

A Qualitative Exploration of 2013 Consumers' Attitudes and Usage of Mangos

The Big Picture

The National Mango Board (NMB) conducted qualitative research in April 2013 with mango buyers and non-buyers to provide direction for an upcoming quantitative research study. The group sessions were held over a three-day period through online discussion boards with 16 total participants (12 females and 4 males). Of the group, seven were current mango buyers, having purchased and eaten whole, fresh mango at home within the past 6 months. Nine were non-buyers who had never purchased or eaten whole, fresh mangos at home but did not report disliking them. All participants were primary shoppers between with ages of 21 and 69 and represented a mix of ethnicities.

The discussion covered the spectrum of the mango buying and using experience, general perceptions and reasons for not buying or buying less, as well as reasons for buying and using them. Due to the online nature of the groups, the NMB was able to ask each participant to purchase and use mangos in their home setting and provide them with descriptions of their experiences.

Key Findings

- Fruit purchases are affected by a variety of influencers. Some are at point of sale (POS) (displays, samples); other influencers come from traditional media (TV health and food shows, women's magazines), Internet and social media (Facebook, Pinterest), and family/friends.
- Respondents usually perceive mangos to be more like **occasional/tropical fruits** than everyday staples. Buyers' associations focus on the attributes they value in mangos (sweet, juicy, fleshy). Non-buyers' associations are diverse (exotic, seasonal, unfamiliar).
- A few buyers have been enjoying mangos since they were kids. Others first tried them as adults in restaurants/bars.
- **Mangos are not top-of-mind for non-buyers.** They say they never noticed them in stores, never were offered a sample in stores, never saw recipes for mangos, and never saw anyone eating one. They do not know how to choose or prepare a mango.
- When choosing a mango for the shopping exercise, respondents tended to rely on the same sensory cues they use for buying other fruits (e.g., its color, how it feels when they squeeze it, and how it smells).
- Non-buyers and some buyers assumed **green means the mango is not ripe** while red means it's a little riper.

- Before preparing the mango, non-buyers often assumed it will be similar to a peach, with soft flesh that's easy to cut, and possibly with a small stone/pit inside. Many tried to **cut it like an avocado** with less-than-desirable results.
- After prepping and eating their mangos, buyers and some non-buyers gave it a thumbs-up due to its **sweet taste and satisfying texture**. Other non-buyers gave it a thumbs-down.
- Some of the unhappy non-buyers found it **bitter or sour-tasting** (their mango likely was not ripe based on their photos). Others were discouraged because it was **hard to cut**, the unexpectedly "large" seed and/or because their mango was hard (and likely was not ripe.)
- The Mango.org links ("How to choose" and "How to cut") were helpful and motivating to non-buyers. Their content provided **helpful** new learning for buyers as well.
- Respondents liked a touch of **tropical imagery** in mango photos but not too much. They liked seeing various colors of **mangos and all forms** (whole, half and slices) in one photo.
- They were attracted to brightly colored photos featuring mangos in recipes that look simple and easy to prepare. They also liked seeing mangos' versatility in the array of recipes.
- Respondents seemed most impressed by knowing fiber and folate are in mangos. Vitamins C, A and B6 also were nice to know about mangos. Copper was unfamiliar in the context of food and tended to be a turn-off as a nutritional claim.
- For Vitamin C, they leaned toward "antioxidant" rather than "high potency" because the former is familiar while the latter sounds potentially dangerous. "Excellent" seemed more compelling for folate, while "good source" is more descriptive for fiber.

Implications

- This research suggests the **biggest barrier** to mango trial among non-buyers is that **mangos simply are not top-of-mind**. Secondary to this is the **lack of knowledge and confidence** in how to choose and prepare a mango among non-buyers and among some buyers, too.
- The qualitative findings suggests the benefit of a multi-faceted educational campaign to make mangos more top-of-mind to non-buyers and to make them **more inviting and approachable** to non-buyers and less frequent buyers.
- Engage tactics targeted to **all of the channels** that influence respondents' fruit purchase decisions, such as the following:

- Encourage retailers to feature mangos in **prominent displays** and to offer samples and demonstrations on how to cut and prepare them.
- **Offer POS** merchandising guidance and aids to retailers such as:
 - Colorful, inviting, fun-looking signage
 - Easy-to-follow tips on choosing mangos
 - Take-home materials for shoppers such as tips and pictures of how to prepare mangos, nutritional information, and uncomplicated, easy recipes, including recipes that are kid-tested and approved
 - Include links to the relevant Mango.org pages on these materials
- **Traditional media:** Get mangos featured on TV shows, placed in movies, and in magazines that focus on health/wellness and food.
- **Internet:** Be sure the content of the Mango.org site is structured to optimize search engine results.
- **Social media:** Maintain a high profile in social media. Use “influencers” in various social media vehicles to blog about mangos and post recipes, tips, pictures and videos on how they use mangos. Encourage users to post their own recipes, tips and videos. Get mango recipes on sites related to hosting parties, baby showers, picnics, etc.
- Encourage **well-known celebrities** to promote mangos in traditional and social media.