

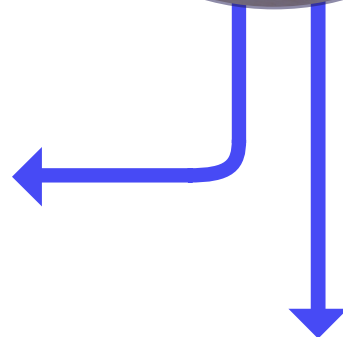
How GutCheck's Innovation Illuminator Helped Purina Identify And Address Kitten Food Purchasers' Unmet Needs



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GutCheck's Illuminator tool allowed us to understand the underlying emotions driving behavior, which gave us a deeper empathetic understanding of their needs and desires, but in an agile way that led to significant time savings as part of our research plan.

Melissa Babb,
Manager, Strategy & Insights



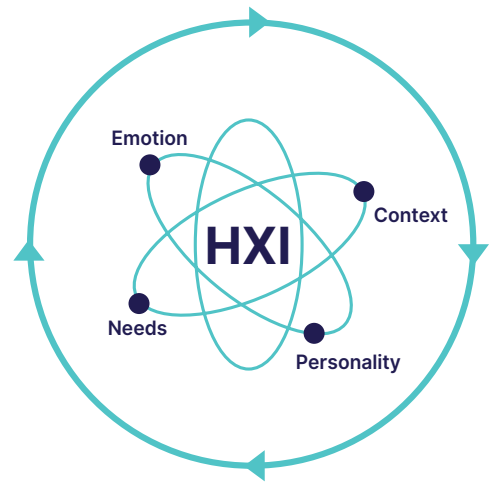
The Challenge

Purina, a company that produces pet food, treats, and litter, is looking to alleviate the frustrations that new pet owners experience in the first year of their pet ownership. Purina recently completed research uncovering unmet needs for the first year of puppy ownership and wanted to explore the tensions and pain points that kitten owners experience.

Understanding unmet needs in the kitten food experience path will assist Purina with creative strategies, ideation, and messaging to focus their communications on alleviating unmet needs and offering expertise to their consumers.

The Solution and Research

To help identify kitten owners' unmet needs in the food purchasing experience path, Purina employed Innovation Illuminator, an Agile Human Experience Intelligence™ (HXI) solution offered by GutCheck. Agile HXI is a new, multidimensional way to deeply understand people's authentic experiences, taking into consideration personality, needs, context, and emotion, so that brands can get closer than ever to their consumers and deliver more empathic innovation and marketing.



The strong partnership between Purina and GutCheck created the perfect opportunity to co-create and explore how the Innovation Illuminator solution fits into Purina's insights needs. Together, they discovered that Innovation Illuminator could explore both the puppy and kitten food experience paths to help identify key opportunities for communications and messaging.

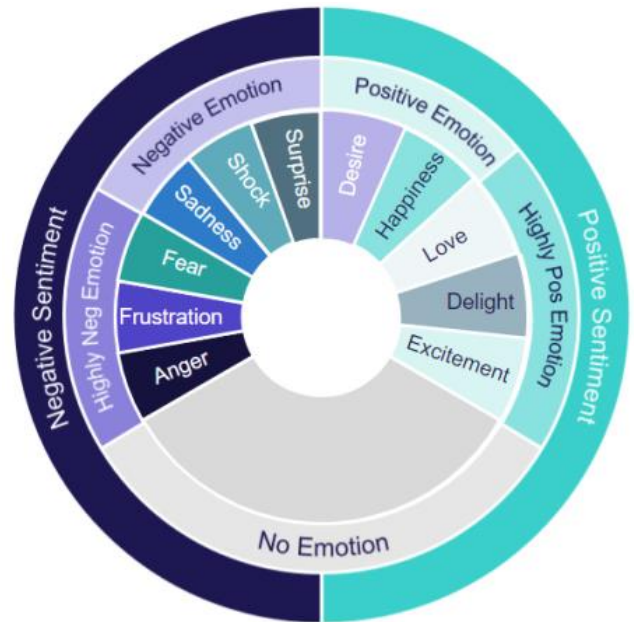
Innovation Illuminator evaluated several predominate websites that offer real consumer commentary in the kitten category. By focusing on reviews left by consumers, a glance at how people are already talking about their kittens, kitten food, and purchasing experiences can be leveraged, allowing for the unique opportunity to gather unsolicited feedback and opinions in context to understand the frustrations and delights of owning and feeding a kitten.

Using proprietary Hybrid Natural Language Processing to analyze the internet-based data for the kitten food purchasing experience path, perceptions and reactions that yield distinct emotions were identified. GutCheck can measure 11 emotions from unstructured text responses, including Excitement, Delight, Desire, Love, Happiness, Surprise, Sadness, Fear, Frustration, Anger, and Shock.

The feedback and commentary were then categorized and prioritized to help single out key opportunities for messaging by exploring the most pertinent dimensions of kitten owners' desired needs in context, paired with analysis of how well those needs are met.

Why Does Emotion Matter?

