



Case Study

Setting the stage for the Arctic® Apple

Okanagan Specialty Fruits (OSF) — the company behind the non-browning Arctic® Apple — has been a long-time partner who has used Vineland's consumer insights expertise to position and launch the only bioengineered apple into the marketplace. Using the apple's own enzyme, the company simply "turned off" the enzyme that makes the fruit brown when cut or bitten.

"One aspect of our long-time collaboration has been our ability to talk to consumers about biotechnology in a way that keeps them open-minded, engaged and interested," Bowen says. "Also key, is our commitment to making sure our results are useful, impactful and delivered in a way that they can be integrated into commercialization strategies."

The relationship began in 2016 when OSF asked Vineland to identify messaging positively resonating with consumers and to determine segments of consumers most interested in purchasing Arctic® apples. This was completed through intercept interviews in four cities to identify messaging that was then tested in an online survey of 2,000 North American consumers.

A year later, mall intercepts in six U.S. cities identified the characteristics of the apples. Focus groups and online research in 2018 and 2019 were conducted to better understand packaging, the eating experience and the non-browning characteristic to support tagline development.

"The Arctic® Apple was developed through biotechnology. We knew from day one that we wanted to address this head on and share the value of the consumer benefits Arctic® delivers," explains Rebecca Catlett, Director of Marketing and Communications at Okanagan Specialty Fruits. "So, we engaged Vineland as a credible, independent and qualified consumer research team to collaborate with us on the development, testing and validation of our messaging. It's been very successful for us."

Last year, OSF again worked with Vineland, this time to complete a sensory claim substantiation study in three U.S. regions to identify consumer preferences between Arctic® apples to that of competitors.

The research showed consumers found the Arctic® apples to be better tasting, giving OSF new information upon which it can build future marketing campaigns.

"We continue to work with Vineland because the work they've done for us has given us actionable, data-supported results," Catlett adds.