

Qualitative Summary

McDonald's: Shamrock Shakes

March, 2015

CONTENTS:

Project Background..... 2

Audience 3

Key Findings & Implications..... 4

Detailed Findings 6

Appendix A: Respondent Profile 12

Appendix B: Polling Questions 14

PROJECT BACKGROUND

McCafe Shamrock Shakes have been a legacy product for McDonalds the past few decades. In recent years, there has been a stronger emphasis on eating healthy, especially within the millennial generation. We wanted to see if the Shamrock Shake still has the same appeal to consumers as it has in the past and if consumer are planning to purchase them this March when they are available and if so, if they considered the health implications.

KEY QUESTION



Are consumers planning to purchase a McCafe Shamrock Shake this year and if so, what are the influencers to purchase and do they take nutritional information into consideration?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES



1. Explore consumer perceptions of the McCafe Shamrock Shake (Including familiarity, purchase intent and if they consider nutritional information when consuming).
2. Understand reasons for consumption.
3. Understand likes and dislikes of the McCafe Shamrock Shake including things that consumers would like change.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Instant Research Community	30 Respondents	1 Day
----------------------------	----------------	-------

This study was executed via an online Instant Research Community™ where respondents answered open-ended questions and follow-ups posted by a trained moderator. This technology fosters a dynamic qualitative discussion where respondents are easily able to interact with others in the group.

AUDIENCE

The table below provides a high level overview of who was included in this research. Additional detail on respondents can be found in the [Respondent Appendix](#).

SCREENER	Adults
Completes	30
Country	USA
Gender	Males and Females
Age Range	18-34; 35-64
Children in HH	Mix- capture
Ethnicity	Mix- capture
HHI Range	Mix- capture
Education	Mix- capture
Geography	Mix- capture
Custom Screens	Visits McDonald's at least monthly
	Consumed McDonald's desserts/shakes in past month
	Familiar with McCafe Shamrock Shake

KEY FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS

This section is designed to provide a topline summary of the most important findings and implications from this research. More detailed findings, including verbatim comments from respondents, are provided on later pages within this report.

CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS

- **Shamrock Shakes are a beloved McDonald's tradition with a following.**
 - The Shamrock Shake's appeal is the color, taste, and packaging related to St Patrick's Day.
 - People love the green and minty taste delivered in clear "green visible" cups.
 - Respondents look forward to the annual limited availability of these drinks in March.
- **The appeal of the Shamrock Shake is greater than concern about nutrition.**
 - Nutrition is a value for consumers but it does not influence the appeal and purchase of Shamrock Shakes.
 - If a Shamrock Shake is desired, it will be purchased and consumed.

REASONS FOR CONSUMPTION

- **The month of March is known as the limited release month for Shamrock Shakes, with some external/internal cue assistance.**
 - There is a connection with St Patrick's Day month tradition and the limited release of Shamrock Shakes.
 - Point of purchase sales and nudging by friends and family are common ways to "close" on an order.
 - Nostalgia and tradition are internal motivators for Shamrock Shake consumption.

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- **The tradition of the Shamrock Shake is strong- continue and spread the good word.**
 - Overall, respondents did not see areas for improvement
 - Expand on ways to raise awareness of Shamrock Shake availability outside of the point of purchase setting.

IMPLICATIONS BASED ON THIS RESEARCH

- **A successful Shamrock Shake marketing campaign would likely highlight the internal and external cues as influencers for purchase.**
 - Consider highlighting taste, tradition, and nostalgia as reasons to find Shamrock Shakes in March.
 - Continue with point of purchase advertising but consider expanding on ways (television, social media) to raise awareness of the unique shake and when/where it is available outside of point of purchase marketing.
- **Consider the treat, reward, indulgence values more than nutrition information values when marketing Shamrock Shakes.**
 - Respondents had clarity about their nutrition values being suspended when choosing Shamrock Shakes- there is no need to tiptoe around this issue.
 - The messages of “special treat” or “March/St Patrick’s Day month reward” are favorable- consider emphasizing these in marketing efforts.

DETAILED FINDINGS

This section expands on the key findings above and includes verbatim comments from respondents where applicable. Note that some comments have been modified for misspellings and/or capitalization but the content was not edited.

