, and Wheaties. However, most of the comments are disabled on the ad videos, making it

impossible to gauge consumer reactions to these ads. Instead, my observations focus on the types of ads aired in 2014. A lot of the cereal commercials on the General Mills YouTube channel highlight the health reasons consumers should eat the various cereals while other advertisements primarily put an emphasis on catchy ways to get people's attention like celebrities and stories with the brand characters. These techniques are used across multiple General Mills brands such as Cheerios, Honey Nut Cheerios, Lucky Charms, and Wheaties.

Some commercials, however, illustrate the use of nostalgia appeals and the idea of the snacking occasion. These ads are primarily for Lucky Charms and Cheerios:

No Marshmallows. This Lucky Charms commercial features a husband and wife fully clothed in work attire, not pajamas, standing up and eating cereal. The commercial begins with the wife pouring herself a bowl of Lucky Charms. She calls for her husband when she realizes there are no marshmallows in this box, only to realize he's eating a bowl entirely made up of marshmallows. Their appearances indicate that this couple is not consuming cereal at a traditional breakfast hour because they're not wearing pajamas and they are doing so on the go because they're standing up, fostering the idea of the snacking occasion. For reference, the ad can be found [here](#).

Lucky Charms at Work. This commercial features Erica Piccininni at an office job. During her lunch break she reaches for a bowl of Lucky Charms and transforms her office into a forest with Lucky the Leprechaun. She's still sitting at her desk throughout the transformation, illustrating that cereal makes for a great snack at work. It allows you to take a break and for a moment escape into a world unlike the reality of work. This commercial, therefore, perpetuates the snacking occasion. To view it, follow this [link](#).

3rd Shift. This Cheerios commercial illustrates the ability of Cheerios to connect the family together, even at unconventional times. This commercial features a dad who gets up at 11pm to get ready for his company's 3rd shift of the day. His young son wakes up too and prepares a bowl of Cheerios for the two of them. The child mentions he just wants to have breakfast with his dad. Although the son still calls the 11pm occurrence breakfast, the commercial portrays a family eating cereal at an unconventional time. Therefore, this advertisement promotes family togetherness and the snacking occasion. For reference, please view the commercial on [YouTube](#).

Night Drive. This Cheerios commercial features a father leaving his home in the evening and driving all night to make it to his daughter's apartment in time for breakfast before her first day at work. It's an emotional commercial that promotes the Cheerios' slogan of love, however it also appeals to a father's nostalgia of having breakfast with his daughter when she was younger. These father/daughter moments from childhood are continued in her adult life even though she's grown up and moved away from home. A "Behind the Scenes" version of the advertisement can be seen [here](#).

2014 – Go Power Oats! This advertisement features a montage of popular commercials from 1941 about the Cheerios' brands. This video allows for comments and these comments

indicate that consumers like this commercial. They are happy about the nostalgia techniques General Mills employs. To view the 2014 – Go Power Oats, click [here](#).

All five of these highlighted commercials are consistent with General Mills' Revival Campaign outlined in *Bloomberg Businessweek*.

Implications. General Mills focuses on nostalgia and the snacking occasion in their recent advertisements posted on YouTube. There is an opportunity to also position cereal as an ingredient in one of these commercials while simultaneously positioning the cereal as a snack.

On the other hand, General Mills could augment its nostalgia appeals, especially with the “2014 – Go Power Oats!” commercial by designing a new Cheerios box that resembles the boxes in this vintage ad. This would be especially powerful because this commercial received positive comments from consumers, indicating an interest in this reminiscent brand.

General Mills Brand Websites

Another key aspect of discerning what General Mills currently does to position cereal is to examine their brand websites. The Cheerios brand website is the most developed and thorough site under General Mills' domain. This site highlights sustainability efforts the company utilizes, health benefits of the oats, recipes for Cheerios, and possible crafts using the boxes. The site also portrays games, latest commercials, coupons, CSR projects, and various uses of Cheerios. This site strongly displays the tactic of branding Cheerios as an ingredient for other foods, a key element in rebranding. The Kix, Chex, FiberOne, and For the Love of Cereal blog also display recipes for General Mills cereals on their sites. The children's brands (Trix, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, and Lucky Charms) focus on the characters and electronic games that correspond with the cereal boxes, while the other adult cereal sites focus on health benefits of those cereals (Total and Wheaties).

Implications. General Mills should include appeals to nostalgia and the snacking occasion. The inclusion of these elements will aid General Mills in rebranding the cereal category to consumers. It will allow the company to frame cereal as a food that can be eaten at any time of day as well as remind adults of eating the cereal they enjoyed as children. There is also an area of opportunity to include recipes on all the brand sites, rather than just a few.

