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**Elizabeth’s Shoes: Research Proposal**

*Introduction*

 The purpose of this research is to find the best method to communicate and promote the foot wear of *Elizabeth’s* and expand their share in the market. There are several research questions that must be answered before this can begin. First, we need to find the target demographic for our audience. MRI data may provide some insight into this. We also must ask ourselves how much emphasis we want to place on the brands charitable side. Outside research can lead us in an appropriate direction. Exploring the brand’s current relevance in the market as well as what vendors might be potentially important is the last, and most important question we must answer. This can only be achieved through survey’s and an exploratory study examining the shopping habits of our target consumer. Combining these three techniques will lead to an aggressive marketing campaign.

*Secondary Research*

MRI+ will give a target demographic to be reached. My utilizing the MRI+ mediamark feature a demographic can be targeted by exploring brands that are similar to *Elizabeth’s*. In this case four categories were chosen: Shoes- brands- other in the past 12 months, Shoes- brands- Crocs in the last 12 months, Shoes - Amount spent in total- Casual/leisure In last 12 months Under $50, and Shoes - Amount spent in total- Casual/leisure In last 12 months $250+. I chose the first category to cover the off brands that were not featured otherwise on MRI+ and Crocs because they are a product that are similar to the flip flops that *Elizabeth’s* carries. Casual/leisure shoes both under $50 and over $250 were chosen to be comparative to the pricing of Elizabeth’s shoes.

Looking at the index number in the last column on the report, across the board it is shown that women dominate the purchase of women’s shoes. Additionally, women over 25 indexed slightly higher in the under $50 category and over $250, but only by a difference of approximately five points. This means that the age range for these shoes could span from ages 18-54, but should be slightly skewed towards those ages 25-54.

Additionally, research by by Gneezy, et al. shows that brand position should focus on the charity the brand is supporting (2010). The Gneezy article states that when people were both presented with a flat-rate and a pay-what-you-want model, profit for the company increased as long as there was an emphasis on charitable donations. More studies like this one can be found utilizing the EBSCO database.



Figure 1, Gneezy, et al., 2010

*Quantitative Research*

 The best quantitative approach would be a survey. It is important to follow guidelines to receive a high response rate by sending out a preliminary notification of the survey. Normally going door to door and giving a physical copy of the survey is desirable, but since the survey will be designed to take no longer than 20 minutes to complete, an online survey will be implemented in the interest of cost, labor, and being able to reach a larger more diverse market.

The survey will be preceded by a qualification survey that will weed out the non-targeted demographic. The survey will be sent out through an email server to US residents, in a simple random sampling style. This means that the qualifying survey will not discriminate and could go out to anyone, as long as they are in the population of being a US resident. Respondents must be over the age of 18, female, and have purchased shoes in the past six months. They must also have a household income of over 50k. This is the target demographic that the MRI+ report from secondary report has shown we need to explore. The additional questions on the preliminary survey will be used later for data mining. After qualifying for the study, respondents will be sent an invitation to complete a short survey.

Questions in the primary survey will answer three questions, and be divided up into three categories: Importance of retailer, importance of ethics, and brand relevance. This will help predict the best retailers to expand to, how we should portray the ethics of the brand, and how much marketing should be done to increase brand awareness respectively. Questions are all shown in a random order to eliminate bias, and answers are randomized when appropriate. Brands that were chosen as primary examples in the questions were chosen because of their similarity to the brand image of “Elizabeth.” Sample surveys are attached in the appendix of this proposal in the form of an outside link.

Upon completing the final survey, respondents will be entered into a drawing to receive a $100 Zappos gift card (which will hopefully be used to buy the Elizabeth brand later on if Zappos is chosen as a vendor). The desired sample size should be 500 people, with five $100 gift cards to be awarded. The expected answer rate will be around 20%, so it is desired to qualify 10,000 people for the survey (the qualifying survey should be sent out until the desired amount of qualifiers exist).

