



GOLDSMITH
STRATEGIC
SERVICES

CLIENT New Direction Focus Group Report

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Presented to CLIENT, Inc.

October 19, 200X

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Caveat

- The findings from this study, or any focus group study, are intended to be directional due to the exploratory nature of this method. As such, these findings are not projectable to the population-at-large nor can they suggest statistical reliability/accuracy. The value of this method is to gain understanding and explore some of the dynamics of usage and attitudes that can not always be obtained via quantitative methods.

Background and Objectives

- CLIENT is in the earliest stages of a brand revitalization program. The first unit to undergo a complete renovation, which covers a new décor package, changes to the service approach/training, and some new menu items, is TEST. This unit is serving as the prototype for the revitalization effort.
- The revitalization effort is a costly one. As such, CLIENT wanted to get target consumer reactions to these changes before rolling out to more units. Two studies were conducted:
 - An in-unit survey with guests which will help gauge reactions to the dining experience.
 - These focus group discussions which were intended to help us understand if the new concept was “right” in terms of the menu, building design, and other experiential aspects; further, the intent of the sessions was to allow us to explore how the revitalization program might impact guest image of the brand and potential visit frequency.

Methodology

- Four focus group sessions, two hours in length, were conducted [when and where]. There were 32 participants, eight per group.
- Primary Screening Qualifications:
 - Mix in women and men, with a female skew
 - Eat out at casual dining, on average, 4+ times a month for lunch and/or dinner
 - Neutral/positive future visit likelihood to CLIENT
 - Mix in marital status, employment industries (among those employed), and income (at least \$35,000 for singles and \$50,000+ for those who were married)
- Group Configuration:

	<i>CLIENT Core Users</i> (1+ time/mo)	<i>CLIENT Light Users</i> (Once past 2-6 mo)
<i>Older</i>	Group 1 Age 50-64	Group 2 Age 40-54
<i>Younger</i>	Group 2 Age 35-49	Group 4 Age 25-39

