

HOW NEW PRODUCT FORECASTING HELPED A MANUFACTURER LAUNCH A NEW DENTAL WATER JET



THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

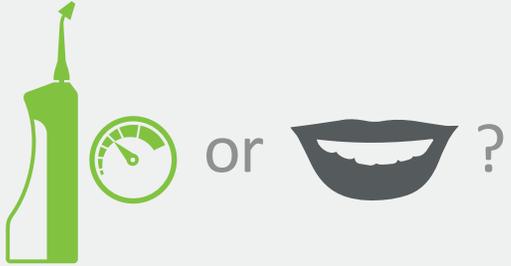
A great smile can go a long way; it's one of the first things people notice about you. One component to a great smile is dental care, yet many people aren't very good at brushing and flossing. It turns out that the effects of less-than-ideal oral hygiene methods accumulate over time and contribute to periodontal disease. And that can be a big problem. As we age, we want to eat our favorite foods, pain-free, with healthy gums and teeth intact.

Responding to this need, our client, an appliance manufacturer, started working on plans for a dental water jet, also known as an oral irrigator. Via compressed streams of pulsating water, this technology promised to reduce pathogenic bacteria, gingivitis, and the risk of periodontal disease.

“But our client had a problem—it did not know *which* features to include in the design and *which* benefits to emphasize in its communications,”

A trusted engineer made a passionate plea to include a customizable water pressure system. But a member of the marketing team argued to instead focus messaging on the product's practical benefits to the user: a radiant smile, a healthier mouth, and even better breath. Frustrated by the lack of consensus and the absence of the consumer's voice in the conversation, our client turned to us for help.

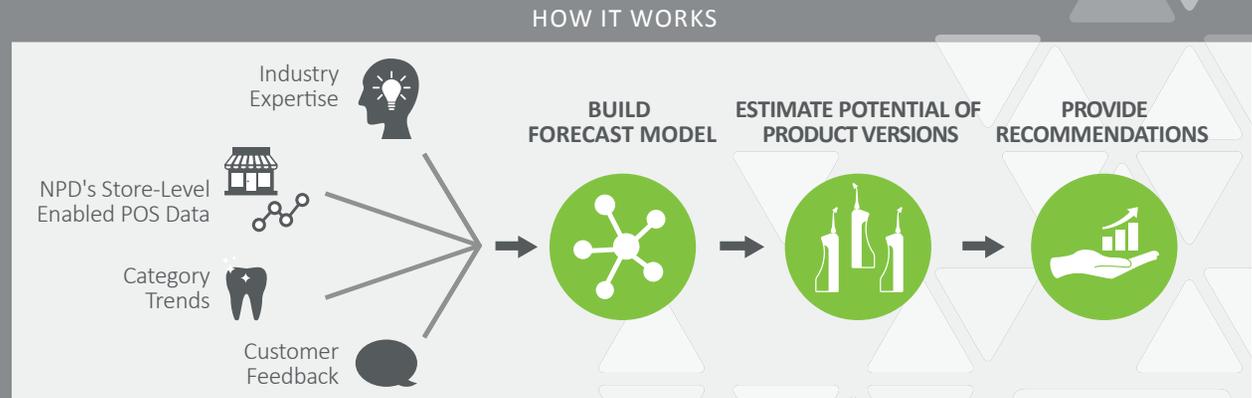
Q: Should we focus messaging on a customizable water pressure system or the benefits of a bright smile?



HOW WE HELPED

We began by analyzing sales data from our Store-Level Enabled point-of-sale (POS) database, which catalogues the post-launch performance of hundreds of thousands of new and revamped products, as well as oral care category trends and competitive dynamics dating back several years. That analysis provided a frame of historical reference. Next, we turned to consumers to understand how they would respond to several variations (with and without customizable water pressure) of a possible product, including “benchmark features” offered by competitors. We also elicited information on the strength of our client's brand versus others in the market place.

Modeling and forecasting came next. We used our client's planned marketing activities (media, promotion, and distribution) in addition to the survey data to estimate the sales potential of five oral irrigators with different features and marketing plans. And throughout the project, our industry analysts provided context on the oral care industry, and our modeling gurus expertise on the new product adoption curve.



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

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THE OUTCOME

Our volumetric forecast indicated that one particular product concept would perform better than 80 percent of other new product concepts tested in the past—with a greater sales potential than that of its competitor. Through market sizing, we worked together with our client to determine the optimal go-to-market approach and the best messaging to use.

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Our client moved forward confidently with the most favorable oral irrigator. And to date, it has been stealing share steadily from the top competitor. Did it include a customizable water pressure feature? You'll have to go shopping to find out for yourself.



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