

Overcoming Consumer Barriers to Healthy Food Safety Behaviors: “Selling” Food Thermometer Use



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Mission:

- ***To increase the use of food thermometers by parents of children under age 10 to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness***





Phases in Campaign Development

- **Phase 1: Campaign for the General Public**
- **Phase 2: Targeted Audience Segmentation**
- **Phase 3: Planning and Implementation of Targeted Campaign**

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Phase 1: General Public Awareness

- **Long history of encouraging food thermometer use**
- **Outbreaks changed the awareness -- 1993 *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak**
- **Science changed the message**

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Past Messages



Safe Handling Instructions

This product was prepared from inspected and passed meat and/or poultry. Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions.



Keep refrigerated or frozen.
Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.



Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils, and hands after touching raw meat or poultry.



Cook thoroughly.



Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.

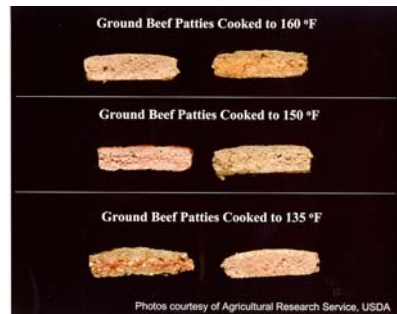


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Cooking Studies Show Color Not a Reliable Indicator of Safety

- **Cooking by color is misleading**
- **1 out of 4 hamburgers turns brown before it reaches safe temperature**



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Using a food thermometer is the only reliable way to determine if food is safety cooked

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But, it is a “Tough Sell”

- **In 1994 Hotline survey, less than 50% owned a food thermometer**
- **Most used it only for the Thanksgiving turkey, if at all**
- **Very few used it for all meats**

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1998 National Survey

- **Less than 50% of American cooks owned a food thermometer**
- **Only 3% use it to check small items like hamburgers**



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Listening to the Customer: Focus Groups Conducted

- **Consumer's food safety knowledge quite good**
- **Used color of meat and "intuition" to test doneness**
- **Knowledge and use of thermometers limited**
- **Less than enthusiastic about using a thermometer**



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Some Barriers Existed...



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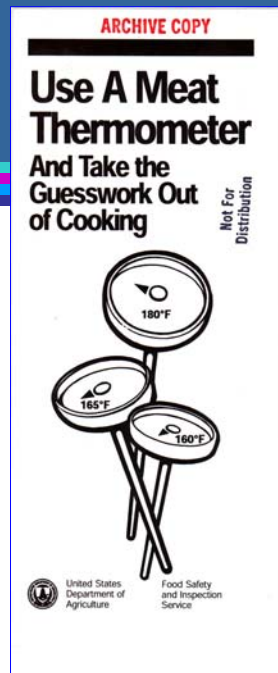
Consumer Attitudes about Food Thermometer Use

- **Inconvenience -- “It’s a hassle”**
- **Added expense to purchase a thermometer**
- **Experience -- feel not necessary -- they know when food is done**
- **Cooking for years without ill effects**

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They didn't think they were guessing...



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Key Findings... Behavior Change is Possible

- **Parents of young children are most likely to change behavior - *but for their children only***
- **Upscale cooks interested in quality foods might consider use to avoid overcooking**

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Data Used to Develop a National Campaign

- **1998 Data told us:**
 - Target parents of young children
 - Emphasize taste
 - Easy to use everyday
- **Campaign focus groups told us:**
 - Stress safety
 - Created “Thermy™” character

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National Campaign Launched



Thermy™ says:

**"It's Safe to Bite
When The Temperature is Right!"**

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Campaign Successes

- **2001 National Survey Shows:**
 - **60% own a food thermometer**
 - Up from 46% in '98
 - **6% use a thermometer when cooking hamburgers**
 - Up from 3% in '98
- **Thermometer sales**
 - **Industry sales data show an increase in sales of thermometers**

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2001 Focus Groups

- **Conducted groups with parents of children under 10**
- **Divided groups based on education level**
- **Utilized New Methods**
 - **Provided all of the participants with materials and half with food thermometers prior to the group**

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Focus Group Results

- **Parents confident in ability to safely handle food at home**
- **Most not aware of importance of using a food thermometer**
- **Participants who received a food thermometer with educational materials more likely to use one**

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Phase 2: Audience Segmentation

- **Began work in 2001 to further segment audience -- parents of young children**
 - **Parents are potential early adopters of this behavior**
 - **Children are at increased risk of foodborne illness**