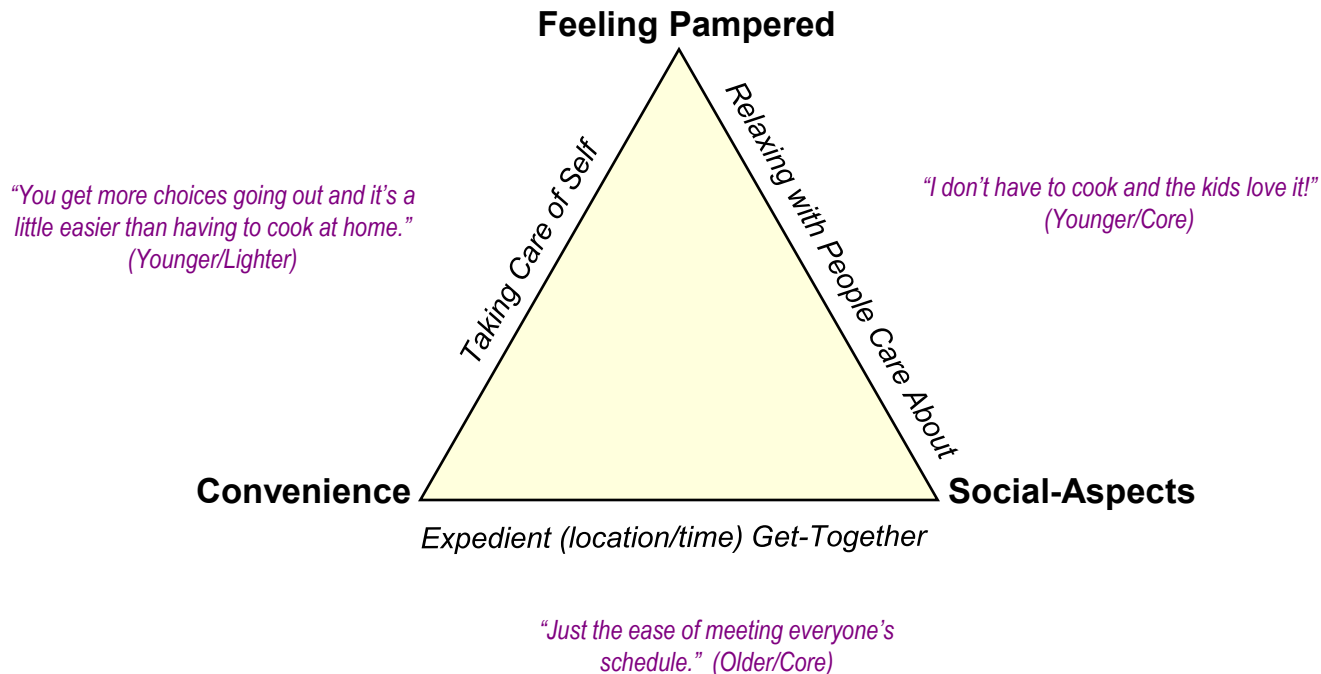
Methodology

- Prior to the session, each participant was required to visit TEST plus one other CLIENT location, either [three options listed].
 - Participants were assigned the same daypart to visit both locations; this daypart was selected based on the time of day they had most likely been in the past to visit CLIENT.
- Participants were given assessment forms to complete after each visit and were asked to bring these forms with them to the sessions, along with their restaurant receipts.
- Throughout this report, when quotes are highlighted, they will be referenced by age and user type (e.g., Older/Light or Younger/Core).
- *All study materials, including full screener, discussion guide and worksheets, are appended.*

Detailed Findings

Favorite Thing About Dining Out

- As part of our group warm-up/introductory exercise, we asked participants what their favorite thing was about eating out.
- There are three driving factors (**bold**) and, for those who named more than one factor, a summation of the underlying end-benefits they were trying to achieve (side-labels) are included.



Where Are They Eating Out (Asked of Core Users Only)

- As participants were screened to include those who dine at chain restaurants, it's not surprising that a number of competitive chains were mentioned as places they visit most often.
 - [list]
- Other local places were also mentioned, more often by the Younger/Core users.
 - [list]
- When participants were asked why they visited CLIENT, one person spoke for all the others:
 - *“For [item], there’s only one place: CLIENT.” (Older/Core)*
 - Another reason mentioned had to do with a calmer atmosphere than found at other places:
 - *“When you start going to places like Friday’s or Benningan’s, sometimes it’s a little much – loud, and there’s the bar and smoking. CLIENT is kind of calming.” (Younger/Core)*

CLIENT Discussion Sequence

- In each group, we first talked about the non-TEST CLIENT locations and then turned to a more detailed discussion of TEST itself.
 - There was a good mix in which CLIENT had been visited for this exercise, with...
 - *Note: When asked which CLIENT they visited most often (not in conjunction with this study), the most frequently mentioned units were...*

Non-TEST CLIENT

Non-TEST CLIENT: In General

Spontaneous Keywords mentioned as part of overall impression:

- Familiar, comfortable, and casual – come as you are.
 - “[It’s] just familiar, comfortable. I have some issues, but other than that, it was like I’ve been here, I know what to expect.” (Younger/Light)
 - “Homey, comfortable seating.” (Younger/Core)

Unique Qualities

- [Equity Product!]
 - “In the old days, I used to go after work and it was [item]...that’s what they’re known for.” (Older/Core)
 - Other quotes deleted

Similar To:

- Many argue CLIENT doesn’t have any local competitors. When pressed:
 - [List – organized by type and meal occasion]

Non-TEST CLIENT: The Strengths

Menu Variety and Menu Design



- *“There’s a lot of stuff on there.” (Older/Core)*
- *“I think their menu variety is very good.” (Younger/Light)*
- *“Homey. The menu’s the same – it’s familiar. I don’t have to work hard to decide what I’m going to have.” (Younger/Core)*
- *“The other thing is that [the menus] have the pictures!” (Younger/Core)*



The Food

- *“The food is always good and they have good-sized sandwiches.” (Older/Light)*
- *“We had more food than we could possibly eat...and the food was good.” (Younger/Light)*



Smoking Section

- *“What I loved was that their smoking was totally separate.” (Older/Core)*

Non-TEST CLIENT: The Neutrals/Mixed



■ Interior Design/Décor

- The restaurants were considered comfortable and casual by some – just what they expected from CLIENT.
 - *“The location I went to in [location] – it was cheery and there were a lot of windows and nice treatments.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“Very comfortable...very much a family atmosphere.” (Younger/Light)*
 - *“It looks like all the other ones. You knew what to expect when you walked in.” (Younger/Light)*
- However, there was at least an equal number who felt that the interiors were dated or bland:
 - *“Interior seating was worn out.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“When I got inside, I thought it was a little too vanilla in design.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“Rather dated – 1980s to me. I wasn’t crazy about it.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“It was like 1972. Pretty bad.” (Younger/Light)*

