

How do we communicate which foods are healthy?

Outcome from workshop 11-12 February, Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters in Oslo, Norway

Organized as part of international program 'The Ecology of Food Perception' at the Center for Advanced Study at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters in the academic year 2013-2014.

Main organizers: Dr. Marije Oostindjer, Prof. Bjørg Egelanddal, Prof. Gro V. Amdam, Dr. Jessica Aschemann-Witzel and Dr. Ellen van Kleef

The problem

We know quite a bit about how to sell foods to people (advertising), how to communicate immediate food related dangers to health (EHEC, untraceable meat) and how to nudge people towards certain food choices. When it comes to healthier eating, there are good examples of strategies that help consumers make healthier choices, such as the Nordic Keyhole label, but there are also examples where strategies were not as successful as planned. Understanding success factors is important in designing effective strategies in the future that stimulate consumers to eat healthier.



Aim and participants

The aim of this workshop was to design new concepts, ideas and strategies that motivate consumers to eat healthier. The participants were researchers, who are the ones behind the science of successful communication; food industry and non-governmental organization participants who may implement communication strategies; and students from public health, nutrition and communication programs, who will be involved in such strategies in the future.

Format

Presentations

The workshop started with 8 presentations that gave the participants information of what is known about successful communication, and the limits and barriers to successful communication about what foods are healthy. 6 of the presentations (*) were linked to a working group's tasks to follow. The presentations were:

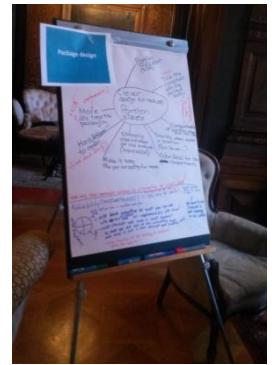
Gun Roos (SIFO)
 Ellen van Kleef (Wageningen University)
 Frode Alfnes (NMBU)
 Nina Veflen Olsen (Nofima)
 Valérie Lengard (Nofima)
 Jessica Aschemann-Witzel (MAPP – Aarhus University)
 Polymeros Chrysochou (MAPP – Aarhus University)
 Marije Oostindjer (NMBU)

*Communication through food labeling
 *Communication through package design
 Nudging
 *Use of modern technology and social media
 *Communication towards children
 *Success factors in healthy eating communication
 *Endorsers in food advertising
 Food communication: the source and the message



Idea storm

After the presentations the groups met to discuss the issue within their topic group on which they wanted to work, and to quickly come up with ideas on how to solve this issue. The other groups then 'visited' the idea and could give their comments.



Working out a presentable strategy

On the second day the groups had 3 hours to work out the ideas using the feedback from the first day, and create a presentable strategy. Groups were encouraged to use different media to present their idea. Different materials were available, and this resulted in drawings, logos, powerpoint presentations, blogs, prototypes, and even a movie.



Pitching the idea to a jury

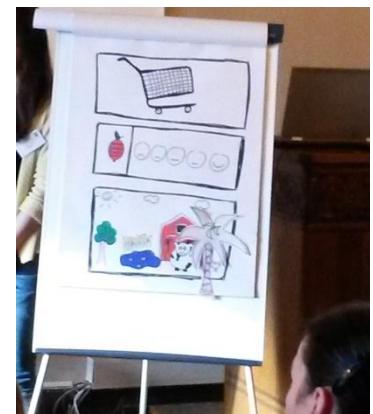
Each group then had five minutes to pitch their idea to a jury. The jury consisted of Ellen Hovland (Animalia), Bård Kulseng (NTNU) and Gro Steine (NMBU). The jury had 5 minutes to ask questions about the strategy. They chose a winner and a runner-up.



The possible solutions

- Communication towards children (winning concept):

An app that can help kids (age 3-10) to get a more varied diet. Children are stimulated to try new foods and diversify their diet, as that may help to establish a healthier eating pattern later in life. Children that tried a new food could register this in the app, and they can say whether they liked it or not. When the child has tried a certain food item 5 times, they receive a character or item that goes with that food (for example, a banana tree for bananas, a cow for beef meat), which they can position within their farm. The app is designed to overcome food neophobia by making it a game.



- Advertising:

MyBasket, an app integrated into shopping carts that provides consumers with inspiration and cooking recommendations, based on preferences, profile, allergies and habits. It allows the user to specify the purpose of the shopping trip (meal versus filling the fridge) and gives options for meals that motivate the consumer to eat something healthy that they haven't been eating in some time (such as fish). It helps to navigate through the store to speed up the shopping experience and provides information about discounts. MyBasket also allows self-check-out.



- Package design:

An improved beverage bottle design that notifies the consumer when a portion has been consumed, and reduces the sip size, that is proved to result in less consumption of the drink. This bottle design with reduced sip size cap and portion indication (including a warning sound for final portion) should be mandatory for all drinks with sugar content above a total of 5%. As consumers may avoid this bottle, the industry will be stimulated to create more low sugar beverages. Bottles are recyclable and batteries for the warning sound are rechargeable by fluorescent lamps in the supermarket.



Technical specifications

- Reduced sip size.
- 450 ml (3 x 150 ml)
- Portions separated by lines.
- The red line has a warning sound.
- Declarations will explain the principal.
- Taller and thinner bottle-

- Success factors:

The Norwegian year of MATGLEDE: Relax and Enjoy your food. A campaign that focuses on emotional engagement of families in simple back-to-basic enjoyment of food; through cooking and eating. The campaign will be initiated on community level, and has an active involvement of stakeholders. The campaign includes stories of regular people and how they engage with food in daily life. These stories will be shown through different channels such as TV, bus stops and Facebook. Schools participate with various food involvement activities for the whole family. Retailers and workplaces contribute by theme weeks, tastings and cooking activities.



- Food labeling:

A redesign of the keyhole label communication to reach new segments such as immigrant women, truck drivers and adolescents: "New keys to the keyhole". The redesign consists of targeted information videos that focus on emotions, uses suitable endorsers and is published through relevant channels for the target group. Appropriate language and setting are used. The videos show the ease of using the keyhole, and point to sources for more information.



- Modern technology (runner-up):

A (online) community for students which they can use as a resource for easy cooking tips: FaceFood – Your survival kit. It helps student who have lack of time, money and cooking skills to better manage food in their daily life. The basis for this online community is a blog where fellow student scan provide instructions and recipes through images and video. Real-life cooking labs and student gathering associated with the community can be organized as well. This concept can be expanded to other age groups as well.



The jury indicated that the winning concept and the runner up concept would be easy to develop and implement and had a large success potential. The organizers are presently looking for stakeholders interested in developing and verifying the winning concepts.