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Goals Based on Stages of Behavior Change:

- **Among parents of children under 10:**
 - **increase *awareness* of the need to use a food thermometer**
 - **increase *intention* to use food thermometers**
 - **increase *sales* of food thermometers**

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Goals Based on Stages of Behavior Change:

- **Increase *trial usage* of food thermometers**
- **increase *continued regular usage* of food thermometers**
- **Decrease the *incidence* of foodborne illness among young children**

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Immediate Focus on First Goal

- Increase **awareness** of the need for using food thermometers among parents of children under 10:
 - by 15% by 2004
 - by 60% by 2010*

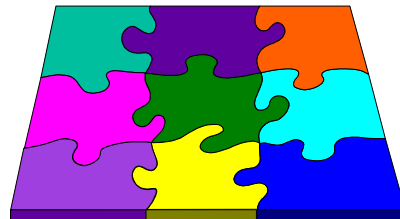
*Objective coincides with Federal *Healthy People 2010* Campaign

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Forms of Segmentation

- Demographic
 - Geographic
 - Psychographic
 - Behavioral
 - Geodemographic
 - Household
- Focus Groups -- Phase 1

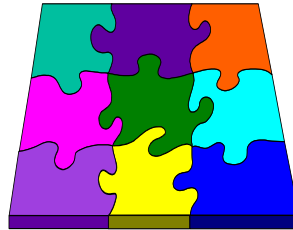


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Segment the Market

- **Demographics**
- **Stages of behavior change**
- **Perceptions & attitudes**
- **WHY?**
- **Improves efficiency**
- **Improves effectiveness**



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Using Commercial Models

- **Incorporate the power of advanced modeling**
 - **technology tested and enhanced for nearly 30 years**
 - **use of “birds of a feather” to find patterns**
 - **use of a household-by-household insight**

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Narrowing the Focus

from all people all the time...

**...to 62 distinct
neighborhood types...**

*...to 28 neighborhood
types
with concentrations of
children under age 10*

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Defining Sub-segments

**28 neighborhood types into 4 distinct
groups:**

- **demographics (educational attainment)**
- **lifestyles (purchase behaviors, leisure activities)**
- **psychographics (willingness to change)**

*Boomburbs
Heartlands*

*Rural Towns
Single Moms*

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Prioritizing Sub-Segments

Use of an Allocations Matrix:

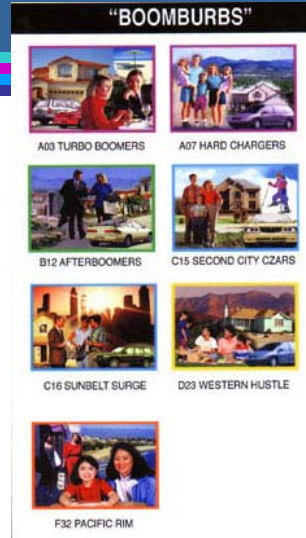
- **Number of children under age ten**
- **Exposure to undercooked meat products**
- **The quickness of new information motivating behavior changes**

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Primary Target Selection

- **Boomburbs** scored highest
- Implications of focusing on this target explored with the I-Wheel™ planning tool

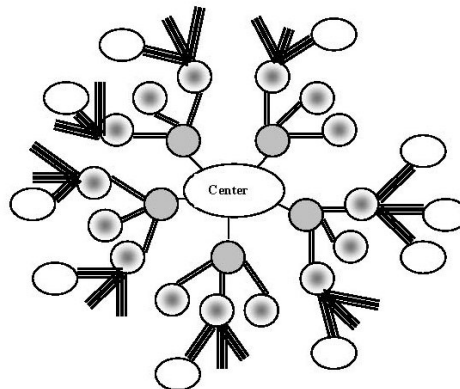


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Implications Wheel: Barriers and Bridges Identified

Figure 4. Implications Wheel™



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Barriers & Bridges

- **Barriers:**
 - May reach a “safety overload”
 - Some who are at risk are not informed
 - Message may get lost in information overload
- **Bridges:**
 - Share ideas with friends and family
 - Tend to seek more information about new things

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Target Exploration: Become Relevant to their World

- **Media preferences (print, radio, TV)**
- **Shopping habits (groceries, home products)**
- **Financial behaviors (credit and debt tools)**
- **Attitudes and beliefs (personal ideals)**
- **Lifestyles (recreation, travel)**
- **Automobiles**