Non-TEST CLIENT: The Neutrals/Mixed



■ Service

- Many liked the service at CLIENT.
 - *“The service was excellent.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“There were only three people working there, the cashier and two waitresses, and they were so happy. They were busy like nobody’s business and they were cheerful about it.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“The service was great. The waitress that I had was right on top of things; quick.” (Younger/Light)*

Non-TEST CLIENT: The Neutrals/Mixed



■ Service

- Yet, some felt the service could be improved upon. It went beyond basic quality issues to the server appearance, where they got seated, and the manager presence.
 - *“We didn’t have the best service. That’s often been a problem for our family with CLIENT [irrespective of time of day].” (Older/Core)*
 - *“I went between lunch and dinner – very few people were in there. It took longer to get my food [at location] than it did at TEST when it was crowded at dinnertime. The waitresses were very friendly, but they looked disheveled.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“I couldn’t believe the cleanliness of the people who work there – they look disheveled.” (Younger/Light)*
 - *“It kind of bugged me that they weren’t that busy and they seated us right by the restrooms.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“Never saw a manager.” (Older/Light – with several agreeing)*
 - *“The manager walked back and forth [at least three times] and we’re just standing there [waiting to be seated]...We were kind of put off.” (Younger/Light)*

Non-TEST CLIENT: The Weaknesses

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■ Exterior Signage

- Participants said that the exterior signage was hard to see or it was hard to know how to best approach a location, such as [location].
 - *“The sign was covered by landscaping.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“The landscaping hides it. When we walked out, I thought ‘oh my gosh, look at how big that sign is when it’s lit.’ But when you got back on the road, you couldn’t see it.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“My only criticism was the location. Unless I was really looking for the one in [location] – it sits off the roadway – I might not of stopped there.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“I wasn’t quite sure where it was, this [location]. And it took me down this frontage road, like in an industrial park. And it didn’t have any lighting from behind.” (Younger/Light)*

Non-TEST CLIENT: The Weaknesses



■ Cleanliness/Maintenance

- Another weakness was the store cleanliness (particularly the restrooms) and maintenance.
 - *“The bathrooms could have used a coat of paint and the tiles replaced.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“It was a little messy. The bathroom wasn’t very clean.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“The restrooms were awful!” (Older/Light)*
 - *“It could have been a little bit cleaner...they didn’t have any toilet paper in the dispensers; no toilet seat covers.” (Younger/Light)*
 - *“Ceiling tiles missing and the music was a little loud.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“In my seat, there were crumbs all in the side and when I looked on the floor, there were crumbs all over the floor – everywhere. It looked like they hadn’t vacuumed that day.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“It smells old...stale.” (Younger/Light)*

Non-TEST CLIENT: Brand Equity

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- **Brand equity** is the summary of how consumers view a brand. Several approaches were taken as part of this study to determine CLIENT brand equity, including our overall discussion and an attribute-based exercise completed before the sessions began.
 - **Signature item**
 - Known menu/variety
 - Type of Car: American middle-of-the-road vehicles, such as Ford or Chevy
 - Most likely to go with family/close friends
 - Top Attributes (no noticeable variation by group/type):
 - Family-Oriented
 - Older/Seniors
 - Basic
 - Casual
 - Comfortable
 - Has Young Kids
 - Traditional
 - Friendly
 - Old-Fashioned
 - Outdated
 - Value-Oriented

TEST CLIENT

TEST CLIENT: In General

- **Spontaneous Keywords** mentioned as part of overall impression:
 - Wow, upscale, contemporary, sophisticated/metropolitan, for more occasions, wine and beer.
 - “My overall feeling when I left was that it was more of an upscale restaurant with more value.” (Younger/Core)
 - “I thought it was fabulous. I would go there a million more times.” (Older/Light)
 - “It’s updated, more hip.” (Younger/Light)
 - “Welcome to the new millennium.” (Older/Light)
 - “I loved it. It would be a place where you’d want to take your spouse, girlfriend, a date.” (Younger/Core)
 - “I could see myself going there for lunch...and see going there after work to have a beer or wine.” (Younger/Core)
 - “My husband and I went after a movie and I liked that we could get a glass of wine – it made it seem more like a Saturday night thing. I normally wouldn’t have gone there, but now I would.” (Older/Core)
 - Some participants felt that seniors might not connect with this CLIENT as they had with the traditional CLIENT.