Objective: Explore consumer perceptions

THE SHAMROCK SHAKE: A TRADITIONAL TREAT THAT IS ANTICIPATED IN MARCH

Familiar to most as a treat that is offered on a limited basis, the Shamrock Shake is anticipated around St. Patrick's Day. People see March as the time of year when this specialty shake is available at McDonald's. They look forward to this limited availability treat with positive emotions.

I look forward to St. Patrick's Day every year because it is my favorite holiday and I LOVE Shamrock Shakes. I visit McDonald's more during this time of the year to indulge in Shamrock Shakes. They are the perfect blend of mint. My kids and I would have them everyday if we could. (Female, 33)

Ya i love the taste of them! hate when their gone, it kills me how they have something good and its a limited time then you keep wanting them and you cant get it lol. (Female, 32)

Clever advertising and/or introduction by a family member or friend are reasons that people became familiar with the Shamrock Shake. Participants shared memories of the first time they were exposed to the shake- often with a family member or friend who recommended it. They also referenced clever advertisements (television and signage) that enticed them to try the product for the first time.

Found out by my father sharing with me that it was his "favorite treat" for this time of year. (Male, 48)

I think they have been around for a while, but I have only had McDonald's Mccafe Shamrock Shakes for the past couple of years. I don't know that they have always called them Mccafe shakes, I think that is in the more recent years. I found out about them from the sign on my local McDonald's. (Female, 37)

The last experience with a Shamrock Shake tended to be an “at the moment” decision while in the restaurant, though there were a few people who specifically sought it out. Most participants described being happy to see it in the restaurant and choosing to eat it at the

point of purchase. Others described seeking it out specifically in the month of March. When talking about the future, participants stated that they planned to drink at least one Shamrock Shake during the month of March.

The last time I got one was last year right around this time. I didn't decide to get one until after I was there. The McDonald's I went to definitely wasn't pushing them-I only knew they existed from their drive thru signage. I think the reason I went was to get an iced latte but ice cream sounded so much better. (Female, 38)

The last time that I had a shamrock shake was last year in March. I was picking up dinner on my way home from work and saw that they had shamrock shakes so I decided to get one. I did not specifically go just to get one. It was just an on the spot decision since it was advertised. (Female, 27)

“TREAT” TRUMPS NUTRITIONAL CONCERNS

“Healthy” is not a large part of decision making when considering partaking in a Shamrock Shake. When speaking of their future purchase, respondents knowingly referred to the Shamrock Shake as a “treat” or something to be considered as a dessert or fulfilling a sweet tooth yearning. Although eating healthy is a value that some respondents brought up, they disregard this when choosing a special treat like the Shamrock Shake.

Normally, I'd say yes. But, because I don't eat/drink Shamrock Shakes every day, I can allow myself a treat once in awhile. That being said, if they were healthy I'd drink them everyday lol. (Female, 24)

Nutritional fact does not play a role for my decision on this shake. It is a good reward to myself and I wish to ignore any side-effect because it is so yummy and hard to resist it. (Male, 47)

Objective: Understand reasons for consumption

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CUES FOR SHAMROCK SHAKE CONSUMPTION

Seasonal/limited availability in March. The fact that this shake is available for a limited amount of time during a certain period of the year makes people think more about getting to McDonald's while the Shamrock Shakes are there.

I like to buy this item because it has a good flavor I enjoy, that's more unusual. They only have it for a limited time, so you have to have it while its available. I also sometimes like to have them on St. Patrick's Day, for a fun treat, a green shake! (Female, 39)

I try to stay away from shakes as they are fattening, but they seem so festive and light that I seem to always justify getting one since they are a seasonal treat. (Female, 45)

Effective advertising. Seeing a sign or hearing from McDonald's employees as a part of their "have you tried" narrative influences Shamrock Shake purchases.

I purchased this product because I think that they are delicious and it happened to be advertised on the menu. Another reason I chose to get one was because when I pulled up to the speaker then first thing they asked me was if I wanted to try a shamrock shake. (Female, 27)

Advertising is a huge influence. That's the only way I know that they are available-much like my beloved McRib. I usually will get a couple during the season just to keep my taste buds from rebelling. (Female, 38)

Appealing color, unique mint taste. The unusual taste treat of a minty, ice cream drink appeals to consumers.

i like the mint green taste because it is refreshing and very unique.. There is no product like it other than the Shamrock from McDonald's. (Female, 27)

I am an ice cream lover, but mint is my favorite flavor. I remember being a kid and the thought of green ice cream just made me giddy with excitement. I fell in love at that moment! Now each year, as soon as I notice the sign, I have to get one. It is a bit a comfort food for me too. (Female, 33)

Fellowship and "other" influence. Respondents noted that the "fun" of drinking the Shamrock Shake is often introduced by others and shared *with* others.