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Boomburbs: Trendsetter Population

- **News and information hungry**
- **Technology-savvy gadget lovers**
- **Demand high achievement for their children**
- **Gourmet-conscious “foodies”**
- **Safety conscious**

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Boomburbs: Trendsetter Population

- **Seeks luxury**
- **Above average consumers of scientific and technological entertainment**
- **Influencers in society -- doctors, educators, communicators, political leaders**

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Boomburbs Preferences

- **Magazines --**
 - **PC Magazine, Martha Stewart Living, Money, Bon Appetit**
- **Radio --**
 - **Soft Contemporary, Classic rock, News/Talk, Drive-time, NPR**
- **TV --**
 - **Comedy Central, E!, Headline News, The Disney Channel**

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Boomburbs Preferences

- **Stores --**
 - **Target, Pier 1 Imports, Gap for Kids, Toys R Us, Macy's, Disney**
- **Household Products --**
 - **Burglar alarm, bread machine, electric coffee grinder, Camcorder,**
- **Food and Drink --**
 - **Brie cheese, Godiva, lunch kits, toaster pastries**

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Wide Variety of Information Available...

- **Financial Behaviors**
- **Attitudes and Beliefs**
- **Lifestyles**
- **Automobiles**

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Where They Live

- **Phoenix**
- **Sacramento**
- **Orlando**
- **Atlanta**
- **Albuquerque**
- **Greensboro**
- **Annapolis**
- **Tampa**

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Desired Behaviors - What We Want Them To Do:

- **Become willing to collect information**
- **Accept that it might apply to them**
- **Experiment with methods and tools**
- **Acquire food thermometers, learn to use**
- **Repeat the behavior every time**
- **Teach their children and others**

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Possible Benefits to Emphasize

- **Better tasting meat**
- **Insuring a perfect quality result every time**
- **Satisfaction from predictability**
- **Increased confidence in the cooking process**

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Possible Benefits to Emphasize

- **Enjoyment of using a new technology**
- **Satisfaction from pursuing healthier cooking that is safer for their children**

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Strategies for Education

- **News media stories**
- **Internet**
- **Cooking-related TV programs**
- **Television/film references**
- **Upscale grocers**
- **Upscale gadget retailers/catalogs**
- **Adult education, eg, cooking classes**
- **Parent-Teacher Organizations**

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Phase 3: Plans for Reaching Boomburbs

- **Conduct Boomburbs observational research focus groups**

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Focus Groups Held in August

- **Little knowledge of thermometer use**
- **Viewed them as inconvenient to use**
- **Used visual cues to decide if food is done**



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Focus Groups Barriers

- **Family tradition -- thermometers not used by role models**
- **Don't know how to use food thermometers**
- **Don't think it necessary to use them on small cuts of meat**

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Bridges to Use



- **Parents concern for children's safety**
- **Boomburbs interest in food quality and using technology**

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Other Findings

- **Don't know visual signs are not reliable**
- **Web use high -- as predicted**
- **Get information from the media**

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The 4 “P”s for Boomburbs

- **Product:** Use a food thermometer for everyday meals
- **Price:** Hassle factor and actual cost to purchase a thermometer
 - **Exchange hassle for safety of children**

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The 4 “P”s for Boomburbs

- **Place:** Parents of children under 10
- **Promotion:** Messages and mechanisms we will use to reach them

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Phase 3: Plans for Targeted Campaign

- **Explore Web site changes specific to Boomburbs**
- **Work with applicable media to inform Boomburbs about safety issues**
- **Develop PR plans and educational plans for Boomburbs**
- **Develop revised support materials for Boomburbs**

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Plans for Targeted Campaign

- **Possibly redesign the Thermy™ character to be more technical or eliminate**
- **Conduct pilot campaign in a specific city to test materials**
- **Continue collaboration with thermometer manufacturers to design appealing products**

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Plans for Targeted Campaign

- **Collaborate with industry to produce learning environments at grocers, colleges, etc.**
- **Design a plan to reach the Boomburbs children in their school environments**
- **Develop and install a formal tracking & evaluation process; revise objectives**

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Evaluation Techniques

- **Federal Government FoodNet Foodborne Illness Data**
- **Federal Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System**
- **Federal Consumer Food Safety Survey**
- **Industry data on Thermometer sales**
- **Targeted Market Surveys**

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Stay tuned...



Thank You

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