TEST CLIENT: In General

Unique Qualities

- Some of the new menu items, such as the [item].
 - *"I've never seen it on a menu anywhere and it was very, very good."*
(Younger/Core)
- Cloth napkins at lunchtime (only mentioned in the Younger/Core group)

Similar To:

- Redacted

Upon Entry, Eye Focused On...

- Bar area
- Being greeted
- Waiting area

TEST CLIENT



■ The Food

- Taste/Quality: Generally positively received, with a few negatives.
 - “Great!” (Younger/Light – several)
 - “Better than expected.” (Younger/Core)
 - “[Item] was phenomenal. I’m not sure they’d have that at the other one, so I’d definitely go back to the one on [location] for that alone.” (Older/Light)
 - “I was surprised at what they offered and then I was unhappily surprised...when they tried to step up [item].” (Older/Light)
 - “My fiancée had the turkey dinner and we were really not impressed with it...It didn’t seem like anything special.” (Younger/Light)

TEST CLIENT



■ The Food

- Food/Plate Presentation: Not only did guests like how the food looked on the plate, they liked the colors/shapes of the new plates themselves.
 - *“The presentation of the food was a lot different as well. The plates [were] bigger and a lot more modern.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“The presentation of the food – it was on these bright colorful plates with different shapes and things – very bistro-esque...the presentation was fantastic.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“The plates, the presentation of the food, I really liked it.” (Younger/Light)*
 - *“I didn’t like those plates; they were kind of funky like a triangle.” (Younger/Light)*

TEST CLIENT



■ The Food

- Portion Sizes: Generally thought to be very satisfactory or larger than anticipated, with a few who felt the servings weren't as large as they expected from CLIENT.
 - *"I almost couldn't finish it. I had the Shrimp Pasta and I was surprised because I thought the portion at [location] – while tasty – was a bit small...this was the reverse – more food than I was expecting." (Older/Core)*
 - *"I had the largest Cobb Salad I've ever had." (Younger/Core)*
 - *"I don't know if it's because of the little triangle plates. It looked pretty on the plate, but I didn't feel like I got nearly as much food." (Younger/Light)*

TEST CLIENT



■ Menu Variety

- Many found the new menu variety exciting or interesting.
 - *“Sometimes when I go to restaurants, I fall into [a rut] where I order the same things, but every once in awhile, I like to try something different...I started looking for things that were unique and they were there.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“I think they’re trying to keep up with the [neighborhood] over there...The menu was very diversified compared to the other [CLIENT] – they’re trying to compete.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“I would like to go back and try many more new things. It was tough to pick what to order.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“It had the Comfortable Classics that you’re used to at CLIENT, but some new and different things were kind of exciting.” (Younger/Light)*
 - *“My kids ordered off the kids menu and they had a great selection.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“The kids meals were fun...nice selection.” (Younger/Light)*

TEST CLIENT



■ Menu Variety

- Some felt the menu was more limited (which detracted from CLIENT’s core equity).
 - “They’re also known for their [items], and they don’t have the choices that they used to.” (Younger/Lighter)
 - “I thought the menu was condensed and you can’t convince me otherwise!” (Younger/Light)
 - Other quotes redacted

- And some felt that some menu items weren’t (yet) believable for CLIENT.
 - “In looking at the menu, I thought the menu was great. There were some great selections, but I struggled when looking at the steak or the shrimp – I couldn’t pull the trigger on getting steak at CLIENT. [The hurdle] was that it just didn’t fit my past image of CLIENT.” (Older/Light)

