

Quantitative Research Report

Brainbuild

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Introduction

This report will provide a detailed description of the results and findings of the quantitative research our group conducted. We designed a self-administered survey to research the attitudes and feelings of college students aged 18-24, our target demographic, on advertisements and messaging of health and fitness apps. Our goal in this research was to garner findings that would aid us in developing solutions to Brainbuild's communications challenge. We aimed to research the key publics we have previously determined and learn how to best target them; our specific focus is messaging and advertising with a public relations perspective on branding.

By using the survey method, our group aimed to reach a larger sample than possible with other methods. Respondents discussed their familiarity with health and fitness apps as well as messaging used to advertise those apps. We determined that understanding these respondents' attitudes regarding health and fitness apps would be crucial in being able to develop a strong advertising and branding campaign for Brainbuild, because these respondents reflect the larger target public. We also utilized stimuli in the survey to gain real consumer feedback about Brainbuild. All research thus far has shown the importance of developing a strong brand image to create brand awareness, and that messaging is vital to reaching a brand's target audience, particularly in regards to social media and word-of-mouth marketing. The quantitative research we have conducted reinforced this sentiment and provided many insights into how Brainbuild can communicate with its key publics moving forward.

Research Questions

All research conducted thus far has been framed around several key research questions that have guided the entirety of our research purposes, but can also be applied specifically to our survey research. One of the two main questions we sought to answer through our survey was how individuals review and engage with competing health and fitness apps, other technology and their advertisements. The second main question we aimed to answer was how Brainbuild should be formulating content and engaging with its consumers, based on the techniques and consumer responses to its competitors. Secondary questions we sought to answer were questions such as how competitors are reaching their audiences and what messages they are sending; we also aimed to discover aspects of our target publics' social media presence and behaviors, such as how they engage with different content across social media and if they discuss the content they see with people in their lives.

These questions guided our survey design in that we asked several questions regarding respondents' attitudes towards advertisements and brands on social media, as well as about competing apps. Specifically we asked about what apps the respondent uses or has used and how the app markets itself to them, along with what they either like or dislike about the app and its messages. All of these questions helped to answer Brainbuild's communications challenge and to give insights on the aspects our group aims to focus on, namely effective advertising and branding strategies related to messaging.

Survey Method

In conducting quantitative research, the research method our group chose was to design a survey questionnaire, aiming to reach a large sample of our target public in a short period of time covering a wide geographical area. We designed a self-administered online survey, keeping in

mind the respondent's literacy level so that the survey would be easy to take, along with good question ordering, wording and aesthetics. Members of the sample group can remain anonymous and the data collected is relatively easy to analyze. The survey method is also considerably cheaper than most of the other primary data collection methods such as observation and experiments. However, we have no way of knowing whether there are forms of human bias involved. In addition, there might be a difference in understanding. As such, it is difficult to formulate questions in such a way that they will mean exactly the same thing to each individual respondent. Furthermore, the data produced is likely to lack details or depth on the topic that we are investigating. We also incorporated visual stimulants of screenshots of the Brainbuild app to increase survey respondents' engagement level. The implementation of visual stimulants allows respondents to have a rough idea of the Brainbuild app without actually downloading the scheduling app, since a scheduling app is a rather new and unique concept.

Distribution

Our survey was designed to be taken online, and as such we distributed the survey online, namely via social media. We created a post asking respondents to answer questions about their attitudes and uses of health and fitness apps and their respective advertising, requesting no more than five to seven minutes of the respondent's time. We chose to distribute the survey via social media because we knew that it would have the greatest potential to garner the most responses in a somewhat short time frame. Also, since the survey was online, it made the most sense to send respondents a reusable link via an online mode of communication. Some of the benefits of using an online survey method are that we were able to accrue a large number of responses, and it made the survey very easy to distribute. However, some of the constraints of using an online survey method are that there often would be many unfinished and still in-progress surveys, since a participant was able to either click out of the survey or open other browsing windows, for example. This meant that we potentially did not gain as many responses as we could have. Also, as with any online communication, there were at times glitches and snags we faced when either sharing the survey or when trying to format the questions in a way that would be the same for everyone who opened it. The survey was fielded on April 7, 2018, and was officially closed on April 12, 2018.