Emotions, especially those like frustration, anger, happiness, delight, and love are signals of whether our expectations of a brand, product, or service are being met. We can get frustrated or angry when we expect a product or brand to meet our needs, but it does not. Or we react with love or delight when our needs are met, and a product helps make our life better. These emotions are drivers of behaviors such as repeat purchase or usage and willingness to recommend to others.



This study focused on the following key questions and objectives:

What key areas and points of the food purchase journey in the first year create the most tension and pain points for kitten owners, and how can Purina optimize their messaging against those pain points to communicate expertise?

- Identify the outcome consumers are trying to achieve, and the barriers and tensions they experience as they make decisions in their experience to develop a contextualized understanding of unmet or under-met needs.
- Increasing messaging resonance by differentiating within kitten food to create a more empathic experience by aligning messaging that increases trust and expertise, and addresses frustrations.
- Prioritize opportunities to focus communication on areas with the greatest potential to address unmet or under-met needs, better positioning food products for success in-market.



The Results

Unique Hybrid Natural Language Processing analyzed thousands of unsolicited consumer comments available on Reddit, forums, and retailer websites to understand the main pain points in the kitten food experience path. By going a layer deeper than sentiment, true emotions are uncovered within the online commentary.

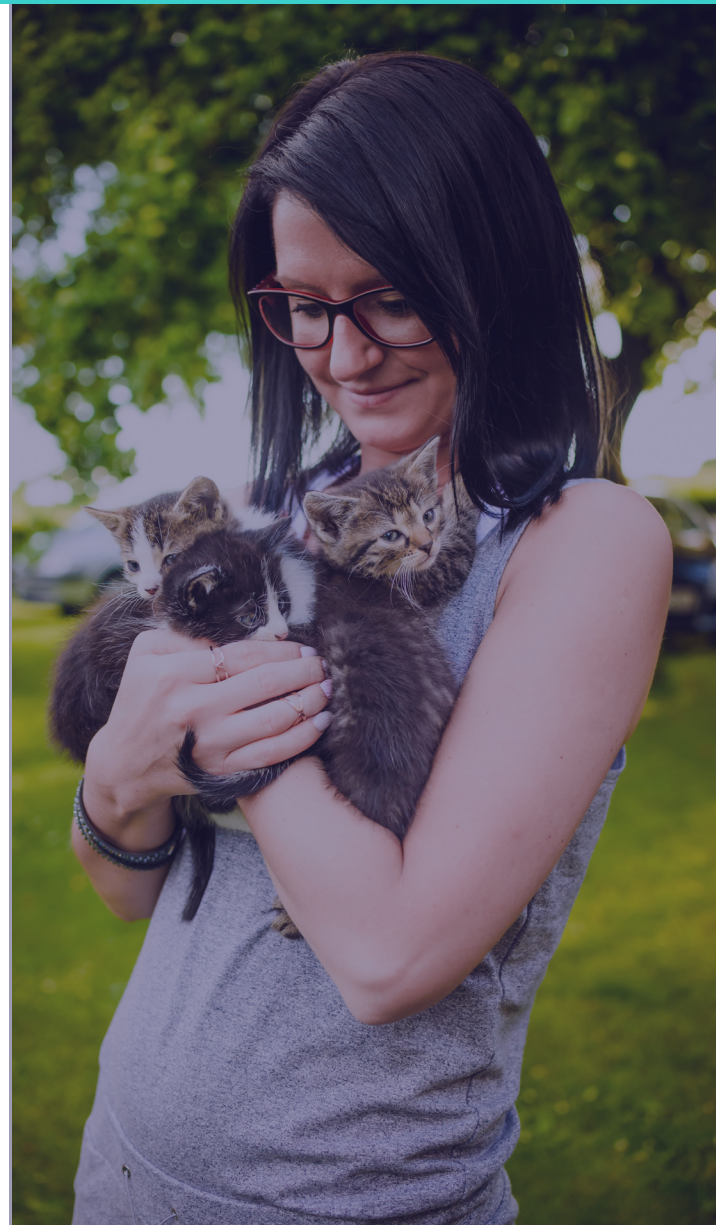
Key emotions were identified with each of the attributes and benefits discussed throughout the commentary, and while some are considered table stakes or fundamental expectations, other areas provide an opportunity for Purina to develop messaging around these identified under-met or unmet needs.

By understanding the experiences with the highest frustration, Purina can work to address them and ensure that their customers look to them for guidance around the kitten food experience to increase their overall satisfaction.

Key Recommendations

Understanding the unmet needs of pet owners in the first year with a new kitten required identifying the true frustrations throughout the purchasing experience path. Innovation Illuminator quickly identified the emotions tied to each stage, and helped point out where messaging can be focused to ensure that Purina connects with kitten owners, delivers empathetic innovation, and alleviates key frustrations their consumers experience.

While there were similarities between the experiences of puppy and kitten food buyers, each animal is unique and kitten food buyers have their own set of distinct considerations. Innovation Illuminator helped shed light on the unmet needs kitten buyers have, ensuring that Purina develops messaging to better connect with their consumers and best position their kitten food products for success.





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We are the Agile Human Experience Intelligence company. Building on our agile principles of speed and cost-efficiency, we leverage innovative technologies and human expertise to bring brands closer to authentic, contextualized human experiences, so they can confidently make the key decisions to drive growth through better innovation and brand building.

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