TEST CLIENT



■ Menu Design

- With regards to the physical design of the menu, there were those who “got the vision” and saw how the new menu design fit with the interior decorating changes...
 - “A little more upscale.” (Older/Core)
 - “It’s more of a gourmet, upscale [place].” (Older/Light)
 - “It looks a little more Italian looking.” “Mediterranean.” “More artsy – more high class.” (Younger/Light)
 - “I think the whole ambiance thing, where things are more upscale – that’s why I didn’t think the pictures were appropriate on the menu.” (Younger/Light)
 - “Less like [competitor]. I like the [illustrations]; it stimulates your appetite.” (Older/Core)
 - “I just thought change...not so cheesy – plasticity.” (Younger/Light)
- ...And those who want safe/comforting cues in the midst of change.
 - “I didn’t like that they didn’t have pictures...They have newer food and I wanted to know what it looked like.” (Younger/Core)
 - “I like to have pictures, though. I make my choices by looking at the pictures.” (Younger/Light)
 - “I didn’t feel quite the same way about the menu. I felt it was more like you wanted a quick bite to eat or something.” (Older/Light)

TEST CLIENT



■ Interior Design/Décor

- Overall impressions were generally very positive about the change in décor. Reading between the lines, for a certain segment, it seems that coming to this CLIENT made them feel better about themselves and about visiting.
 - *“I was shocked when I walked in, but in a good way...[my friend and I] kept looking around thinking this was so pretty.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“Soothing. I wouldn’t say traditional...but it was soft and tranquil. Almost spa-like. The colors were all very neutral.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“Both my wife and I really enjoyed the décor and the colors. It seemed like there were higher ceilings and frosted glass separating the booths so it was more private. It was a nice atmosphere.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“I thought the interior design was beautiful. I thought the artwork on the wall was beautiful. It looked like something that could work year-round...not seasonal. I liked the airiness of it. It felt clean to me.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“I liked the colored glass that kind of obscured the kitchen. I liked that it was more contemporary looking.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“I was blown away by the interior, especially after coming from [other location]...this was stereotypical [location].” (Younger/Light)*
 - *“The lighting was good. I loved the colors, the earth tones were wonderful.” (Younger/Light)*

TEST CLIENT



■ Interior Design/Décor

- As to be expected, there were some who did not like the new design direction – who felt that it wasn't what they wanted from CLIENT.
 - *"I didn't get the feeling that it was a place for [item], like I used to." (Older/Core)*
 - *"It wasn't homey. It was cold in there. There was no feeling of fun – a feeling you get at [other places named]." (Older/Core)*
 - *"I felt they were trying too hard to impress me. I want a relaxing atmosphere." (Younger/Core)*
 - *"I actually didn't like it." (Younger/Light)*

- A couple of others articulated something that should also be considered in future implementations:
 - *"The atmosphere itself seemed a little disjointed like it didn't know what it was doing. The booths always seem more casual and in the front it's more the Asian atmosphere – so those two parts didn't seem to jell." (Older/Core)*
 - *"It almost had an unfinished feel." (Older/Core)*

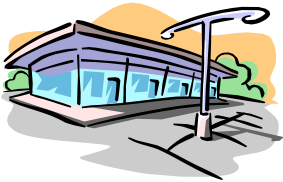
TEST CLIENT



■ Interior Design/Décor

- Reactions to the restrooms were mixed. They were nicely decorated on the surface, but some customers had a sense that CLIENT hadn't gone all the way in implementing changes here.
 - *"Nice decorations in the bathrooms." (Older/Core)*
 - *"The bathrooms were awesome compared to the way they used to be and even compared to the ones in [other location]." "Except the garbage was overflowing." (Younger/Core)*
 - *"I thought it needed to be regouted at the edges. It was dirty. The sink was gorgeous – the sink and the soap...but there was the smell of urine." (Older/Core)*
 - *"[For the bathrooms], they were trying to be hip, but it didn't really work because you could see holes in the bathroom wall or where the old things used to be." (Younger/Light)*

TEST CLIENT



■ Exterior Design

- Overall appearance: Some felt the new exterior was better in its look and communicated a sense of welcome.
 - *“Looked more upscale.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“I heard the music as soon as we got closer to the door and we knew that something was very different.” (Younger/Core)*

- Most liked the change in placement of the entry doors.
 - *“Changed the entry – I liked it.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“It’s big double doors, big waiting area. You don’t feel so closed in.” (Younger/Core)*