Sampling Procedures

In gaining respondents for our survey, we aimed to stay in the realm of our target public, specifically college students aged 18-24. Our ideal population was this demographic group. Our survey respondents came from a largely homogeneous population. However, we did not limit respondents to only this range and allowed for individuals of other groups to participate as well, largely so we would be able to have the largest amount of responses as possible. Preventing individuals from outside of this age range was also not possible, as we distributed the survey online and would have had no way of vetting every possible respondent. Our sampling procedure was a non-probability and random sampling procedure. A benefit of this procedure was that we were able to receive a large number of responses and did not have to take the time to arbitrarily select participants. Non-probability sampling procedures are much easier to conduct than probability sampling procedures. A weakness of this procedure was that we ended up with responses from individuals outside of our target public because we did not contain the survey to one specific population. At the closing of our survey, we had 158 responses.

Results

Descriptive Statistics of Sample

As mentioned in the Sampling Procedures, in gaining respondents for our survey, we aimed to stay in the realm of our target public, specifically college students aged 18-24. Thus, our survey is set up specifically for people aged 18 and above. Looking at the respondents who completed the demographics portion ($n = 118$), the ages of our respondents ranged from 18 to 61 with an average age of 23. Out of the 118 respondents who filled out their age, only one person is under the age of 18 and nine respondents are over the age of 40.

By gender, there was a fair amount of both males and females that responded. Nonetheless, respondents largely identified as female. 68 percent ($n = 81$) of the 119 respondents who completed the question about gender were females and 31 percent ($n = 37$) were males. A large percentage, 85 percent ($n = 101$), of respondents were college students, which is an expected result considering the survey was distributed by college students to groups of college students.

82 percent ($n = 100$) of respondents identified as white or Caucasian and the other 18 percent in total identified as Asian or Pacific Islander ($n = 9$), Black or African American ($n = 9$), Hispanic ($n = 3$) and other ($n = 1$). Only 7 percent ($n = 8$) of the survey respondents identified as student athletes. Considering these results, people who took our survey are predominantly white female students.

In terms of psychographics, more than 77 percent ($n = 91$) of the survey participants identify themselves as having busy schedules with little to no time to maintain a healthy lifestyle which includes regular exercise and a balanced diet. However, despite their busy schedules, most respondents see themselves as active people who are generally interested in personal fitness and nutrition. Among 134 participants, 85 percent ($n = 114$) have used health and fitness apps before. Of the 171 selections from those who have used health and fitness apps before, 50 percent ($n = 86$) of them use MyFitnessPal and 29 percent ($n = 49$) use Fitbit/Apple Watch.

Results of Analysis

The survey we created aims to answer two main research questions in which we try to evaluate the respondent's engagement with competing health and fitness apps, other technology and their advertisements. Through analyzing the data we collected, we also aim to answer how Brainbuild should be generating its content and engaging with its consumers. Some secondary questions we sought to answer were questions such as how competitors are reaching their audiences and what are the tone and attitudes of competitors' advertisements. In addition, our group aimed to examine how our target publics interact with their social media. Through analyzing our public targets' social media behavior and interaction, we wanted to see how content is being discussed.

Attitudes Toward Health, Fitness and Apps

RQ1: How many people engage with competing health and fitness apps?

To effectively determine the competition to Brainbuild and how individuals engage with competing health and fitness apps, we asked our research participants if they had ever used any health and fitness apps and if so, which ones they used the most. For the question regarding

whether or not the respondent had ever used a health and fitness app, the group ($n = 134$) overwhelmingly had, with 85.07 percent ($n = 114$) responding that they had. This data shows very clearly that the respondents in this survey were at least familiar with the availability and purpose of health and fitness apps on the market.