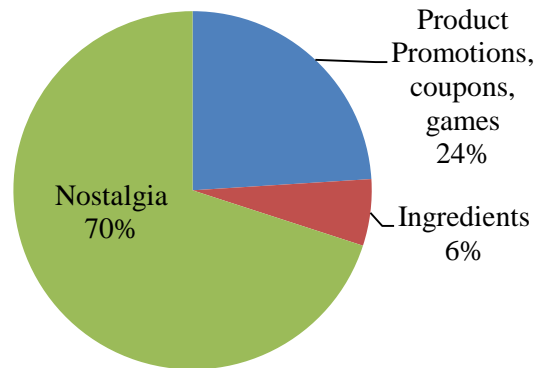
Social Media

While it's important to comprehend how General Mills frames cereal, the naturalistic observations of various social media boards provide insights into consumer thoughts pertaining to cereal. This analysis allows us to understand what a vast variety of people think about cereal and whether or not there's any mention of nostalgia, the snacking occasion, uses of cereal as ingredients, and/or sustainable packaging. Below are the results from scanning Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter posts.

Pinterest. Searching the phrase “General Mills cereal” on Pinterest results in a large number of posts pertaining to nostalgia. In fact, of the first 105 pins on Pinterest, 70% of them consist

of vintage cereal boxes or toys within cereal boxes that people reminisce about from their childhood. Additionally, 24% of these first 105 pins relate to product promotions, coupons, or games and the last 6% of pins relate to users finding ways to incorporate cereal as an ingredient for other foods, as seen in the chart below.

First 105 Pins on Pinterest



None of these pins reference the snacking occasion or packaging. The most interesting vintage post pertains to the 1957 Pick-a-Pack (pictured in Appendix B) as it is a 50's version of the Breakfast Snack Pack currently sold at grocery stores today. The person who pinned this vintage photo only talked about it as a blast from the past, however it also indicates that General Mills is revitalizing a popular concept from the 50's that emphasizes cereal as a snack.

Instagram. While it's easy to trace consumer pins on Pinterest, most of the observations I could make on Instagram were through comments on General Mills' Instagram posts due to the privacy terms set by Instagram. Some of the main things I noticed in comments on their Instagram page include:

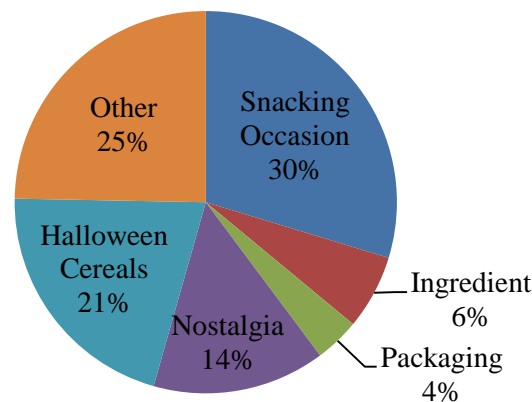
1. Positive remarks about Gluten free General Mills cereals
2. Negative remarks about GMOs
3. Overall tremendously positive comments about Cheerios

There are also vintage posts with positive comments such as the Throw Back Thursday to the Trix rabbit from 1969 and the retro Monster cereal design brought back to Target in 2014. Additionally, there are positive comments about recipe ideas posted to the General Mills Instagram page, however there's not much mention of the snacking occasion or packaging.

Facebook. Facebook is similar to Instagram in the sense that due to privacy settings, it's only possible to track consumer comments on General Mills' posts rather than viewing what consumers themselves post. The two most liked General Mills cereal brand pages on Facebook are Cinnamon Toast Crunch and Cheerios with 1.2million and 1 million likes respectively. Aside from a few comments on various Facebook posts about GMOs and other health concerns, most of the consumer comments on these pages are positive and reflect how much these consumers love these cereals. Some comments mention eating Cheerios for meals besides breakfast; however a large amount of consumer posts remark eating Cinnamon Toast Crunch as a midnight snack.

Twitter. When combing through Twitter posts pertaining to cereal over the past year, I was only able to view the posts that received the most favorites and retweets because the rest were no longer visible. Of those posts, 30% of social media users mentioned loving cereal as a snack other than breakfast. A lot of these posts noted that cereal was the consumer’s favorite choice of midnight snack. The snacking occasion is the most consistently mentioned topic with twitter users pertaining to cereal. Following snacking, 21% of the posts highlighted the consumers’ love of the General Mills Halloween cereals. Furthermore, 15% of twitter posts referenced retro boxes or memories of eating a cereal as a child and being excited about being able to have it again as an adult, alluding to nostalgia. Additionally, 6% of tweets listed foods they used cereal as an ingredient to make and 3% commented about cereal packaging. The other 25% of twitter posts about cereal mostly stated different sentiments of loving cereal in general with a few concerns including the nutrition of cereal and GMO discussions, as seen in the chart below.

Twitter Posts About Cereal (Oct. 2013 - Nov. 2014)



Implications. Overall the most trending consumer topics across various social media sites reflect those advertised: the snacking occasion and nostalgia appeals. These consumer posts expose positive reactions to consuming cereal as a snack and reminiscing about the cereals they once enjoyed as kids.

Since a lot of the posts echo themes currently advertised in commercials, there is an opportunity for General Mills to advertise cereal as an ingredient in commercials. This may enhance the discussion about cereal as an ingredient and create a new usage situation for it. The same principle can be applied to reusable packaging.