TEST CLIENT



■ Exterior Design

- Probably the most significant issue to be addressed was that for many, the outside of the building didn't match the inside – or communicate the new changes that had taken place inside.
 - *“The inside sure didn't match the outside. If you're going to have an inside like that, you need to do something with the outside. The outside is not going to attract anybody. They wouldn't know that the inside existed.” (Older/Lighter)*
 - *“TEST inside was very contemporary and outside was rustic. They could have upped the ante on the outside.” (Younger/Light)*

- There were several other suggestions for improvement, focusing on the visibility of the signage, lighting, creating a direct entryway, and the landscaping.
 - *“They also had no rear signage. We came in from Sam's Club [behind]...and you can't tell it's a CLIENT.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“We parked on the south side of the building and it was really dark.” (Younger/Light)*
 - *“You couldn't walk directly to the front door. You still have to go over to the side and around.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“The sidewalk was real narrow and we wondered if on a busy night it would be a problem going in and out.” (Younger/Light)*
 - *“The landscaping was terrible.” (Older/Light)*

TEST CLIENT



■ Service

- Reception to the service at TEST was very positive.
 - *“Everyone was smiling and as chipper as can be.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“I had excellent service – very, very nice to the kids.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“I felt so good when I went in there because the people were so warm and friendly.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“[The server] was totally with it. I was so blown away and impressed by our waiter. He was incredible.” (Younger/Light)*

- Most liked being greeted at the door – it communicated a sense of welcome.
 - *“Greeted at the front door – wow, that was nice.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“When we walked through the door, somebody had opened it for us.” (Younger/Light)*
 - *“We got greeted by a hostess. It was amazing.” (Younger/Light)*

TEST CLIENT



■ Service

- They also liked the attire of the new servers, and one person commented that hiring practices must be different at TEST.
 - *“The servers were all dressed really nice.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“Liked the ties.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“The wait staff dressed very, very nice.” (Younger/Light)*
 - *“It seems they’ve chosen their waiters and waitresses differently. They seem a little more [clean].” (Younger/Core)*

- The new payment method (at the table) was universally liked.
 - *“I hate standing in line to pay for my food.” (Older/Core)*

TEST CLIENT



■ Service

- We heard several times that people hadn't been seated in a place they felt was appropriate – near the kitchen or restrooms when the restaurant was empty, or near children when they were a party of adults.
 - *“When I first went in, they sat me in a booth and it was off from the kitchen. I didn't really like it so they moved me.” (Older/Light)*

- Finally, we heard from some that the manager hovered too much and/or that the server asked how things were without really stopping to listen.
 - *“The whole thing was annoying as the manager hovered.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“I think they bothered me too much at the table.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“[Server] came by and asked us how we liked our meal, but asked while we were eating and he walked right past [without waiting for a response].” (Older/Core)*

TEST CLIENT



■ Smoking Section/Layout

- One of the most significant negative issues for participants was the placement of the smoking section at TEST: It was too central for comfort.
 - *“The smoking. The first thing when I walked in the door was the smoke hit me...Why would you design a restaurant like that with a bar and everything in the front that you have to walk through to get to your table?” (Older/Core)*
 - *“Here you have to walk through the smoking to get to the non-smoking area.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“After putting all this effort into this restaurant, you stick the bar and the smoking section right behind the hostess area and I thought that was crazy, especially for non-smokers.” (Younger/Light)*

TEST CLIENT



■ Beer and Wine/Bar

- Having beer and wine available is different from making it a focal point. Most liked having beer and wine available...
 - *“Great addition.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“I think it opens it up. I know my wife, her friends go out a lot for birthdays and stuff and they would never pick CLIENT because they like to sit around and have a glass of wine to relax before and after [dinner].” (Older/Light)*
 - *“I would go more often – I love having a beer when I go to dinner.” (Younger/Light)*
- ...but some felt it didn't fit with CLIENT.
 - *“It seems weird.” (Younger/Light – several)*
 - *“It was very unexpected to walk in and see the bar.” (Younger/Light)*
 - *“I didn't know what that little coffee bar was all about.” “I didn't know it was coffee – I thought it was just beer and wine.” “I thought the whole bar thing was kind of strange.” (Younger/Core)*