The next question that was used in the survey was to determine, of the respondents who said they had previously used a health and fitness app, what apps they were using the most. Of the group who said they had used a health and fitness app, MyFitnessPal was the most common selection, being chosen by 46 percent of the sample ($n = 52$). FitBit was the second-highest selected choice with 29 percent, ($n = 38$), while 18 percent ($n = 20$) of respondents chose “other”. There was a clear familiarity with the MyFitnessPal app, as it, as previously mentioned, had been used overall by 46 percent of our entire sample.

RQ2: How are competitors reaching their audiences, and what messages they are sending?

As a major part of our audience research, a primary goal was to determine not only what health and fitness apps that the respondents used, but furthermore, what they liked and disliked most about the programs. One major theme was ease of use, as many respondents felt that apps like MyFitnessPal and FitBit were effective in that they helped the user clearly navigate objectives. One respondent said, in response to being asked what they liked about MyFitnessPal: “Easy to use, thousands of foods are already in the system so putting them in is easy. Same goes with entering my workout.” This theme was consistent with the listed pros of other apps such as FitBit and Garmin.

In terms of dislikes, there were several key issues with the health and fitness apps that our sample had used in the past. One of the primary issues with MyFitnessPal was the element of counting calories, which some users said they had concerns about in regards to accuracy and the amount of importance that the app placed on calories. Users also mentioned that they did not use the MyFitnessPal app enough, indicating that it was at times not motivating to open and continue to track each meal.

In order to determine how other health and fitness apps were reaching their audiences and gaining downloaders, we asked our respondents to choose which way they had heard about the health and fitness app they had listed. For this question, respondents had the option to choose more than one response. Of the responses ($n = 161$) choices, the most popular response was “friends/word-of-mouth” with 40 percent ($n = 64$). Respondents selected “internet” 25 percent of the time ($n = 40$), while social media accounted for 20.5 percent of the response ($n = 33$). This showcases a clear fact that there is validity in believing that marketing strategies for health and fitness apps should be personable and Brainbuild should recognize that word-of-mouth is effective in allowing people to hear about the brand.

Attitudes Toward Advertising and Brands

RQ3: How do individuals review and engage with advertising and messaging?

In order to further gather information on how individuals engage with advertising and brand messaging we asked participants to rate how they felt about advertisements that they see on a general basis. From the first statement in regards to the usage of advertisements the average answer from respondents ($n = 120$), is that advertisements tend to be overdone or overused. The

average responses ($n = 121$), in regards to the statements about advertisements making consumers want to buy a product, lead us to believe that advertisements are only slightly more effective than non effective, but the mean to this response lies very closely to the middle. In relation to the last statement in this question, the average from all of the responses ($n = 120$), indicated that most would agree with the statement that advertisements are useful in conveying information about a product or brand.

As we study the results from these questions, we can further develop the way that Brainbuild will be best able to reach audiences in their messaging and advertisements. From this question and analyzing the results, we can gather that audiences do effectively receive information from advertisements. This leads us to believe that information is vital in the messages that we relay from advertisements, as this is what the audience is going to gather.

RQ4: How do individuals engage with different content across social media?

With the presence of new and ever changing media technologies, we thought that it would be important to study how consumers engage with content on social media. Of respondents who answered the question ($n = 121$), “How likely are you to purchase or use a product advertised on social media,” the most common answer was “slightly likely” with 33.06 percent ($n = 40$) of respondents selecting this answer. The next most common answers to this question were “moderately unlikely” with 17.36 percent ($n = 21$) selecting this answer, 14.05 percent ($n = 17$) responding “slightly unlikely” and 13.22 percent ($n = 16$) responding “moderately likely.”

These results, lead us to the conclusion that even though individuals may not be heavily influenced by advertisements that they see on social media, there still does seem to be subtle influences by what they are exposed to on various social media platforms. This might encourage Brainbuild to strive to build on these social media platforms, in order to gain on these subtle yet important influences by advertising on social media.