Interview Results

The next step in measuring consumer interest and perception about cereal was the interview. The interview questions revolved around the four prong list of brand revitalization: 1) nostalgia, 2) the snacking occasion, 3) sustainable/reusable packaging, and 4) utilizing cereal as an ingredient. The beginning of the interview also gauged general attitudes towards breakfast and cereal. This research augments the findings from the social media analysis and aided in survey development. For an interview informant table, including a brief profile of interviewees, see Appendix C.

Breakfast. The interviews began with a simple statement of “tell me about breakfast” with prompts leading interviewees to discuss their typical weekday, weekend, and vacation

breakfasts. Of the 11 respondents, 4 noted that they do not regularly eat breakfast, if anything they just grab coffee or a protein shake. Another 4 mentioned they often eat a bowl of cereal for breakfast during the week, but eggs on the weekend. The last 3 usually eat fruit, yogurt, or frozen waffles as their regular breakfasts. All the respondents stated they eat continental breakfasts on vacation.

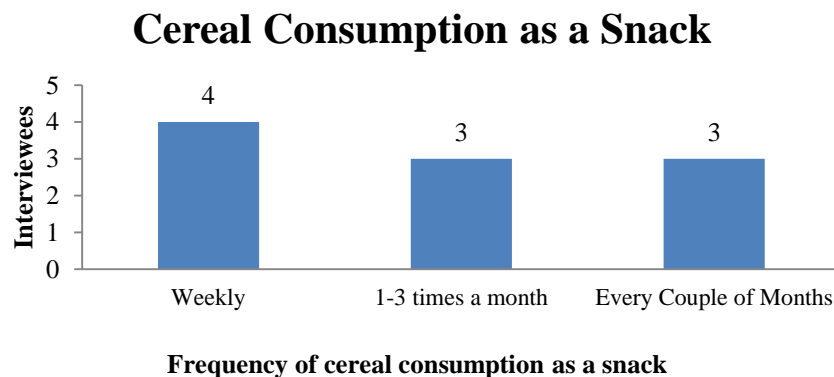
Cereal. The most common reasons the interviewees gave for choosing cereal over other options for breakfast are having enough time to sit down to breakfast and randomly feeling like cereal is what they are in the mood to eat.

All of the participants declared positive overall experiences with cereal as they have been eating it their whole lives. Those who eat it less as adults ate it a lot growing up. Specifically, 8 indicated they ate more cereal growing up than they do in adult life. Some uttered they would eat it more if it contained less sugar.

Six interviewees have at least one of the same favorite cereals today that they had growing up, ranging from cereals traditionally classified as adult cereal (i.e. Raisin Bran) to children's cereal (i.e. Lucky Charms).

Nostalgia. When asked about advertisements the participants recalled from their childhoods, several indicated remembering those commercials pertaining to cereals with catchy slogans and/or characters associated with the brands. The examples they cited include Rice Krispies (Snap, Crackle, Pop), Honey Nut Cheerios (Buzz Bee), Lucky Charms (They're magically delicious! /the Leprechaun), Frosted Flakes (They're great! /Tony the Tiger), and Trix (Rabbit). Although the interviewees recall seeing these characters growing up, most did not have a favorite cereal character.

Snacking Occasion. Seven interviewees remember eating cereal as a snack or meal besides breakfast throughout their childhood. On the other hand, 10 out of the 11 respondents currently eat cereal as a snack with different frequency. One eats a bowl of cereal every night before bed because she loves cereal. Another eats cereal as a snack 4 times a week because it's convenient, quick and filling. A different person eats Cheerios as a dry snack on her daily walks about 2-3 times a week while someone else munches on cereal as a snack once a week due to its ease-of-consumption. Three other respondents eat cereal as a snack 1-3 times a month because it's simple but they also like other snacks, while the last three eat cereal as a snack every couple of months as they feel like it, as seen in the chart below.



Packaging. The next set of questions pertained to packing cereal as a snack for the respondents' children. As such, these questions were only applicable to 5 interviewees. Of these participants, 4 used to pack the cereal snack in Ziploc bags. Two packed the snack the morning of, 1 the night before, and 2 either morning or night. They all packed approximately ½ - 1 cup of dry cereal for their children.

Furthermore, the final question about packaging related to the notion of a new, reusable cereal snack package. Interestingly enough, the 7 women indicated they would be interested in a product like this because it'd be better to wash the container rather than continuously throwing away Ziploc bags, it'd be convenient to have the snack pre-packaged to just throw in the child's bag and go, and the durability of the container would keep the cereal from crushing in a backpack. Another common reason these women liked the idea is because they prefer reusable, sustainable products. In fact, one interviewee got really excited and animated when I asked the question about reusability. However, the four male interviewees were indifferent about the reusable cereal snack packaging idea.

Ingredients. The final interview question asked participants about their uses of cereal as an ingredient in other foods. Nine participants declared they use cereal as ingredients rarely for meats (hamburger and chicken), Rice Krispy treats, Chex mix, desserts, and casseroles. The first response for a lot of respondents was Rice Krispy treats.