TEST CLIENT



■ Price/Value

- Virtually everyone recognized that the prices at TEST were somewhat higher than other CLIENT locations, but that didn't seem to adversely impact perceived "value" as the improved food, atmosphere and service off-set this increase.
 - *"I will tell you a big positive: for a family of five, it was less than \$40. That was a huge [thing] – great! A big value." (Younger/Core)*
 - *"I noticed that the prices were about a dollar different." (Older/Light)*
 - *"Fits right in [with other places in the area]." (Older/Light)*
 - *"I thought it was excellent." (Younger/Light)*
 - *"Slightly higher than other CLIENT's, but not shocking." (Younger/Light)*

TEST: New Branding Communication

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- The **attribute exercise** was also done for TEST *prior* to our group discussions to see if impressions of the brand shifted at all due to the new in-store experience. These impressions are telling because they weren't influenced by group discussions in any way.
 - The attributes selected most frequently are listed below. (There were no noticeable variations by group/type.)
 - Casual
 - Dines with Friends
 - Contemporary
 - Comfortable
 - Stylish
 - Business Executive
 - Friendly
 - Family-Oriented
 - Welcoming

Attribute Exercise I: Comparison by Store

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- CLIENT – either version – was seen as casual, comfortable, friendly and family-oriented (the latter, however, more pronounced for the traditional CLIENTs).
- From this small sample, it's clear that the new CLIENT was seen as more contemporary and stylish – a place for friends, colleagues, and family.

— TEST

- Casual
- Contemporary
- Dines with Friends
- Comfortable
- Stylish
- Business Executive
- Friendly
- Family-Oriented
- Welcoming

— Non-TEST

- Family-Oriented
- Older/Seniors
- Basic
- Casual
- Comfortable
- Has Young Kids
- Traditional
- Friendly
- Old-Fashioned
- Outdated
- Value-Oriented

Attribute Exercise II: Comparative Assessment



- Another attribute exercise was done after we had discussed both restaurants in depth. It was a direct comparison of the two CLIENT store types against a series of positioning attributes. (See appendix for worksheet derived from previous positioning research.)
- TEST was deemed “much better/better than other CLIENTs” (4 or 5 rating) on:
 - Interior feels contemporary
 - Beer and wine available
 - Menu items are like those expected at higher-end restaurants
 - Offers original, creative menu items
 - Food is visually appealing and they take great care in cooking
- Areas where TEST was comparatively weaker:
 - Breadth of [item] offerings
 - Value is excellent

TEST CLIENT: CLIENT or Not?

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■ The Name

- Where Am I? During the sessions, many participants said that when they first walked into CLIENT, they were wondering where they were. However, the surprise didn't detract from the experience.
 - *"I almost felt as though I wasn't in a CLIENT. I was thinking: are they coming up with a second concept? Because this is going to be confusing to differentiate the older version with this. This one was much more pleasant and suitable and I even thought I'd need to dress differently for this one." (Older/Core)*
 - *"We walked in and thought: did I walk in CLIENT? Where am I? Wow, this is neat!! I'm going to enjoy this tonight." (Older/Light)*
 - *"I walked in and I said: 'we're in CLIENT, right?'" (Younger/Light)*

- Some felt the new direction was a good idea, but wouldn't work in every neighborhood.
 - *"I think it's a great concept. I just don't know if it'll fly everywhere." (Younger/Core)*
 - *"It's something that might not fit into every type of neighborhood. It had that upper-class feel, more business-like." (Younger/Light)*

TEST CLIENT: CLIENT or Not?

Logo

■ The Name

- And some didn't feel that this was a CLIENT at all – that the concept needed a new name.
 - *“Maybe this shouldn't be CLIENT. Maybe they need another name. The [original] restaurant as one entity and this becomes something else.” (Older/Core)*
 - *“I think this went a little too far.” (Older/Light)*
 - *“I would have bought it more if it was a different name. I thought it was too far reaching.” (Younger/Light)*
- **What do these conflicting opinions mean?** For the entire study, this is most likely the most critical question that must be addressed by CLIENT. CLIENT has never been and can never be all things to all people. What we know is that deciding where to eat generally is spontaneous or habitual – basically a rather low-involvement proposition. If consumers are required to think too hard about what CLIENT is – or to distinguish between the two concepts – they're less likely to think about CLIENT at all. As such, some form of name change, coupled with other changes, should be considered.
- One of those other changes is to the logo – the style should be distinctive enough from the current logo and fit with the new interior design better. As a couple of our participants said:
 - *“The logo is contradicting to the [look of the menu]. If it's going to be new, make it new.” (Younger/Core)*
 - *“The [logo is] kind of old and plain and blah.” (Younger/Core)*

TEST CLIENT: CLIENT or Not?

