



# How Danone Transformed its Approach to People Centricity in 6 Months



**Adam Mertz**

Chief Growth Officer

Adam Mertz



**Elizabeth Ackerly**

Sr. Director Strategic Insights & Analytics  
Danone

## Essential Dairy & Plant-Based products

**NO. 1**

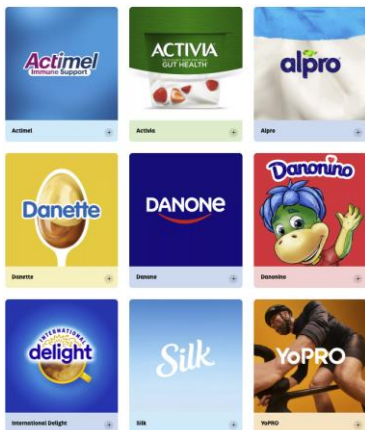
**WORLDWIDE IN FRESH DAIRY PRODUCTS IN 2023**

**NO. 1**

**WORLDWIDE IN PLANT-BASED FOOD AND BEVERAGES**

**€14.322 BN**

**TOTAL SALES OF ESSENTIAL DAIRY AND PLANT-BASED PRODUCTS IN 2023**



## Waters

**17%**

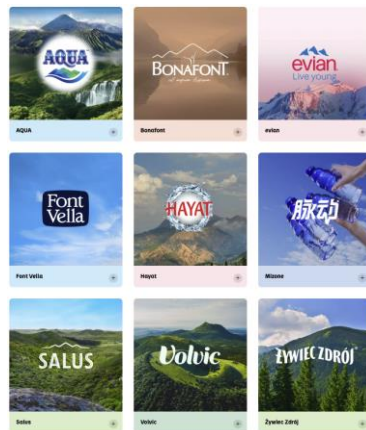
**THE SHARE OF WATER IN GROUP SALES IN 2023**

**NO. 2**

**WE'RE THE SECOND WORLD LEADER IN PACKAGED WATERS**

**€4.7 BN**

**OF TOTAL SALES IN 2023**



## Specialized nutrition

**NO. 1**

**IN ADULT MEDICAL NUTRITION IN EUROPE**

**NO. 2**

**IN EARLY LIFE NUTRITION WORLDWIDE**

**€8.5 BN**

**TOTAL SALES IN SPECIALISED NUTRITION IN 2023**



# Discuss = Market Intelligence on a global scale



## Insights platform + services for more qual research, your way

### One Global Platform

#### Do In-Depth Research

Human-led • AI-led • Uploaded

#### Analyze Findings

Themes • Quotes • Sentiment  
• Charts • Highlight reels

#### Leverage Genie Experience Agents

Recruit



Project



Interview



Translate



Insights



### Extensive Services

(across every project)

- Live tech support
- Project management
- Recruitment
- Screener writing
- Report writing

## Examples of global brand customers & recognition



# The biggest challenges to building a people-centric culture



**Collecting “always on” feedback is hard**



**Understanding global audiences is inefficient**



**Difficult to deliver insights fast**



# Market Insights Shift at Danone

From



To

Consumer insights are time consuming and effort intensive

Low fidelity insights (the what)

Siloed data and difficulty sharing insights across teams

Tech-forward market insights (AI + human approach)

Instant access to in-depth (the why) perceptions across target audiences

One global consumer insights hub

# INSIGHT-LED GROWTH THAT UNLOCKS...

More Meaningfully Different &  
Superior Concepts & Products

Bolder Experiences

More Agile Services

More Engaging Communication

More Exciting Activations







# How Danone is Driving This Shift

# Step 1 - we needed a scalable global solution

Leveraging proven tech was critical - used by peers, powerful yet easy

## Our needs

Enable anyone to understand target audiences

One central place for all global market insights

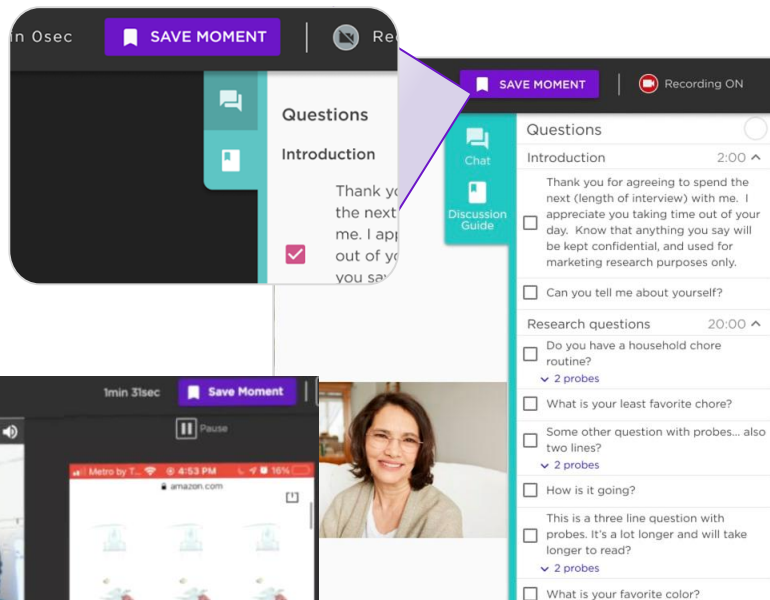
Budget-friendly approach to fast, in-depth customer feedback





