

MARKET RESEARCH TOPLINE

Background and Methodology

- The objectives of this project were: to understand how consumers use topical cold remedies on their children; to gauge reactions to the current product (respondents were sent a sample); to explore opinions of the secondary form of the current product; to understand perceptions of packaging and TV ad storyboards for both products.
- Three focus groups were held in Milwaukee on October 15. All respondents had a child at home with a cold. There were two groups of topical cold remedy users: one included moms who had an ill child aged 2 – 6, the other included moms whose ill child was age 7 – 12. The non user group included moms who had an ill child aged 7 – 12.

Key Findings

Overall Findings

- In general, most users liked the tested product because it eased their child's breathing and was not messy. However, nearly all respondents said they associate the brand with pain in adults and not with children's colds. **The packaging and shelf placement of the product must clearly convey that it is for cold symptoms, as many said they "would see that brand name and not even think about it for a cold."**
- The applicator caused some concern that "*it would collect bacteria – and get all germy – how could you use it on more than one person?*" **The company should consider solutions such as: a smaller size tube intended for individual use, providing multiple, replaceable applicators in each package or including directions for cleaning the applicator.**
- Consumers saw the secondary form as a product for adults, because they assumed kids would remove it. While they saw the benefits of easy application, convenience and pre-measured medication, many did not believe the secondary form would perform as promised or be as strong as the primary form. **In marketing the product, the company should highlight the benefits of strong medication, secure placement and easy removal.**

General Topical Cold Medication Usage

- Respondents use topical cold medications to ease their child's breathing in the first few days of a cold. These medications are put on the child's chest, under the nose and sometimes on top of the nose. These medications are primarily used at night when nasal congestion interferes with sleep. Nearly all respondents used the medications because they experienced them in childhood.
- Non-users said they did not generally use topical cold medications because their children did not like the smell, though a few used a medication in a vaporizer. Some non-users also were concerned about the safety of these medications on children. Others said their own parents did not use topical cold medications and so "*I just don't think of them.*"
- While topical cold medication users said they appreciate that the medications ease breathing, they said they have concerns about getting the product on clothes or on sheets. Moms do not like having to remove the product from their own hands after applying it.
- Most respondents were aware of warnings regarding oral cold medications in children under 4. Most found this "*ridiculous – it's just because some people don't read the dosage instructions*" and said they would "*use common sense.*" Only a few saw topical cold medications as an alternative to oral medication.

Reactions to Tested Product

- Most respondents found that the tested product did open up their child's nasal passages and ease breathing as promised. The product was especially useful in helping children sleep at night by reducing coughing.
- Specific "likes" included: the applicator, which keeps mom's hands clean and allows older children to put the product on themselves; the lack of color – allowing the product to be used during the day; and the fact that the product is non-greasy and absorbs quickly, keeping clothing and bed clothes clean.
- There was concern about the applicator harboring bacteria; some respondents said they washed it. Other product "dislikes" included: difficulty removing the plastic seal around the cap; confusion regarding removal of the cap – most expected to twist it rather than pull it off; difficulty controlling product flow. A few respondents said they preferred a product they could apply with the hands as they saw it as "*more comforting and provides a little massage.*"
- Respondents associated the brand with relieving pain in adults. Some saw the tested product as an expected brand extension "*because of (key product attributes).*" Others said they simply do not associate the brand with cold remedies. A few respondents said they were concerned that the brand would be "*too harsh*" to use on children.

Reactions to Secondary Form of Tested Product

- Overall response to the secondary product form was mixed, but in general it was considered an adult product. Respondents expected "*kids would just take it off.*" The large product size also cued that this was an adult product.
- Perceived benefits of the secondary form included: its design for one-time use, which was considered more sanitary than the primary form's applicator; the pre-measured medication, which was seen as eliminating guesswork; the lack of mess; the expectation of a milder scent, allowing the product to be worn during the day; the soft fabric which respondents said felt comfortable and would prevent medication from getting on clothes.
- Respondents had many questions about the secondary form including: whether it would pull hairs out when removed; how many products would be in the package; whether a uniform dosage for all users was safe and how long the medication would last. Specific dislikes included: the inability to add "*just a little more medication*"; the inability to spread the product over a larger area; a perception that the medication in the secondary form would not last as long as the gel formulation.

Tested Product Packaging

- The primary form package showing a person was preferred because respondents said the product was "*new, and the illustrations show how it will work.*" The secondary form package, also with an image of a person, clearly conveyed product use. The primary form package which showed only the product container was considered "*confusing, - you can't really tell what it is or what it is supposed to do.*" The brand's association with pain rather than cold care exacerbated this confusion.
 - ✓ However, the current package, showing an adult male, indicated to most that the primary product form was for adults only.
- Respondents remarked that for either package "*it should say 'for colds' or 'congestion caused by colds'. When I saw the brand I would just think it was for aches and pains.*" Preferred package claims included: "Safe for adults and children over the age of 2," which assured users and gave a specific age range and "Cools and clears nasal passages fast," which explained what the product does. Some respondents also liked "Unique applicator" to highlight an important product benefit. "Safe with other medications" is seen as unnecessary, since most respondents assumed this.

Tested Product Television Storyboards

- For both forms of the product, advertising campaign #1 was preferred. Respondents said they could relate to the familiar situations and appreciated the narrative of a relatable problem and an effective solution.

- Advertising campaign #2 was considered “*not a story, just a series of statements.*” Rather than presenting a single, relatable situation, campaign #2 ads were seen as presenting more general, less personally meaningful claims.

Implications

- To refine the tested product the company should consider:
 - ✓ Reassuring consumers regarding the safety of the applicator, through one of the above-mentioned solutions, or with a different type of applicator.
 - ✓ Making the perforated area of the seal on the cap easier to see, such as with a colored stripe.
 - ✓ Using the form/shape of the cap to indicate that it should be pulled, not twisted. For example, with a flip top cap or with grip areas molded into the cap.
- In developing packaging for the two product forms, the company should consider:
 - ✓ Prominently featuring that the products are for cold care, so consumers do not dismiss them as 'typical' brand products for pain.
 - ✓ Using an image of a person on the package to clearly show how the product works, but in a way that does not suggest gender or age. For example, by using a silhouette or showing just the chest area.
 - ✓ Assuring consumers that the primary product form is "safe for ages 2 and up" which should help alleviate concerns that the brand could be "*too harsh*" for children.
 - ✓ On the secondary form package, reassuring consumers that the medication is strong and long-lasting, that the medication will stay in place, but can be painlessly removed. Directions should reassure users that the size/dosage is safe for all persons over age 13.
- In marketing these two products the company should consider:
 - ✓ Introducing both forms simultaneously for greater presence and credibility in the cold care aisle.
 - ✓ Using television advertising that features familiar situations in a narrative form with a clear, meaningful problem and the tested product as the solution.
 - Animation should be considered as it allows for the exaggeration of both symptoms and relief (more so than with actors) to reinforce the message of the tested product's effectiveness.
 - ✓ Supplying coupons in boxes of other products from the same brand to promote the new cold relief solutions, since brand users are already convinced of its efficacy.