

BBQ Product Crosses Over the Line of Varied Tastes

>Abstract

This case asks students to assess measurement and scaling issues in the context of the introduction of a frozen, microwaveable BBQ product line into the Southeast by Rich Products, Buffalo, New York. Rich is a manufacturer of bakery and barbecue products for the food service and retail sectors of the food market. The new line is being introduced with commercials depicting Ruby, a fictitious waitress at Pork-O-Rama who prefers the taste of the new frozen line. www.richs.com

>The Scenario

Rich Products Corp. is hoping its frozen barbecue will appeal to the wide tastes in its narrow market, but it realizes consumers will need a nudge in that direction.

Enter Ruby Taylene Dodge, waitress down at the Port-O-Rama and major figure in the company's marketing campaign for its new product, Rich's Southern Barbeque.

Barbecue is a regional delicacy; it varies in taste from county to county throughout the Southeast. According to Joe Tindall, the company's product development manager of new products, Rich Products (Buffalo, New York) had to develop a tangy product to appeal to varied tastes and had to persuade consumers they'd like it.

To cross over regional and local differences in the six-city market in the Southeast, Long, Haymes & Carr Advertising (LH&C), Winston-Salem, North Carolina, has launched a series of 30-second TV ads called "Please Don't Tell 'Em Ruby Sent You."


"The fictitious Ruby is supposed to give the product authenticity without trying to compete with barbecue restaurants or stands," said Don Van Erden, vice president/ management supervisor, LH&C.

"Our research told us that no one has more rapport and credibility with the barbecue-eating public than the real-life barbecue waitress," Van Erden said. "In Ruby, we have a vivid persona who's believable because she's based on real barbecue waitresses we've observed."

Rich Products hopes Ruby will reach all consumers with her friendly Southern accent and down-home sincerity.

"I'm a loyal employee of the Port-O-Rama, but my real true love is Rich's Frozen Barbeque," Ruby says in one spot. In another she's wearing a disguise. "I can't just go to my grocer's freezer for Rich's Barbeque," she says. "I've got a career at the Port-O-Rama to consider."

She praises the product in all the spots but, fearful of losing her job, warns viewers, "Just please don't tell 'em Ruby sent you."



The microwavable barbecue entrees were test marketed last year in Nashville, Tennessee, Little Rock, Arkansas, and the Alabama cities of Birmingham, Huntsville, Montgomery, and Tuscaloosa. “That’s the market now, but expansion into other areas is planned,” Tindall said.

> Discussion

- 1 What measurement and scaling issues should be considered when developing a study to measure consumers’ attitudes toward barbecue in general and, specifically, Rich’s Southern Barbeque?
- 2 Assume Rich’s wanted to test people’s preference for its barbecue versus the other leading brands (of which there are five). What would you recommend to measure these preferences?
- 3 What measurement and scaling issues should be considered when developing a study to measure the effectiveness of “Ruby” as a character spokesperson for Rich’s Southern Barbeque?

> Source

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