Implications. Similar to discoveries on social media, the interviewees responded positively and affectionately to nostalgia appeals. Interestingly, 55% of respondents have the same favorite cereal today that they did in childhood, perhaps making nostalgia appeals more effective.

Furthermore, the 4 interview participants who eat cereal for breakfast on a weekly basis also eat cereal as a snack weekly. Although only 4 fit this category, 91% of the interviewees eat cereal as a snack at least every couple of months. This indicates these consumers participate in the snacking occasion and see it as positive. There is an opportunity for General Mills to expand upon current snacking commercials to supplement this trend.

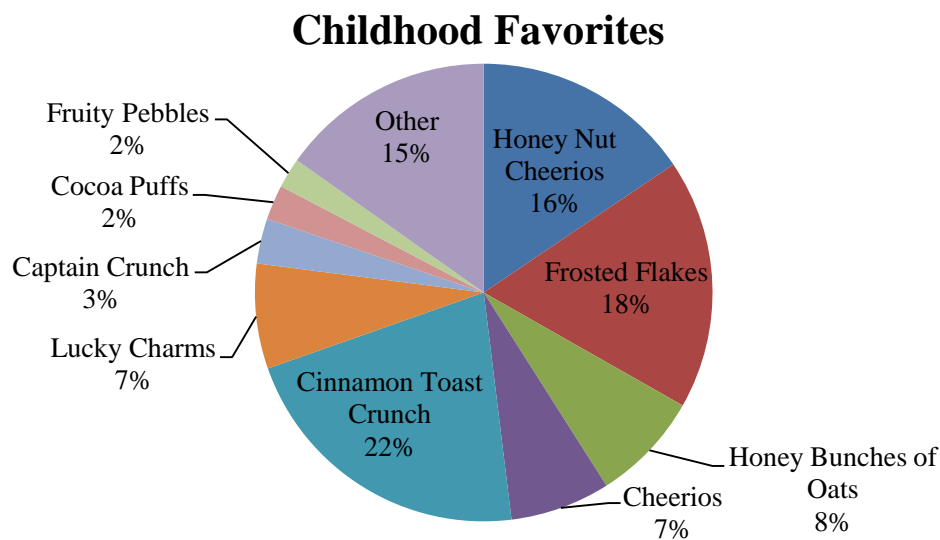
Female respondents of the interview also indicated a strong desire for reusable cereal snack packaging for either themselves or to pack for their kids to eat at school. There is an opportunity for General Mills to understand the overall demand of developing a new, reusable cereal snack container to meet the needs of environment-conscious consumers. However, it's important to note that due to the sample size, these interview results are not generalizable and representative of the population.

Lastly, several interviewees mentioned making Rice Krispy treats when they use cereal as an ingredient. For many it was the first thing that came to mind, meaning if General Mills could develop a new food idea where one of their cereals was the main ingredient, it could be highly profitable for cereal sales. This new snack should fit current consumer trends mirroring nutrition to be successful.

Survey Results

The interview responses helped shape common themes and close-ended questions to ask in the survey. Once again, there were questions pertaining to the four suggested branches of the cereal category revitalization: 1) nostalgia, 2) the snacking occasion, 3) reusable packaging, and 4) positioning cereal as an ingredient for other foods.

Nostalgia. The survey began by asking the 256 respondents to identify their favorite childhood cereals to understand the effectiveness of nostalgia appeals. The most popular childhood favorites were Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Frosted Flakes, Honey Nut Cheerios, Honey Bunches of Oats, Lucky Charms, Cheerios, Captain Crunch, Cocoa Puffs, and Fruity Pebbles. Below is the breakdown:



In the survey, 45% of participants indicated that they still have the same favorite cereals today. The other 55% of respondents that have different cereal preferences indicate the reasons they no longer have the same favorites are primarily that they prefer less sugar (33%), they like healthier options (30%), their tastes simply changed (12%), or other reasons such as allergies (25%).

Additionally, 73% of respondents remember a cereal commercial from their childhood that they particularly liked. Of those who recalled a favorable ad, 31% indicated they would likely go to the store and buy this cereal if they saw the ad again today. In fact, according to a bivariate correlation test, there's a significant correlation at the 95% significance level between whether participants enjoy the same cereal they did as children and their likelihood to go to the store to pick up a box of cereal after watching an advertisement they remember viewing as kids. Therefore, those who have the same cereal preferences as they did growing up are more likely to be influenced by a nostalgic commercial pertaining to that cereal.

Snacking Occasion. At the 99% significance level of a bivariate correlation test, with Pearson Correlations of 0.322, 0.347, and 0.366, eating cereal as a snack in the afternoon, evening, or

late at night (respectively) is strongly, positively correlated with eating cereal for breakfast. This means that the more often survey participants eat cereal for breakfast, the more likely they'll also eat cereal as a snack during all times except for the morning. Of the 256 survey respondents, 40% eat cereal for breakfast at least once a week.

Furthermore, at the 99% significance level of a partial correlation test, eating cereal as a snack in the afternoon (0.475), evening (0.487), and late at night (0.497) all have strong positive relationships with how often these consumers buy cereal. However, the relationship between buying cereal and eating cereal as a snack in the morning was not significant. Thus, the more frequently participants eat cereal as a snack anytime excluding morning correlates with higher likelihood of purchasing cereal more frequently.

