

Focus: Product Panel Management

New product panel management saves retailer \$218K per year

A major US grocery retailer incorporates product panels as an essential part of the new product development (NPD) process and runs frequent panels with employees and associates to assess products and compare its private label products against competitive retail and national brand products.

With the need to coordinate with up to 40 suppliers a week and over 2,000 products a year, the retailer implemented a software solution from Solutions for Retail Brands (S4RB) to improve the scheduling and reporting of panels with an estimated **\$218k per year cost reduction**.

Background

Panels are an essential feature of product quality assurance. However, the management of panels was extremely time-consuming and resource intensive.

An array of information, including employee surveys and product preparation information, was created and coordinated manually - as was the communication with suppliers, and panellists. Panels were frequently missed and therefore yet more time was spent chasing, reminding or rescheduling.

Reporting on panel results was also then largely manual and time-consuming, with different processes observed between categories and team members. This significantly limited the amount of analysis that was possible.

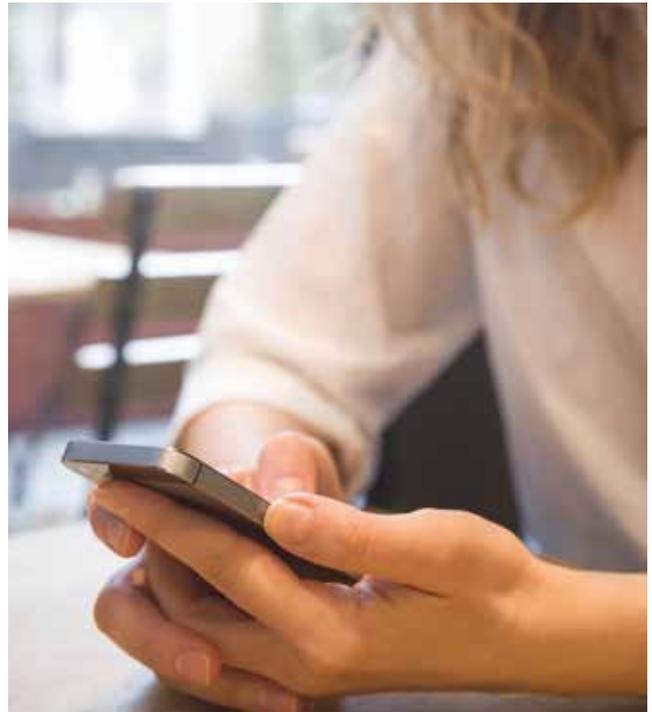


Solution

The solution was a taste panel booking calendar and reporting platform - S4RB's supplierENGAGE™ product panel management. S4RB implemented an online calendar for buyers to schedule panels, with automatic supplier notifications and reminders, which significantly reduced administration and missed panel sessions.

The system provides complete oversight and control of the process for the panel administrators, and includes automatic creation of product preparation guides to further reduce administration.

Integrated surveys and dashboard reporting increase the accuracy and availability of results, maximising the value available of the entire panel initiative. The system also integrates with the S4RB self-help system so that explainer videos and FAQ are available to support users.



Impact

The solution enabled a 10% increase in taste panels with a 75% reduction in resource needed to administer panels and increased access to useful results that ultimately drive decisions about new product development and drive product quality.

The system now supports the interaction of over 100 retail buyers, 1,250 suppliers and over 52,000 panellists a year, with an estimated cost reduction of \$218k per year.

Key facts

- 2k products and 100k comments
- 75% less admin resource
- 10% increase in taste panels
- Estimated US \$218k cost reduction