

Gale Martin, Abby Hart, Aaron Meador, Alex Gallegos

**2011**

**Feasibility Report on the Best Value of Generic Chocolate Chip Cookies**

***With so many generic brands to choose from, how do you know which brand of chocolate chip cookies are the best bang-for-the buck? This study sought a concrete answer to this question, based on a survey and taste-test conducted on a sampling of university students and faculty.***

**Feasibility Report on the Best Value in Generic Chocolate Chip Cookies**

**Gale Martin, Abby Hart, Aaron Meador, Alex Gallegos**

**Technical Writing 2700**

**University of North Texas**

**Executive Summary**

**Goals**

**The objective of this report is to allow the reader a clearer choice in future desert purchases. We are going to look at all the different ways to evaluate your options in choosing a chocolate chip cookie. Not only in price, but also, in nutritional value and overall taste.**

**Methods for Evaluating**

**We administered a random survey and taste test to 24 students at the University of North Texas. Students sampled four different generic brand soft-baked chocolate chip cookies purchased from major grocery stores. Sample 3 was a control group sample, which was identical to sample 2. The control group sample allowed us to better assess the accuracy of the participants responses.**

**Results & Evaluation**

**The survey results demonstrated that a consumer’s primary concern when buying chocolate chip cookies is taste. The least concern of purchasers is the nutritional value of the product. The cost of the product was second in importance factor in consumer’s minds when making a choice. Interestingly, shopping convenience ranked fourth on the list of concerns while making a decision for a purchase.**

**Conclusions & Recommendations**

**There is a correlation between the cost of the cookie and the taste. The Kroger Deli brand was the most expensive cookie sample used and was ranked as most preferred in taste. The least expensive cookie sample used was the *Great Value* brand cookie, purchased from Wal-Mart. It was surveyed as least preferred in taste by survey participants. We recommend that consumers interested in best-value as judged by taste make their purchase from the Kroger delicatessen.**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY………………………………………………ii

INTRODUCTION v

METHODS FOR EVALUATING THE OPTIONS 3

RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION 7

CONCLUSIONS 13

RECOMMENDATIONS 14

***INTRODUCTION***

***Ruth Wakefield,***

***Inventor of Nestle’s Toll House Cookies***

***Chocolate chip cookies were invented by Ruth Wakefield, a dietitian who lectured on food until purchasing a Massachusetts inn with her husband. The now famous inn was named the Toll House Inn. Ruth’s special recipes were a hit with her guests, and she became well-known for her deserts. Her guest’s especially loved her Butter Drop Do cookie recipe. On one occasion she lacked an ingredient – her baker’s chocolate. She decided to substitute her baker’s chocolate with cut up bits of a semi-sweet chocolate bar. She expected the bits to melt when cooked, but instead they just softened. Her guests loved her new cookie recipe.***

***Ruth Wakefield’s Toll House – Home of Nestlé’s Toll House Cookies***

*** The chocolate bar happened to be a gift from Andrew Nestles of the Nestles Chocolate Company, who was so impressed with the popularity of her recipe that he promised to publish it on every bag of his chocolate chips. Ruth was given a lifetime supply of chocolate chips to use in her cookies. Hence, we have Nestle’s Toll House Chocolate Chip Cookies forever.***





Methods for Evaluating the Options



**Methods for Evaluating**

**A random survey and taste test was administered to 24 students at the University of North Texas. Students sampled four different generic brands of soft-baked chocolate chip cookies purchased from Albertsons, Kroger, Wal-Mart grocery stores. Sample 3 was a control group sample, which was identical to sample 2. The control group sample allowed us to better assess the accuracy of the responses of the students. The results of our survey are summarized in Table 1, 2, and 3.**

***Taste***

**Taste is obviously the main concern in a purchaser’s mind when making a cookie purchase. This element will sway most people’s opinions either way.**

***Texture and Color***

**The better a cookie or any food looks, the more appealing in taste it will be to the consumer. Visual appearance is an important psychological factor in judging the taste of a product. Also, as no one wants a cookie that crumbles when picked up, the texture of the product is equally as important its visual appearance.**

***Appetizing***

***When getting the best deal for a desert such as a chocolate chip cookie, it should not only look delicious, but also smell delicious. The more appetizing a treat such as this is, the more likely you are to be a satisfied customer.***



**Students from Technical Writing class 2700 sampling five types of generic cookies**

***Chocolate Chip Cookie***

***Taste Test***

***Rating scale 1 = Best 5 = Least Liked***

***Which sample tastes better?***

***Rate the samples from Best (1) to least liked (5).***

***Sample 1­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 2 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 4 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 5­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Which sample looks more appetizing?***

***Rate the samples from Best (1) to least liked (5).***

***Sample 1­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 2 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 4 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 5­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Which sample has a better texture and color?***

***Rate the samples from Best (1) to least liked (5).***

***Sample 1­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 2 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 4 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 5­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***After reading the statements on the nutritional value, which sample do you feel meets your needs in nutrition?***

***Rate the samples from Best (1) to least liked (5)***

***Sample 1­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 2 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 4 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Sample 5­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Considering taste, cost, looks, nutritional value, and calorie count, which cookie would you buy?***

***Sample 1­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 2 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 4 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Sample 5­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Rank the criteria below in order of importance in making your purchase decision?***

***Ranking Order:***

***1 = most important --- 6 = least important***

***Taste ­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Cost ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Nutritional value \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Calorie Count \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Looks appetizing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Purchasing Convenience­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

