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**NEW CONSUMER RESEARCH
UNCOVERS VALUES THAT
DRIVE MOMS' FOOD AND
BEVERAGE CHOICES**



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In May 2010, MSR Group conducted a consumer laddering study for the Corn Refiners Association to learn more about the motivations behind the ways grocery shoppers evaluate their options (including products sweetened with HFCS vs. products sweetened with table sugar).

Laddering is a respondent-driven, one-on-one interview process in which the interviewer probes the respondent's statements—through a series of “Why is that important to you?” questions—to uncover higher-order values that motivate those statements. In this study, MSR interviewed 44 mothers of school-age children from 24 states.

Ultimately, the study showed that moms base their choices on three higher-order values, or emotionally charged drivers: health, happiness and general benefits to their families.

Rational Attributes

The laddering process enabled the mothers to reveal higher-order values after they had begun by discussing basic product attributes—taste, calories, ingredients, price—that they said influenced their purchases.

Taste was cited by the mothers as it related to their children: Would the children find it acceptable? And, in some cases, would the acceptable taste help the mothers teach their children to enjoy healthy foods?

Calories were important, for even those moms who had less of a tendency to focus on specific ingredients. They looked for lower-calorie options as a way to both manage their own weight and help their children maintain a healthy weight.

Desirable ingredients (fiber, protein, whole grains, organic ingredients, etc.) helped these mothers believe they are providing good nutrition now and helping their children avoid health risks in the future.

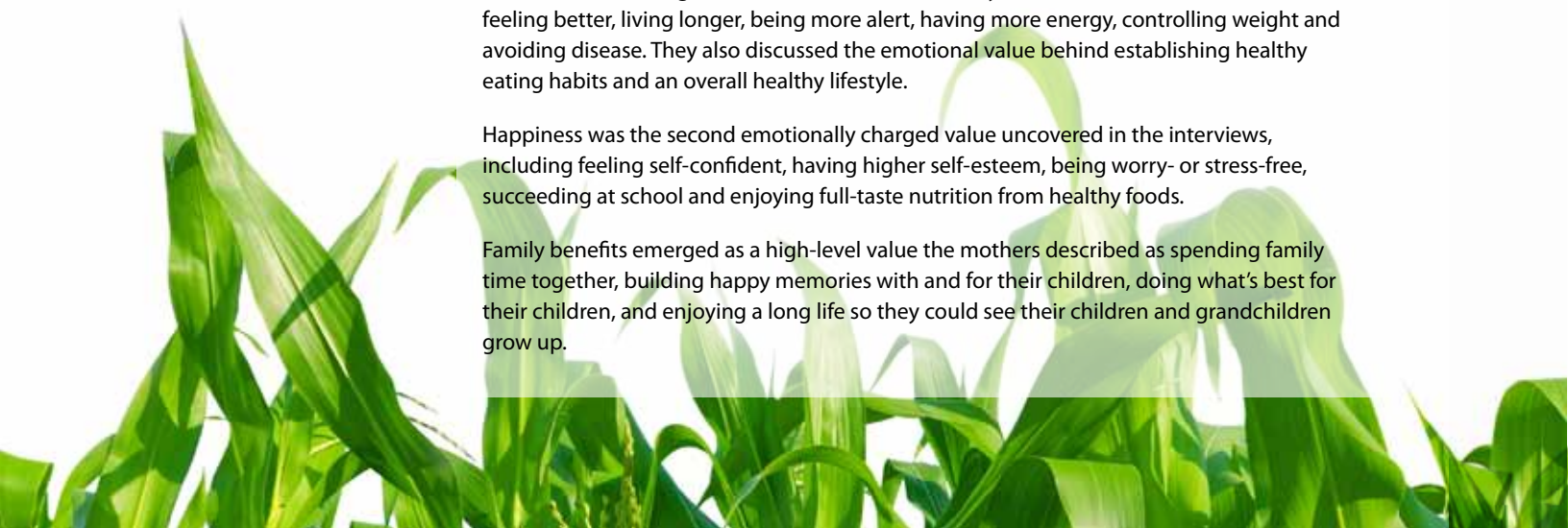
Price is understandably an issue in today's economy, but further questions about this attribute did not lead to significant emotional values.

Emotionally Charged Values That Drive Purchase Choices

Health—this laddering exercise showed strong connections between this value and taste, calories and ingredients. The mothers ultimately described “health” in terms of feeling better, living longer, being more alert, having more energy, controlling weight and avoiding disease. They also discussed the emotional value behind establishing healthy eating habits and an overall healthy lifestyle.