# Human-led feedback sessions

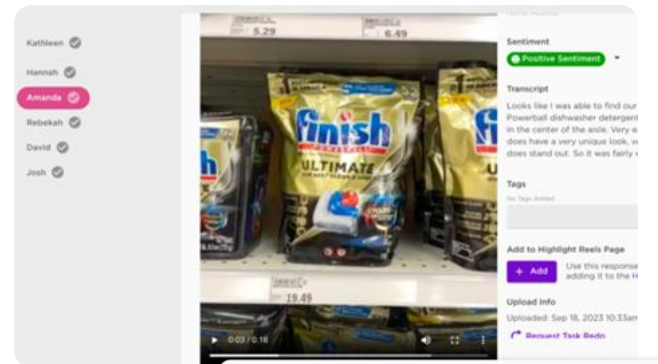
Even our most senior execs (including CEO) are engaging



- Save key moments in a click
- Create highlight reels in the platform
- Interactive discussion guide
- Enable an unparalleled observer UX
- Whiteboarding and stim sharing
- Mobile screen sharing
- Organize key takeaways
- Auto-transcription and subtitles
- Insights agent summarizes feedback

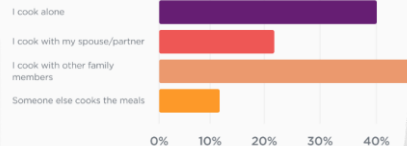
# Self-paced feedback activities

## In-home usage testing, unboxing, shopalongs & more



### Task

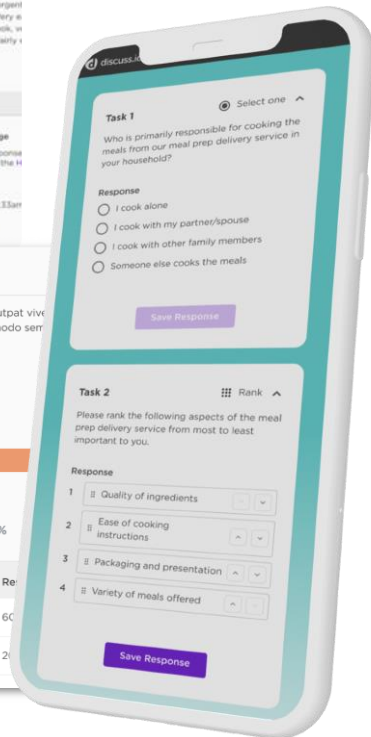
At non pellentesque et lacus. Integer nunc massa leo risus bibendum volutpat vivamus non dui libero nec vestibulum aliquet quisque. Massa et venenatis commodo ser



### Answer Choices

- ☐ I cook alone
- ☐ I cook with my partner/spouse

- PDF, PPTX or DOCX
- Photo
- Ranking Scale
- Rating Scale
- ☒ Select All that Apply
- ☐ Select One
- Text
- Video



- Snackable insights - by task or respondent
- One click to add to highlight reels
- Instant translation to English, if needed
- AI auto-probing to surface deeper motivations and context
- Global recruiting included
- Analyze insights instantly with GenAI
- Better, larger pool of respondents - complete questions on their schedule

# Insights on-demand



## Insights Agent analyzes feedback across self-paced and live research

**Activity 1: 34 responses**

- Positive Sentiment
- Household Dynamics
- Motivation

**Activity 2: 41 responses**

- Neutral Sentiment
- Family Schedules
- Online Workouts

**Activity 3: 53 responses**

- Mixed Sentiment
- Lifestyle Priorities
- Work Demands

**Question 1: How frequently do you exercise during the week?**

The frequency of exercise among individuals reflects a mix of consistent habits and adaptable approaches shaped by personal goals, household dynamics, and lifestyle demands. Many individuals maintain a regular workout routine, engaging in physical activity three to five times per week or more. This consistency is often driven by specific goals such as improving fitness, reducing stress, or preparing for events. Regular exercisers tend to incorporate workouts into their daily schedules, treating them as an essential part of their routine.