Lastly, at the 99% significance level of a partial correlation test, with Pearson Correlation variables of 0.177 and 0.178, there is a positive relationship between eating cereal as a snack in the morning or afternoon and using cereal as an ingredient for other foods.

Ingredients. While there is a significant, positive correlation between eating cereal as a snack in the morning or afternoon and using cereal as an ingredient for other foods, there is not a significant correlation between utilizing cereal as an ingredient and eating cereal for breakfast. There also are no relationships between eating cereal late at night or in the evening and using cereal as an ingredient. According to the survey, 38% of respondents indicated they use cereal as an ingredient in other foods, with the majority (26%) doing so less than once a month.

Packaging. One question in the survey tried to gauge consumer thought about purchasing more cereal. Participants were asked to check as many boxes that apply to finish this sentence, "I would buy more cereal if..." Three of the answer choices pertained to cereal packaging, indicating that 29% would buy more cereal if they could pick up an easy-to-go container of cereal, 22% would buy more if they could purchase a re-usable cereal snack container, and 19% would buy more if it had more sustainable packaging.

Other. The other options in the "check all that apply" question pertained to health concerns and time for breakfast. Of the 590 responses for this question (respondents could choose more than one), 47% noted they'd buy more cereal if it contained less sugar and 46% stated they'd like to see more protein. Also, only half of survey participants eat breakfast daily, so 44% mentioned they'd eat more cereal if they had more time for breakfast in general. Other write-ins people added included their issues with cost, the need to use milk, and overall satiety of cereal.

Additionally, while there was a question about storage of cereal, the results did not correlate with cereal purchasing habits; however, 76% keep cereal behind a closed door, 22% in an open space, 2% in the refrigerator, and 1% elsewhere. Finally, 68% of the survey respondents were female and 96% were between the ages of 18 – 33 years old (Generation Y).

Implications. According to the law of large numbers, the survey results are representative and generalizable to the population because there are well over 30 participants. That being said, the results for nostalgia indicate a strong correlation between consumers having the same

favorite cereal now as in childhood and their likelihood to go to the store to buy cereal after viewing a nostalgic advertisement. This is an opportunity for General Mills to broaden their nostalgia appeals, especially for Cinnamon Toast Crunch and Honey Nut Cheerios because these were the two most favored General Mills cereals when participants were children.

Additionally, the survey results indicate strong relationships between eating cereal as a snack (anytime excluding morning) and both the respondents' consumption of cereal for breakfast and buying habits of cereal. This mimics the results of the interview and is representative of the population. Therefore, increasing attention to the snacking occasion may also increase consumption of cereal at breakfast. However this relationship is correlated and does not predict causation.

Due to the correlations between eating cereal as a snack in the morning or afternoon and consumers' usage of cereal as an ingredient, there is an incentive for General Mills to expand upon the use of cereal as an ingredient. Although only 38% of respondents use cereal as an ingredient, there is an opportunity here for General Mills to develop a new snack that fits recent consumer trends and can be easily made using cereal. This snack should be nutritious and low in sugar, as well as high in protein. By generating a quick, simple daytime snack people can throw together themselves, General Mills would be exercising a successful snacking occasion campaign, as well as positioning their cereals as necessary ingredients, helping grow sales in their cereal category.

Lastly, even though a minority of survey respondents signified they would like to see an easy-to-go container of cereal, a re-usable cereal snack container, and more sustainable packaging, there is an opportunity for General Mills to combine all three concepts. It could be beneficial to develop an easy-to-go cereal snack container that is re-usable and sustainable and fits these consumers' needs, especially if advertised properly.

Discussion and Recommendations

Applying the best practice strategies for brand revitalization to a category revival, General Mills should focus on appealing to audiences by creating nostalgia appeals and different usage situations. The concept of the snacking occasion and repositioning cereal as an ingredient for other foods constitute usage situations that are currently trending in social media. Throughout this analysis, it is evident that consumers are talking about nostalgia and cereal as a snack through social media. Although less prevalent, these social media users are also commenting about using cereal as an ingredient and cereal packaging. The interviews and surveys convey similar results.

Nostalgia. Consumers are interested in vintage cereal appeals and nostalgia. This evidence is apparent both in the analysis of social media and the results of both the interviews and surveys. General Mills' recent Cheerios commercials reflect appeals to nostalgia; however their packaging does not reflect these appeals. Therefore, the company should develop a vintage box to accompany these commercials. These reminiscent appeals should also be more present on their brand websites and should expand beyond the Cheerios brand. The survey

results indicate a strong correlation between favored childhood cereals and the likelihood of buying a box after viewing a reminiscent commercial, meaning General Mills should employ nostalgia campaigns for other childhood favorites such as Cinnamon Toast Crunch.