*Qualitative Research*

 To gain insight into a shoppers habits that may have been missed by the survey, I believe a field based technique would be best to further investigate shopping habits. Once again, participants must qualify for this study and may used the aforementioned qualifying questionnaire to do so.

 Once they qualify, they will be asked to keep a diary of their shopping habits. This diary must be accompanied by receipts to verify purchases, although for the diary itself they will only be asked to record thoughts and feelings about their purchases. Using these combinations of techniques, we will increase validity while being able to gain insights that might have been missed in the previous two studies. Using a more free-form approach will allow for a wider breadth of answers and insights, and allow the consumer to relate their shopping experience in a much more natural environment which may yield more accurate results.

 This diary should be kept for the duration of a month, and will include only purchases of apparel and shoes to give a manageable amount of information to work with (ideally it would be nice to see all shopping habits to cover how much one cares about all environmentally friendly products, but in this case it would be too costly and labor intensive).

 The study will run for 3 months so that it will be done in time to run a timely campaign. It will follow 45 participants; 15 for each month. Of these 15 each month, 5 will come from a metropolitan area, 5 from a suburban area, and 5 from a rural area to examine each area. The same three areas will be used for each month. Participants will be sent an invitation to the qualifying survey when their area is selected, using a cluster sampling method where people are randomly chosen from a population. After a person qualifies, they will then be put into another subject pull where we randomly select participants to invite into the final studying, which is known as stratified sampling. Each participant will receive $100 for participating. The study should take place 4 months before the marketing campaign will be launched, so the information can be properly utilized and examined.

 Data will be collected and analyzed using text analysis by looking for repeating themes, and by simply looking over texts by several observers to see if any holistic insights were missed.

*Discussion*

 Using the three methods above as discussed should give insight into how we can properly target our audience and gain insight into brand relevance. The MRI data and research paper is helpful and very cost effective. The MRI data in particular reflects a time span that would be otherwise be unreasonable to investigate for a timely release of a campaign. However, this research is limited in that it can only give you broad insights into research and may not be specific enough for your particular brand. In the case of the research paper, it is also limited to a very particular demographic that does not necessarily reflect our target demographic.

The quantitative research method is useful, reasonably cost effective, and can draw from a large population easily, however it is limited in that you cannot manipulate variables obtain a sense of causation, nor can you be assured that the respondents are answering truthfully. Concerns like social acceptability, or wording of the questions can affect how each respondent answers. To limit this questions were randomly placed, however this does not guarantee that answers will be completely accurate. Especially since this survey will be administered online, there is risk of respondents simply flipping through the questions without paying attention. Additionally, there is concern that there will be a low level of participation. The higher the participation, the more accurate the results. If we have a low level of participation the study may lack validity. There is also a risk that the qualifying participants might be concentrated in one market, which would skew results. Steps to actively monitor where respondents are from should be taken, but the risk will always remain.

The qualitative method of doing field research gives you a holistic view of what consumers might be doing in an organic environment. It is a much more in depth approach than the other methods in that it allows for more room for interpretation and therefore insights that might have been grazed over in the other methods. However, self reporting may be a problem with my particular approach and could affect reliability of the study. If participants are not good about documenting their purchases, or otherwise lack writing skills there might be holes in the study. This could be minimized by proper coaching of participants before hand, but should always be a concern.

*Conclusion*

 Combining these techniques a clear view of an advertising campaign should be achieved. *Elizabeth’s* clearly has an advantage in its stance of being part of a good cause, however it is important to examine how we can further that cause. By combining research methods the validity and reliability of information should be elevated.

APPENDIX

# Works Cited

Gneezy, A., Gneezy, U., Nelson, D. L., & Brown, A. (2010). Shared social responsibility:

A field experiment in pay-what-you-want pricing and chartible giving. *Science* *,*

*329*, 325-326.

# Sample Survey’s

Qualifying Questionairre: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XFG52D7

Sample Survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XTHWJD2