**Results of the Evaluation**

****

**Results of the Cookie Taste Test**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Taste** | **Looks more Appetizing** | **Texture and color** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **sample 1** | **96** | **84** | **91** |  |
| **sample 2** | **70** | **75** | **72** |  |
| **sample 3\*** | **73** | **73** | **61** |  |
| **sample 4** | **74** | **65** | **71** |  |
| **sample 5** | **93** | **78** | **78** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Table 1 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**\*Sample 3 is a control sample because it is the same product as sample 2.**

|  |
| --- |
| **What Factor is Most Important to Your Cookie Selection?****Rank most important to least** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Taste** | **Cost** | **Nutrition** | **Calorie Count** | **Looks** | **Convenience** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Samples** | **41** | **51** | **115** | **105** | **96** | **103** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Table 2

\*It is important to note that the results listed above are ranked with the highest count being the least important factor in cookie choice.

* So, the most important factor in cookie selection would be taste, followed by cost, appearance, purchasing convenience, calorie count and nutrition.

Table 3

|  |
| --- |
| **Chocolate Chip Cookies Nutritional Facts** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Great Value**  |  | **Albertsons**  |  | **Kroger**  |  | **Wal-Mart** |  |
| **Ingredients** | **Chocolate Chips** | **% of** | **From Bakery** | **% of** | **Deli Baked** | **%** | **Bakery** | **% of** |
|   | **Sample A** | **Daily** | **Sample B** | **Daily** | **Sample D** | **Daily** | **Sample E** | **Daily** |
|   |   | **Value** |   | **Value** |   | **Value** |   | **Value** |
|   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |   |
| **Serving Size** | **3 Cookies/33 g** |  | **1 Cookie/29 g** |  | **1 Cookie/29 g** |  | **1 Cookie/28 g** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Calories** | **150** |  | **140** |  | **135** |  | **130** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Fat**  | **7 g** | **11%** | **6 g** | **10%** | **6 g** | **10%** | **6 g** | **9%** |
| **Saturated Fat** |  |  | **2.5 g** | **13%** | **2.5 g** | **14%** | **3 g** | **15%** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Cholesterol** | **0** |  | **10 mg** | **3%** | **8 mg** | **3%** | **5 mg** | **2%** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Sodium** | **125 mg** |  | **130 mg** | **5%** | **125 mg** | **5%** | **120 mg** | **5%** |
| **Potassium** | **125 mg** | **5%** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Carbohydrate** | **21 g** | **7%** | **20 g** | **7%** | **20 g** | **7%** | **18 g** | **6%** |
| **Dietary Fiber** | **1 g** | **3%** | **1 g** | **2%** | **1 g** | **2%** | **1 g** | **4%** |
| **Sugars** | **11 g** |  | **12 g** |  | **10 g** |  | **8 g** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Protein** | **1 g** |  | **1 g** |  | **1 g** |  | **1 g** |  |
| **Vitamin A** |  |  |  | **2%** |  |  |  |  |
| **Iron** |  | **4%** |  | **4%** |  | **4%** |  | **4%** |
| **Calcium** |  | **2%** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Folic Acid** |  | **6%** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Cost** | **40/Ct @ 2.76** |  | **25/Ct @ 3.99** |  | **50/ct @ $8.99** |  | **12/Ct @ 2.00** |  |
|  |  **$ 0.06**  | **each** | **$  0.16** | **each** |  **$ 0.17**  | **each** | **$  .16** | **each** |

**Conclusions & Recommendations**



**Conclusions:**

The results of the survey indicated that a consumer’s first concern when buying cookies is their taste. A consumer’s next point of interest is the cost of the purchase. The third factor affecting their decision is the physical appearance and texture of the product. The convenience of making the purchase ranked in fourth place. The last concern of the purchaser was the nutritional value in the product.

Although, we did not give participants information concerning the nutritional value of the products they were sampling, we did include a statement on the survey which asked the ranking of this concern. As noted above, nutritional value was of the least concern in making their decision. Included in the study is a table showing the nutritional values of each product sampled. The data collected was taken from the wrappers of each product. It appears from the table results that a standard measure or guideline is used when calculating and producing one serving of this type of cookie. The variance in nutritional values between each item did not exceed three points, with the exception of the calorie count which varied by a range of 20 calories. However, this factor could be modified by the variance in weight between products. We can assume that manufacturers who produce chocolate chip cookies follow nutritional guidelines published by the Food and Drug administration or some other regulating authority. Due to this standardization in the industry, there is only a slight variance in the number of calories and nutritional composition of one cookie or one serving size. This means that all samples were similar and did not have major differences in composition.

There is a correlation between the price and taste of the cookies; the higher the cost of the cookie, the better the survey participants perceived the taste. It should be noted that survey participants were not informed of the cost of each sample. Their judgment was based solely on the products taste, texture, and appearance. This justifies our conclusion that the quality of the product was directly related to the cost. This brings to mind the old adage: “you get what you pay for.” In a competitive and regulated food market, such as we have in America, competition builds in quality controls and quality is measured by the cost of production and the price the market will bear.

**Conclusions & Recommendations**

Based on the previous tables, we recommend the following:

There is a correlation between the cost of the cookie and the taste. The Kroger Deli brand was the most expensive cookie sample used and was ranked as most preferred in taste. The least expensive cookie sample used was the *Great Value* brand cookie, purchased from Wal-Mart. It was surveyed as least preferred in taste by survey participants. We recommend that consumers interested in best-value as judged by taste make their purchase from their nearest Kroger delicatessen.