Snacking Occasion. Currently, General Mills sells the Breakfast Snack Pack, Cheerios Protein mini boxes, and individual cereal cups in stores. These products position cereal as a snack, however they should be advertised more. The research conveys that none of these items are being publicized on social media or via commercials. General Mills should start the conversation about these products to increase the awareness and acceptability of eating cereal as a snack. Also, the current commercials that focus on cereal snacking pertain to Lucky Charms and Cheerios. General Mills should also supplement their snacking appeals by advertising a larger variety of cereals as a tasty snack.

Ingredients. To improve cereal sales, General Mills should work to position cereal as an ingredient for multiple brands. This expansion could help ferment a different usage situation for cereal, revitalizing its use. Currently, only two brands depict recipes using cereal on their boxes. General Mills should include recipes on more of their boxes and should position cereal as an ingredient in commercials. There are no advertisements on their YouTube channel that sell cereal as an ingredient. Furthermore, while some brand websites include recipes, many do not. General Mills should expand their recipes to include more cereal brands. There is an opportunity for the company to change the way consumers view cereal by making it a necessary ingredient for another food. Thus, General Mills should work to develop a snack that is simple to make, tastes delicious, is healthy, and utilizes cereal.

Packaging. Although General Mills' main focus should be on nostalgia, the snacking occasion, and positioning cereal as an ingredient, they should also consider developing a reusable cereal snack cup to appease the eco-friendly consumer. Women in the interview were excited about the concept of this item because it was both sustainable and convenient when packing a snack for their kids to bring to school. The cereal snack pack could be bundled with the parent cereal or sold separately and would look similar to existing individual cereal cups, however would not need to be thrown away for about a month. This product could help General Mills climb from the recycling rung of the sustainability ladder to the reusable rung.

Overall, General Mills should implement these recommendations to augment sales in the cereal category and remain competitive by meeting the desires expressed by current consumers.

Limitations

There are a few limitations within this study to keep in mind. First, while the survey results are generalizable to the population due to a large sample size, it's important to note that the majority of respondents are between the ages of 18-33 years old and live in the state of Arizona. Therefore, there may be different trends pertaining to cereal consumers elsewhere in the United States and amongst different age groups. Furthermore, in both the interview and survey, more than 50% of respondents were female (64-68%), therefore the viewpoints expressed in this study may be slightly biased towards females. Although as females still act as primary shoppers in

most households, this slight gender bias may not be a problem. Lastly, although I combed through most social media postings within the last year, only those most trending on twitter were still available to view. However, those posts that are most trending probably reflect the majority point-of-view, therefore reflecting what the greatest number of social media users think about cereal.

Further Research

Based on the outcomes of this study, there are areas in which additional research would be beneficial in understanding ways to revitalize the cereal category. First, the analyses performed in this study contained a combination of observations, cross tabulations and correlations, none of which predict causality. While correlations in this study determine the relationship between cereal consumption frequency and buying frequency, they did not predict the causation between the two. For instance, although there is a clear relationship between consuming cereal as a snack in the afternoon, evening, or late at night and eating cereal for breakfast, this study cannot prove that eating cereal as a snack causes consumers to eat more cereal for breakfast or vice versa. This information would be valuable to understand in order to determine if spending more time advertising cereal as a snack could also increase consumers' tendency to eat more cereal for breakfast, resulting in an even larger increase of sales in the cereal category. Experiments should be conducted to determine actual buying habits in relation to snacking.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial to understand the causal relationship between eating cereal as a snack in the morning or afternoon and using it as an ingredient. This research should also include an inquiry of additional information about what kind of snacks consumers like to make and eat regularly. This understanding could help General Mills develop a snack that people can make using cereal.

Lastly, focus groups should be conducted to establish consumers' thoughts on prototype examples of reusable packing for the individual cereal cups. These focus groups could help improve the product, as well as allow for a better understanding of whether or not these consumers think they would actually purchase a sustainable cereal cup.

Conclusion

The four main areas General Mills should focus to spark a cereal category revival are 1) nostalgia, 2) the snacking occasion, 3) positioning cereal as an ingredient, and 4) sustainable/reusable packaging. Current consumers trends on various social media sites indicate that popular topics of conversation are vintage cereal ads/boxes and eating cereal as a snack. These trends are also reflected in General Mills' current advertisements, online brand positioning, and interview/survey responses. There is an opportunity for the company to expand on these campaigns by including more brands, linking them with packaging, and creating a new snack that's easy for consumers to make at home utilizing cereal.

Each of these tactics coincides with successful brand revitalization tactics of utilizing nostalgia and creating new usage situations for products. Thus, these ideas could help spark the revival of cereal and boost overall sales.