Another revealing question that we asked in order to try and understand consumer social media engagements was “How likely are you to talk about advertisements or posts you see on social media?” This question would lead us to information and insights as to how social media has an effect on word of mouth discussions about a brand, product, or service. Of respondents to this question ($n = 121$), the most common answer was “slightly likely” with 33.06 percent ($n = 40$) of responses. In contrast to this, 19.83 percent ($n = 24$) of respondents said that they were “moderately unlikely” and 19.01 percent ($n = 23$) responding with “extremely unlikely.” Eleven percent ($n = 14$) of respondents said that they were “moderately likely” to talk about ads that they see on social media platforms, and only 3.31 percent ($n = 4$) said that they were “extremely likely.”

After analyzing the results of this question, it can be concluded that one portion of the population would likely not talk about ads on social media, while another portion of the population would be considered likely to discuss these same topics. This information could prove valuable to Brainbuild in that now that the source of some topics of discussion or word of mouth conversations are ads that are seen on social media. If Brainbuild can effectively reach these people with messages and advertisements on social media, it is likely that a fair amount of people who see it, will later discuss it with someone else. Thus generating an even broader audience.

Attitudes Toward Brainbuild

RQ5: How should Brainbuild be formulating content to engage with its consumers?

The fifth research question addresses how Brainbuild should formulate content to engage with its consumers. In order to understand people's opinions on Brainbuild's current messaging and brand identity, we presented respondents ($n = 158$) with images of Brainbuild's website and app page and asked for feedback. First, we want to look into how people think about Brainbuild's visual appearance. Our survey asked respondents ($n = 158$) to determine their level of disagreement or agreement regarding a statement that describes the Brainbuild's visual appearance, likert-type scale ranging from one being "strongly disagree" to seven being "strongly agree". Respondents ($n = 117$) tended to agree with the statement "Brainbuild is visually appealing" ($M=5.46$, $SD=1.18$), with 45.29 percent of respondents ($n = 53$) chose "Agree", 27.35 percent of respondents ($n = 32$) chose "Somewhat agree" and 13.6 percent ($n = 16$) of respondents chose "Strongly agree". The data indicates that overall people think Brainbuild is visually appealing, which will help Brainbuild to lay the foundation of generating content that engages its consumers.

Our survey then looked into specifics on whether there was anything people liked about those images, which focuses on not only visual appearance but also content. Of the respondents ($n = 118$) who answered this question, 88.14 percent ($n = 104$) responded "Yes". Of respondents ($n = 104$) responded "Yes" to the question, "color", "clean" and "easy" are the most frequently mentioned words in their answers. The survey also went into asking whether there was anything about the images people disliked; 74.58 percent ($n = 88$) of the respondents chose "No". Of the 25.42 percent of respondents ($n = 30$) who chose "Yes", the top concern is notification, with many respondents saying those notifications are annoying and make the app look wordy. The result shows that overall people like the current appearance of Brainbuild. People enjoy the color and the sense of simplicity presented by Brainbuild's website and app, but are concerned about the notifications, which go against simplicity. The data indicates that Brainbuild should put more effort on formulating the notification message to make it less annoying, while still achieving the functionality of reminders.

Our survey result indicates a tone of voice that Brainbuild can adopt and develop on. One of our survey questions asked respondents ($n = 118$) to identify their visions of Brainbuild's tone of voice based on the images provided. "Friendly" ranked the highest with 72.88 percent ($n = 86$) of respondents selecting it. The data here shows that formulating content with a sense of "friendliness" would match with the tone that target audiences expect to receive from Brainbuild's current brand identity. Formulating the notification messaging in such a way could help Brainbuild to better engage with its users.