Happiness was the second emotionally charged value uncovered in the interviews, including feeling self-confident, having higher self-esteem, being worry- or stress-free, succeeding at school and enjoying full-taste nutrition from healthy foods.

Family benefits emerged as a high-level value the mothers described as spending family time together, building happy memories with and for their children, doing what's best for their children, and enjoying a long life so they could see their children and grandchildren grow up.

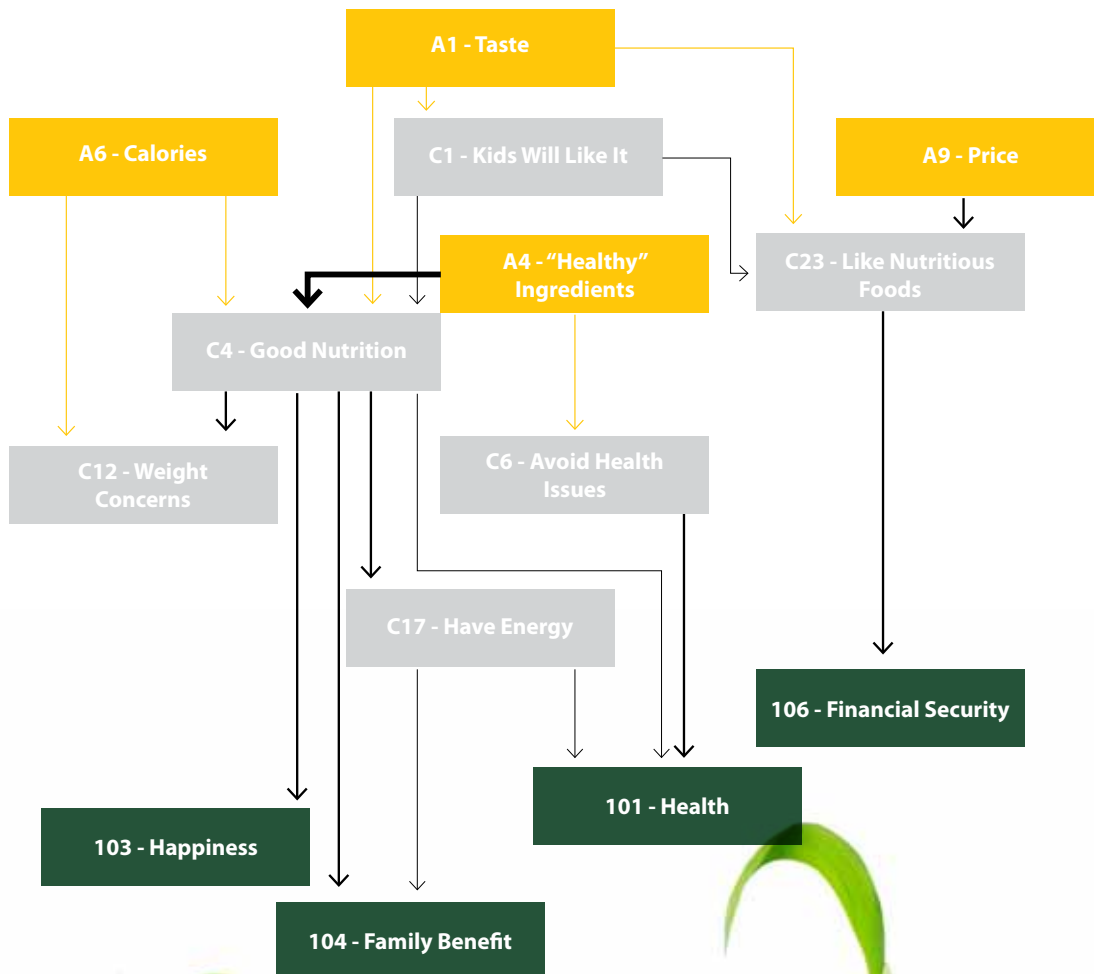


Lessons for Marketers

Food and beverage marketers would be well served to focus on emotionally charged, motivating values such as health, happiness and family benefits as they develop programs promoting their products—and the ingredients in them—to consumers.

Food and beverage products evoke strong emotive responses because consumers actually eat and drink such products. Marketers need to be aware that this emotion translates into a consumer need to trust in the transparency of the products and their ingredients—and truthfulness in ingredient claims and labeling. In a related study, for example, more than 44 percent of respondents identified switching ingredients as a “marketing ploy.” Violating consumer trust in this way can negatively impact a brand’s reputation.

VALUES THAT DRIVE MOMS' PURCHASES



Ladders with the most direct correlations are indicated with black lines. The thickness of the line indicates the intensity of the connection.

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