

# HOW A FOOD MANUFACTURER USED OCCASION SEGMENTATION TO REIGNITE SLUGGISH SAUCE SALES

## THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

These days, when it comes to grocery shopping, it's all about the perimeter of the grocery store. Fresh food consumption is on the rise, and U.S. shoppers are more leery than ever of preservatives, processing, and all other unnatural food ingredients. So if you're a manufacturer and your products live in the center aisles of the grocery store, we're willing to bet you've had a rough past few years. You're in the dead zone.

Our client, a CPG manufacturer, approached us for this very reason. Its historically successful line of Italian cooking sauces—located in center

aisles—had taken considerable heat lately for its decidedly unfresh nature. With the rise of homemade Marinara sauce and other fresh stuff in the refrigerated section, shoppers were showing less love—reflected in sluggish sales—for jarred pesto, vodka sauce, and tomato-based sauces.

“Wanting to win back the hearts and minds of consumers, our client recognized it first needed to re-align its portfolio to consumers’ current needs, wants, and desires.”

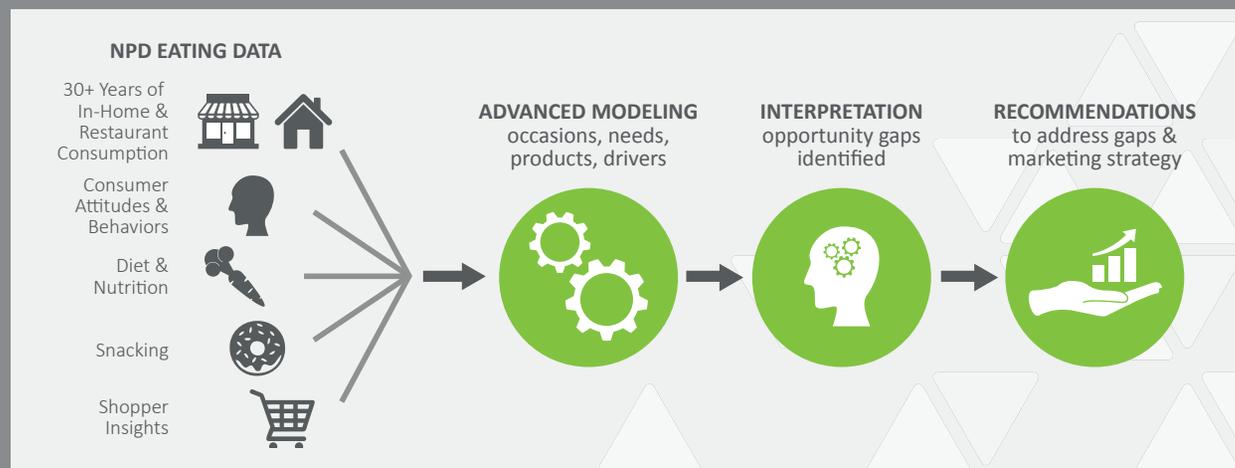


## HOW WE HELPED

Offering trendable insights on behavior, attitudes, and motivations, drilled down to the occasion-level, our **occasion segmentation** solution addressed this manufacturer's challenge. Harnessing detail on 30-plus years of continually tracked in-home and away-from-home eating behaviors, we referenced data on restaurant and grocery purchases, diet and nutrition, and snacking. The data also showed *why* consumers chose to eat what they did and what level of involvement they were willing to invest in a meal preparation. Using this data, we developed a statistical model that identified the occasions in which consumers were most likely to eat pre-made sauces and the consumption drivers for those occasions. The solution produced a fresh, tasty, and full roadmap of promising opportunities.

*This is an illustrative case study, inspired by our actual work with clients, but fictionalized to protect client confidentiality.*

## HOW IT WORKS



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## WHAT WE RECOMMENDED

Using this model, our team of food consumption and research specialists identified different occasions throughout the day when people ate prepared tomato-based sauces. We could show the time of day, type of meal, with whom, and where people were eating sauce products. We learned that it was *not*, as our client had suspected, people’s nostalgia for a comforting Italian standard or a fond memory of a special dinner they enjoyed as kids that was driving the purchase decision. Instead, it was convenience.

People turned to pesto as a quick and easy weeknight crowd pleaser. They chose marinara to accompany leftover penne for a makeshift lunch. When low on time and inspiration, some used the Pomodoro sauce as a marinade. Based on these findings, we advised our client to focus its product marketing efforts on the core convenience-based occasions.

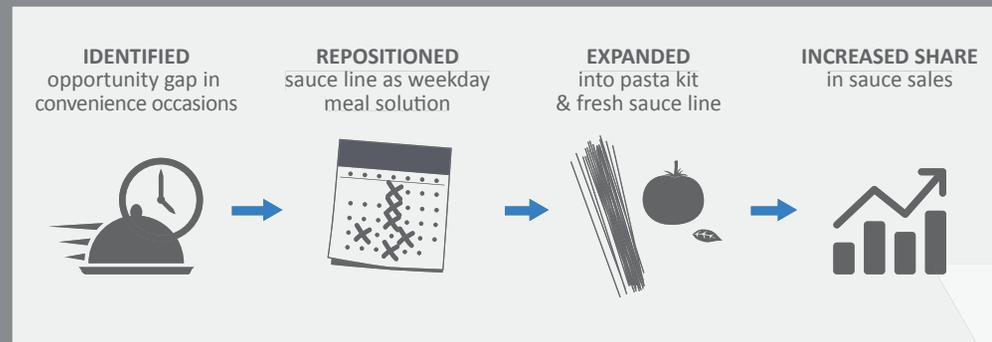
## NPD’S ANALYTIC SOLUTIONS GROUP

NPD’s Analytic Solutions Group includes a team of senior leaders with extensive experience developing and delivering analytic solutions that address strategic marketing, sales, and planning issues. By investing in its information infrastructure and establishing new retailer partnerships, NPD now collects and delivers more granular information. And by combining its unique data assets and industry expertise with state-of-the-discipline research techniques and proprietary solutions, NPD is equipped to answer clients’ most pressing business questions.

The client’s marketing team embraced these insights, using them to reposition the current sauce line as an affordable, weekday meal solution. The information we produced also informed new product development for an “emergency” pasta kit to always have on hand for when life gets in the way. And our client is

considering developing a new line of fresh sauces for the perimeter to appeal to consumers seeking fresh meal options. The strategy is working: since our client implemented these changes six months ago, it has seen a 7-percent increase in share of pasta sauce sales.

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## LEARN MORE

Contact your NPD account representative, call 866-444-1411, or email [contactnpd@npd.com](mailto:contactnpd@npd.com).