While respondents provided overall positive feedback based on Brainbuild's website and application images that the survey provided, they ($n = 118$) became hesitant when asked to indicate their likelihood of downloading the app just based on the images and information about Brainbuild. The survey provided a scale ranging from one being "extremely unlikely" to seven being "extremely likely." "Slightly likely" has the highest percentage rate of 28.81 percent ($n = 34$) and "moderately likely" ranked the second, chosen by 18.64 percent of respondents ($n = 22$). But only 11.02 percent ($n = 13$) of the respondents chose "extremely likely". Overall, respondents ($n = 118$) showed a positive inclination towards Brainbuild based on the images and

information provided on the survey ($M=4.36$, $SD=1.83$), but not many respondents hold strong intentions to actually download the app. The data shows that Brainbuild's current messaging is not strong enough to motivate people to download the app. In order to achieve a higher rate of download and degree of engagement with the users, Brainbuild may want to formulate its messaging with a "friendly" tone of style and keep the whole visual appearance simple and straightforward.

Conclusion

As Brainbuild is currently in the process of attempting to find the most valuable way to advertise its product to a new consumer base, this data analysis allows the company to gain a better understanding of how it can reach these new potential downloaders. To effectively break through into a popular market, Brainbuild must strengthen its messaging and learn from other leaders in the health and fitness app market.

Our results showed that potential downloaders were almost overwhelmingly familiar with health and fitness smartphone apps, a majority of them having used one in the past. The survey also found that using these apps was a result of largely hearing about them through friends or word-of-mouth. In terms of reach, both the internet and social media had an impact on these brands connecting with their users. These results suggest that Brainbuild has an advantage because its target audience is familiar with the style of product; however, the company should consider unique ways to help build its word-of-mouth reach.

The results of this survey also signified that, as a whole, viewers are sometimes subtly inclined to interact and engage with online advertising, even if there is skepticism about online ads as a whole. The study suggests that online marketing does not hold a very strong correlation to word-of-mouth conversations in regards to health and fitness apps. As such, Brainbuild should work to find strategies that are not currently being used by other companies to help spread the word in daily interactions among users.

Finally, we found that survey respondents felt favorably about Brainbuild's tone of voice and the imagery that is being used by the company. This includes images of Brainbuild's website and mobile app. The challenge that emerges from this study for Brainbuild is its ability to get users to download the app after being exposed to its messaging. Survey results found that, despite liking the content itself, users were not particularly motivated to download the app after seeing messaging. This presents an opportunity for Brainbuild to think outside of the box and develop marketing strategies that not only have the audience talking, but also willing to use the app.

Appendices

Table 1

Trends and Attitudes Towards Health and Fitness Apps

Discovery Method of Health and Fitness Apps

Internet	24.84 Percent (n=40)
Magazines	0.00 Percent (n=0)
Friends/Word-Of-Mouth	39.75 Percent (n=64)
Social Media	20.50 Percent (n=33)
Other	14.91 Percent (n=24)

Table 2

Attitudes Toward Advertising and Brands

General Responses to Advertising

<u>Response</u>	<u>Mean</u>
Overdone/overused	4.69 (SD = 1.42)
Often amusing/funny	4.40 (SD = 1.23)
Effective in making me want to purchase a product	4.07 (SD = 1.36)
Unnecessary	3.23 (SD = 1.55)
Often controversial	3.93 (SD = 1.40)
Useful to convey information about a product or a brand	5.20 (SD = 1.14)
Other	4.31 (SD = 1.41)

Note: For the semantic differential questions, respondents selected from “1” being strongly disagree to “7” being strongly agree, and so for the following measures.

Katie Forbidussi: Introduction, Research Questions, Survey Method, Descriptive Statistics of Sample, Results of Analysis; Table 2

Kelly Hsu: Descriptive Statistics of Sample, Survey Method, Results of Analysis

Laeral Knutson: Editing

Elizabeth Pollard: Results of Analysis--Attitudes Towards Advertising and Brands; Table 1

Yujie Tao: Results of Analysis--Attitudes Towards Brainbuild

Joe Wedra: Conclusion, Results of Analysis--Attitudes Towards Health, Fitness and Apps