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Appendix A – Grocery Store Observations

I. Adult Cereal Box Example – Total



Front View



Back View

II. Child Cereal Box Example – Lucky Charms



Front View



Back View

III. Snack on Side Panel of Boxes – Rice Chex and Honey Nut Cheerios



IV. Breakfast Snack Pack



V. Cheerios Protein – Mini Boxes



Size Comparison



Front View

VI. Individual Cereal Cups



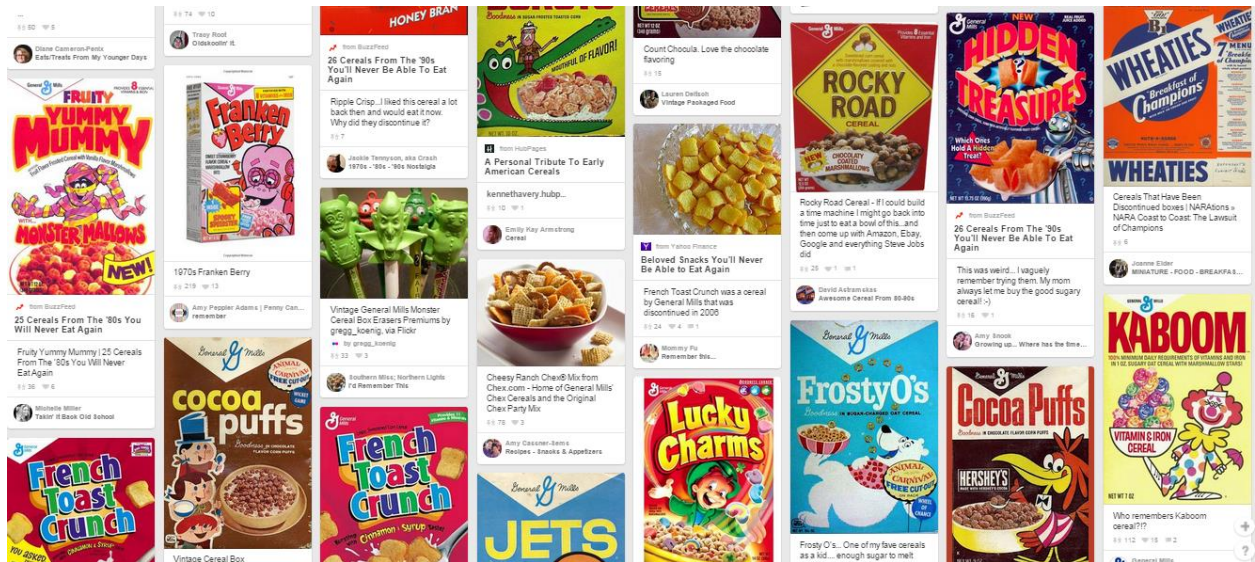
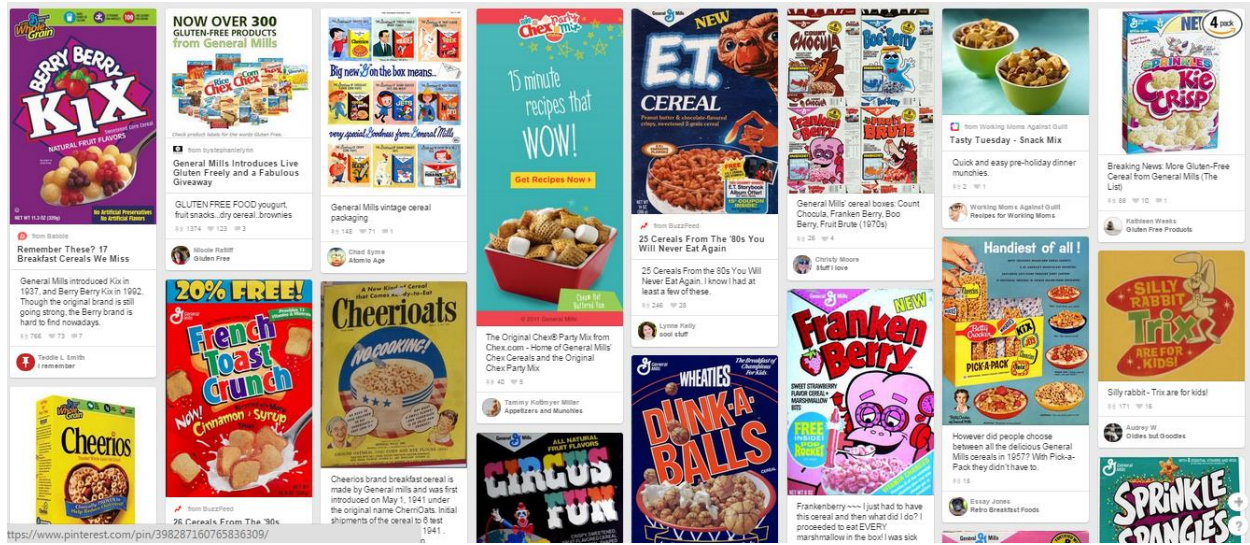
Front View