I would only purchase it if my husband wanted one or a friend. (Female, 31)

It's a treat, and a fun seasonal thing. I like mint. If a friend is getting one I'll get one too, because I don't want to feel left out. (Female, 54)

Indulgence or reward. Recognized as a treat or a "pick me up" during the day as well as something that is "earned" for achieving "x."

Looking for something sweet and cool. Not an everyday occasion, more like a special treat or a pick me up. A reward for myself or for my kids for good behavior. (Male, 29)

This is a way to treat myself to an indulgence on the go. I can stop at McDonald's without any extra planning and I buy myself a treat to savor while I drive about town to run errands. (Male, 37)

Objective: Determine likes, dislikes, and improvements

SHAMROCK SHAKES LOOK GOOD, TASTE GOOD, AND ARE A TRADITION TO CONTINUE AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE.

The fresh, minty taste. Respondents talked about the positive combination of mint and ice cream for a tasty beverage. Although nutrition is on the general radar, this treat fits into the category of everything tasty in moderation.

I like that taste of mint, not too bold, just enough. And ofcourse the ice cream that is smooth with some whip cream and cherry on top. the price dont bother me at all as i would pay just about anything if i really want something. (Female, 60)

I wish they were no calories ;) But other than that, there's not much I dislike about that. I can be honest with myself that buying a Shamrock Shake is doing NOTHING for my nutrition or wasteline...so all I really want out of it is good taste and low cost and it delivers those things. (Female, 24)

The Shamrock Shake's green color fits the St Patrick's Day spirit and traditional offering. The green color is in keeping with the St. Patrick's Day tradition and it is a color that is known in McDonald's for that time of year only.

I love the taste! its re freshing and sweet but not to sweet it has a great taste. and i love the look its attractive the bright green color with the whip cream on top! just looks appealing to start with. and the price is ok for it. (Female, 32)

I like the flavor of the shake, it is the perfect amount of mint flavoring. I also like the coloring, it doesn't look too bright, it is a nice shade of green. (Female, 21)

Packaging that highlights the green color and "spirit" of the St Patrick's holiday. Given the annual unusual color and focus on green for St. Patrick's Day, respondents enjoy the clear McCafe cups that showcase the beverage color.

I like the flavor, the tasty mint taste. I also like how they go with St. Patrick's Day, I like special treats for different holidays. The color makes it fun for March. (Female, 39)

I love the flavor of Shamrock Shakes. I also love that they are a seasonal treat. I think the fact that I can only get them during this time of year makes them even more special. The new plastic cups are far more attractive and classy than the paper cups I remember from the past. I do not like the whipped cream and cherry on mine, so I order them without. I also think the price is affordable. They are the perfect St. Patrick's Day treat. (Female, 33)

Pricing is reasonable and "do-able" for this treat. Respondents who liked the price noted that it was very reasonable for size and treat delivered.

I like that it's holiday-themed... McCafe cups are now clear so you can see the green color better. I LOVE the mint flavor. Shamrock Shakes are not something I eat very often, so their rich, full, creamy texture is exactly what I'm looking for when I "cheat" from my normal every day diet. I love that I can get these in a drive through instead of going into a store or restaurant, and I also love that a small size is a pretty decent serving but not insanely priced. (Female, 24)

Price is good good pick me up on the way out the door. (Male, 47)

IMPROVEMENTS LEAN TO “STAY THE SAME” AND HEIGHTEN THE AWARENESS DURING THE SHORT TIME FRAME THAT THE SHAMROCK SHAKE IS AVAILABLE.

The majority of respondents are happy with the Shamrock Shake with “no changes” suggested. Many people found it hard to find anything that they disliked about the Shamrock Shake or improvements needed.

In my eyes, it is a perfect combination of name and image. The shamrock shake is pretty cool and eyeball catching. I have nothing in mind to change it. (Male, 47)

I think it already is the perfect product and I wouldn't change a thing about it. (Female, 27)

Address the limited seasonal aspect of the Shamrock Shake. Respondents want more advertising reminders when the Shamrock Shake is available at McDonald's- not just at the point of purchase. They also suggested ways to expand the seasonal aspect to a longer period of time that a minty shake is offered.

