

EBOOK

Improving brand equity through AAU surveys





How is your brand doing? How much do your customers like or dislike what you have to offer? And, when was the last time you asked them? An important part of driving customer loyalty is having a good understanding of the brand experience. In other words, what is the brand's standing in the marketplace among consumers? How is the brand perceived? Which brand traits are important to consumers?

One way you can capture these important insights is through an AAU (Awareness, Attitude and Usage) survey. This valuable tool can provide a comprehensive assessment of a brand's overall health in the marketplace. It measures consumers' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors toward a brand and its competitors. Using this information, you can monitor who the leaders and laggards are, which traits define successful brands and the sort of brand experience your organization provides.

Elements of an AAU survey

At the heart of an AAU study is the “hierarchy of effects” model, which suggests that a consumer’s relationship to a brand moves through progressive stages of intimacy. A consumer must pass through each of these stages before accepting a new idea or purchasing a product:

STAGE 1: AWARENESS

A consumer must first become aware of a brand before having any sort of relationship with it.

STAGE 2: ATTITUDES

Once awareness is achieved, a consumer develops opinions or impressions of the brand. Obviously, a company hopes the consumer develops positive attitudes or impressions of the brand in ways that will get them to consider a purchase.

STAGE 3: USAGE

Once a consumer is willing to consider a purchase, they may try or use the brand. Ultimately, a company wants their brand to be the most used or most preferred out of other options.

An AAU survey asks questions of consumers in a specific category and probes on the survey sponsor's brand, along with key competitors. For example, if Visa sponsored an AAU study, the survey would ask respondents what they think about the Visa experience. It would also ask them to rate MasterCard, American Express, Discover and other brands in the credit card space. Doing so not only allows Visa to understand its position in the marketplace, but also how and why consumers choose credit cards in general.

Typical AAU survey questions may include:

- Which of these brands are you aware of?
- What traits characterize these brands?
- What brand traits are important to you?
- Which brands would you consider trying?
- Which brands do you prefer most?



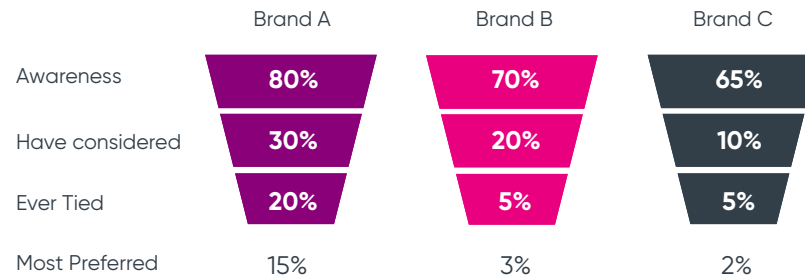
Reporting insights

Once you have collected data from AAU surveys, you can review insights using two reporting techniques: funnel charts and brand maps.

Funnel charts

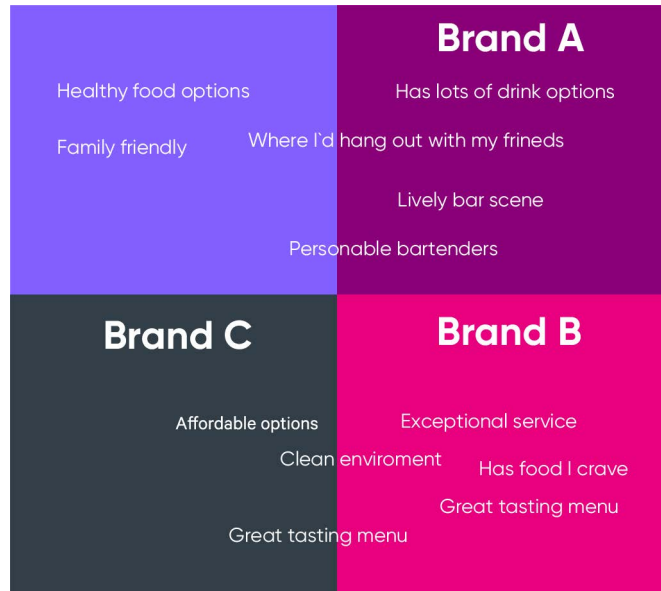
Funnel charts are essentially scorecards that summarize how various competitive brands stack up against each other in the marketplace; i.e. how well each brand is able to convert consumers into active purchasers. Organizations frequently track these funnel metrics by fielding AAU surveys on a regular basis. This allows them to monitor brand equity and performance over time, and see whether improvements (or declines) are taking place as the business evolves.

The funnel chart roughly corresponds to stages in the “hierarchy of effects” model as a consumer becomes more intimate with a brand: from awareness to consideration to purchase to preference.



Brand map

In an AAU survey, respondents are asked to rate different brands on a variety of attributes. Using this information, a brand map can be created, which arranges various brands close to the attributes they are associated with. This gives a nice visual representation of how each brand was described by survey respondents.



Weaving it all together

Funnel charts and brand maps provide a good snapshot of the marketplace, performance, strengths and weaknesses of various brands. They help to describe which qualities make a brand dominant, and which qualities a brand may need to improve upon. For instance, in the examples provided above, the funnel chart establishes Brand A's dominant position in the marketplace; while the brand map illustrates Brand A's ability to carve out a niche as a lively, exciting and trendy scene.

By using AAU surveys to collect consumer feedback and brand perceptions, you can begin to drive your brand in the desired direction. Business and marketing objectives can be constructed accordingly, based on which area of the purchase funnel or brand map your brand occupies, and how you want your brand to evolve.

If you're looking for an easy, yet innovative survey and reporting solution to handle everything from AAU surveys to more complex studies, check out **Forsta.com**

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