Top View

Appendix B – Social Media Observations

I. Pinterest, Search “General Mills cereal” – Top Pins



II. Pinterest – Pick-a-Pack (1957)



III. Twitter – Vintage (Examples)



IV. Twitter – Ingredients (Examples)



Cinnamon Toast Crunch Fried Ice Cream



Golden Graham Crusted Pancakes

V. Twitter – Cereal as a Snack



Bridal Shower Cereal Bar

Appendix C – Interview Informant Table

Interviewee*	Gender	Age	Place of Residence	Type of Interview	Date
A. Smith	Male	59	Phoenix, AZ	Face-to-face	1/6/15
B. Smith	Female	82	Phoenix, AZ	Face-to-face	1/6/15
C. Smith	Female	31	Phoenix, AZ	Face-to-face	1/6/15
D. Smith	Male	32	Phoenix, AZ	Face-to-face	1/6/15
E. Smith	Male	28	Phoenix, AZ	Face-to-face	1/8/15
F. Smith	Female	30	Phoenix, AZ	Face-to-face	1/8/15
G. Smith	Female	68	Chicago, IL	Phone	1/8/15
H. Smith	Male	35	Chicago, IL	Phone	1/10/15
I. Smith	Female	35	Chicago, IL	Phone	1/10/15
J. Smith	Female	59	Phoenix, AZ	Face-to-face	1/15/15
K. Smith	Female	18	Phoenix, AZ	Face-to-face	1/16/15

*Please note, for privacy, the interviewees' real names have not been disclosed.

Appendix D – Interview Questions

Qualifier question: Have you ever eaten cereal?

1. Tell me about breakfast. (Prompt: typical; ideal; vacation; in-home, out, etc.)
2. What makes a cereal day vs. an “other” day?
3. Tell me about your experience with cereal. (Prompt: positive or negative)
4. What is your favorite cereal?
 - a. What do you like about that cereal?
5. How long have you been eating cereal?
6. When do you eat cereal? (Prompt: now; as a child?)
7. What ages did you primarily eat cereal for breakfast?
8. What was your favorite cereal as a child?
9. Do you remember any cereal ads from your childhood?
 - a. What are they?
10. Who was your favorite cereal character? Why?
11. When you were growing up, did you eat cereal for a meal besides breakfast?
12. Do you eat cereal as a snack?
 - a. How often?
 - b. Why or why not?
13. When your children were growing up, did you feed cereal to them as a snack?
 - a. If yes→ how did you pack their snack? (I.e. a Ziploc bag?)
 - b. When did you pack their cereal? (i.e. the night before or the morning of?)
 - c. How much cereal did you pack for them as a snack?
 - d. What kind of cereal did you pack as a snack?
 - e. Would you have liked a re-useable, durable cereal snack package?
14. What was your child’s favorite cereal?
15. Do you use cereal as an ingredient for other foods? If so, can you give me an example?

Appendix E – Survey Questions

My name is Amanda Watts and I am a senior in the Eller College of Management working on completing my honors thesis in marketing. In recent years, cereal sales have been decreasing due to various consumer trends. My thesis aims to analyze the potential revitalization of the cereal category by large cereal manufacturing companies. By completing this survey, you are helping solidify my arguments and aiding my completion of a thesis. I appreciate your time and want to thank you for participating in this brief survey. Your responses will remain anonymous.

1. Have you ever eaten cereal?

- a. Yes
- b. No

***If no, the survey jumps to question 11**

2. When you were growing up, what was your favorite cereal?

- a. Honey Nut Cheerios
- b. Frosted Flakes
- c. Honey Bunches of Oats
- d. Cheerios
- e. Cinnamon Toast Crunch
- f. Other _____

3. Do you remember any cereal commercials from your childhood that you particularly liked?

- a. Yes
- b. No

***If no, the survey jumps to question 5**

4. Please rate the following question on a scale from 1-7, 7 being extremely likely and 1 being extremely unlikely.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I were to see an ad similar to the one I remember from my childhood, I would go to the store and pick up that box of cereal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Is your favorite cereal the same today?

- a. Yes
- b. No

***If yes, the survey jumps to question 8**

6. What is your favorite cereal today?

- a. Honey Nut Cheerios
- b. Frosted Flakes
- c. Honey Bunches of Oats
- d. Cheerios
- e. Cinnamon Toast Crunch
- f. Other _____

7. Why is your favorite cereal different today?

8. Please indicate the average frequency with which you complete the following:

	Never	Less than Once a Month	Once a Month	2-3 Times a Month	Once a Week	2-3 Times a Week	Daily
How often do you eat breakfast?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often do you eat cereal for breakfast?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often do you eat cereal as a snack in the morning?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often do you eat cereal as a snack in the afternoon?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often do you eat cereal as a snack in the evening?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often do you eat cereal as a snack late at night?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often do you use cereal as an ingredient for other foods?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often do you buy cereal?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Please check all that apply: I would buy more cereal if...

- a. I had more time to eat breakfast
- b. It contained more protein
- c. It had less sugar
- d. It tasted less sweet
- e. It tasted sweeter
- f. I could pick up an easy-to-go container of cereal
- g. I could purchase a re-useable cereal snack container
- h. It had more sustainable packaging
- i. Other _____

10. Where do you store your cereal?

- a. Behind a Closed Door (I.e. a Cupboard or Pantry)
- b. An Open Space (i.e. a Kitchen Counter)
- c. Refrigerator
- d. Other _____

11. What is your gender?

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Prefer not to answer

12. How old are you?

- a. Under 18 years old (Generation Z)
- b. 18 – 33 years old (Generation Y)
- c. 34 – 54 years old (Generation X)
- d. 55 years or older (Baby Boomers)