Logo

- **The Name**

- A few name suggestions were presented by participants during the course of general discussion and some others were presented to them.
- Rest of section redacted.

TEST CLIENT: Concept Statement

Logo

- In a few of the groups, we read the concept statement that was the basis for TEST's development to participants.

REDACTED

- The general impressions were that this statement represented a good upgrade to the current (traditional) CLIENTs, but was not an accurate reflection of what had been developed at TEST.
- In the end, most felt that TEST represented a better improvement or “evolution” for CLIENT than if the design had been completely in sync with the concept statement.

TEST CLIENT: Change in Visitation



- When asked directly how the TEST location might impact their visit frequency to CLIENT, the majority said they'd go more often.
 - *"I don't eat at CLIENT very often and will go to this one now because it was a more pleasant feeling. It was more pleasant being there than the original one."*
(Younger/Light)
 - *"I would have a business meeting there [plus go with family and friends]."*
(Older/Light)
- The remainder were an equal mix in those saying they would go less often or as often.

Summary and Implications

Summary and Implications

- One of this study's primary objectives was to determine how, if at all, TEST might impact consumer perceptions and usage of the brand. This research suggests that TEST:
 - Upscales the brand, by being more contemporary – while maintaining its comfortable and casual heritage.
 - Diversifies potential visit occasions – now being better for business associates or for a date, in addition to being good for family-time.
 - Creates revisit likelihood due to the new menu variety – which, while not as broad as some might like (and some items [deleted] could be brought back), was considered a very nice mix, with more healthful items.
- This store is different enough that it appears that CLIENT has created a second brand – one that might do better with its own name, one which is associated with CLIENT in some way. (Additional work should be considered in this area.)
- Certainly, some refinements can be made to TEST to strengthen it further. A subjective “report card” approach is shown on the next page which highlights where changes might be considered and why.



TEST Subjective Report Card

CURRENT GRADE

A

Service. Currently is excellent at TEST, maybe slightly too attentive. Service generally should be consistent with prices and atmosphere; TEST accomplishes this

A-

Menu/Food.

Captured their interest, with a good degree of upscaling in menu offerings (A)

Might provide more choices (e.g., [list], etc.) (B+)

Portions sizes and plate presentation very good (A-)

Menu design, which communicating “new” and “upscale,” needs to be more consistent with interior décor. (In all fairness, it was developed before the interior redesign was completed) (B)

[Other] (B-)

B

Interior Décor/Layout.

Décor is very nice, although better integrating a few elements might be considered (e.g., front and rear dining areas, use of colored woods, upholstery choice) (A-)

Consider moving smoking section off to the side – this may be done with or without moving the bar (C)

Upgrade the restrooms fully, if possible (B)

[Other – with further suggestion for changing interior] (B)

C

Building Exterior. Consider improvements, along with changed signage, to communicate change inside; also consider creating a direct entry from parking lot

A

Price/Value. Consistent with expectations for area

B

Concept Name. Using the existing name is creating unnecessary confusion and not communicating the change inside

Who Is The New CLIENT Target?

- While focus group research is NOT the place to quantify a business' target audience, it can sometimes provide insights that might be of use. Based on this study, if we were to write a target profile, it would likely include:
 - Those in their early 40s to early 50s – reflected in our Younger/Core and Older/Light groups, who “sometimes” (or more often) visit regional/national casual-dining chains
 - Are social/like to socialize, with family and with others
 - Are open to change and want to see places they patronize stay up-to-date as well; this reflects on them and they value “staying current” (which is different from being hip – which they are not)
 - They are not “originals” or “early adoptors;” they may be “second-stage adoptors” or “early mainstream”
 - Both status- and value-oriented, yet not pretentious
 - Use brands/brand names to anchor them to where they are in their lives
 - Invest in comforts (this can be food prepared for them away from home and/or large-screen TVs)
 - Why CLIENT?
 - Familiar favorites/signature items
 - New favorites
 - Fits with their lifestyle needs/the needs of others they are with
 - Feel good about self dining there

Appendix

- Screener
- Discussion Guide
- Homework Questionnaire
- Psychographic Attribute List
- Comparison Worksheet