I would make it year around and do a little more TV promotion to advertised it. (Female, 27)

Lower the price and PLEASE do more advertising of when they are available.! I don't regularly stop at McDonald's and thus don't see the POP materials, so rely on outside advertising to drive me in. (Male, 48)

A minority of respondents did not like the color, taste, pricing or nutritional components. A few people noted that they didn't like the mint taste and green color. A few referenced the dislike for the high number of calories or the less than natural ingredients. A few asked for the pricing to be lower or the size larger for the price as stated.

The best way to make this better is to use all natural ingredients without artificial or synthetic ingredients. An all natural healthy treat would be dynamite. (Male, 37)

It is pretty good already. If I were to make it perfect, I would give them out free with purchase of any food item in March and it would burn calories as you drink it. This is a big dream on my part, but I think everyone would try them for free, especially if you lost weight drinking it! (Male, 29)

APPENDIX A: RESPONDENT PROFILE

A total of [#] respondents met all screening criteria and completed the study. Demographic and psychographic information is included the table below.

PARAMETER	TARGET AUDIENCE	ACTUAL AUDIENCE																
Country	USA	USA: 30																
Gender	Mix	Male: 11 Female: 19																
Age	Mix, Age 18-64	18-24: 3 25-34: 9 35-44: 9 45-54: 7 55+: 2																
Children in HH	Capture	Yes: 20 No: 10																
		Male: 20 Female: 15																
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ages</th> <th>6: 2</th> <th>11: 4</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1: 4</td> <td>7: 1</td> <td>12: 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2: 5</td> <td>8: 3</td> <td>13: 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3: 1</td> <td>9: 1</td> <td>15: 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4: 1</td> <td>10: 2</td> <td>17: 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5: 3</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ages	6: 2	11: 4	1: 4	7: 1	12: 2	2: 5	8: 3	13: 2	3: 1	9: 1	15: 2	4: 1	10: 2	17: 2	5: 3
Ages	6: 2	11: 4																
1: 4	7: 1	12: 2																
2: 5	8: 3	13: 2																
3: 1	9: 1	15: 2																
4: 1	10: 2	17: 2																
5: 3																		
Ethnicity	Capture	Asian: 2 Caucasian: 22 Hispanic/Latino: 2 African American: 2 Other: 2																
HHI	Capture	\$0-\$19,999: 2 \$20,000-\$29,999: 1 \$30,000-\$39,999: 1 \$40,000 to \$49,999: 4 \$50,000 to \$59,999: 4 \$60,000 to \$69,999: 2 \$70,000 to \$79,999: 4 \$80,000 to \$89,999: 5 \$90,000 to \$99,999: 2 \$100,000 or more: 5																
Education	Capture	Bachelor degree: 12 Associate degree: 2 Less than high school: 1 Advanced degree: 6 Some college: 9																
Geography	Capture	Northeast: 9 Midwest: 11 South: 7 West: 3																
Restaurants visit at least monthly	Goes to McDonald's	McDonald's: 30 Wendy's: 29 Burger King: 26 Hardy's: 5 Chick-Fil-A: 16 None of the above: 0																
Foods Consumed at	Eats Desserts and Shakes at	Desserts and Shakes: 30																

McDonald's in past month	McDonald's	Chicken: 26 Burgers and Sandwiches: 30 Salads: 22 Snacks and Sides: 24 None of the above: 0
Familiar with Desserts at McDonald's	Familiar with Shamrock Shake	McCafe Shamrock Shake: 30 Ice Cream Sundae: 24 McFlurry: 24 Baked Apple Pie: 22 Soft Baked Chocolate Chip Cookie: 17 None of the above: 0

APPENDIX B: POLLING QUESTIONS

Polls were included in this study to provide guidance to respondents and/or add an additional layer to the qualitative questions that were analyzed in this report. Poll results are shown below, but they should be considered directional and not serve as a means of statistical significance since this was a qualitative study.

To get started, please tell me how long you've been aware of McDonald's McCafe Shamrock Shakes.	Poll Results
Less than 1 year	3
1-2 years	4
2-3 years	5
3-4 years	3
4-5 years	5
More than 5 years	10