**Collapse Summary**

**Key Takeaways**

- Consistent Routine:**  
The participants make exercise a regular part of their lives, integrating it into their schedules on most days of the week. This commitment is often driven by fitness goals such as training for specific events, improving overall health, building strength, or maintaining an active lifestyle. For these individuals, exercise is not only about physical benefits but also about mental clarity, stress relief, and establishing a sense of discipline. Daily activities, even if brief, are a priority for this group, with many opting for shorter, high-impact workouts on busier days to ensure consistency.

**Related Quotes**

I've made it a non-negotiable part of my day to work out at least three times a week. Whether it's a morning yoga

**Eco-Friendly Shopper**  
[June 4, 2023] [10:45pm]

**Transcript**

**Lucy** (00:00 - 00:39)  
We sort our laundry into different piles based on colors and fabrics. This helps us prevent any color bleeding or damage to delicate items. We usually have separate loads for whites, darks, and delicates. It takes a bit of extra time, but it's worth it in the long run.

(00:39 - 01:11)  
We use a high-efficiency washing machine, which not only saves water but also does a fantastic job of cleaning our clothes. We've also experimented with various laundry detergents and found one that works best for our family's needs. We're mindful of the environment, so we opt for eco-friendly detergents whenever possible. Folding and putting away the laundry is a joint effort in our household.

**Rashida** (01:11 - 01:33)  
When it comes to drying, we mostly air-dry our clothes to conserve energy and extend the life of our garments. For items like bed linens and

**Play**

**Copy Quote** **Create Clip** **Auto-Scroll**

- Ask questions, get answers
- See suggested relevant quotes
- Get handed clips that the agent thinks are highlight reel worthy
- Get the agent's POV on top themes
- Glean perspectives across audience segments
- 1 click to watch the clip, add to highlight reel

**Step 2: Create a global people-centricity program to  
unleash the power of 1-to-1 consumer connection**

**CONSUMER  
LOVE**



THE VISION FOR  
CONSUMER LOVE

**CREATE A  
DANONE  
ALWAYS ON  
CONSUMER-  
CENTRIC  
CULTURE TO  
INSPIRE INSIGHT-  
LED GROWTH**





# We started with being center stage at key internal executive summit



**Nitesh Priyadarshi** · 1st

Chief Strategic Insights & Analytics officer | ex Unilever | Anthropology &...  
2mo · Edited · 🌐

Nothing more can excite you as an insights or a marketing & sales professional than to see People (Consumer | Shopper | Customer | Patient | HCP) Centricity being at the centre of any Marketing & Sales Conference.

More than 270 of **Danone** leaders came together last week to **#RaiseTheGame** and I am both humbled and grateful to be a part of it.

A big thank you to the leadership at **Danone** for making sure People centricity is at the core of everything we do.

thankyou **Véronique**, **Shane**, **Christine**, **Page**, **Arancha**, **Connie**, **Nathalie**, **Patricia** and team for leading from the front and underscoring the importance of it to one and all, for taking this company we all love, to the next level.

Exciting times ahead!



**Mukesh Shaw** · 2nd

Investment Analyst

2mo ...

Love this! 🌟 Seeing people-centricity take center stage is truly exciting. Whether it's designing campaigns or tailoring offers for loyal shoppers, understanding the end-user drives real impact. When we focus on who we serve, magic happens! 🙌🏽

Like · ❤️ 1 | Reply · 1 Reply



**Nitesh Priyadarshi** **Author**

Chief Strategic Insights & Analytics officer | ex Unilever | Anthro...

2mo ...

thanks Mukesh. So beautifully summed up: when we focus on who we serve, Magic indeed happens!

Like · 🌐 1 | Reply



**Christine Siemssen** · 2nd

Chief Marketing & Digital Officer

(edited) 2mo ...

Thank you **Nitesh Priyadarshi** & team for raising the game on people centricity at DANONE. For our brands to be meaningful and different. Bringing health through food to more people, more often!

Like · 🌐👍👍 4 | Reply



# We created in-person events to promote globally



Whilst sessions were being shown, Danoners were able to learn about:

- Consumer Centricity
- How to Request Projects on Discuss
- How to Moderate Sessions in the platform
- Moderation Do's and Don'ts
- Best Practices when Observing Sessions





# Our training helped people get comfortable engaging

## DO UNLEASH YOUR INNER OPRAH

**O** PEN MINDSET  
**P** OSITIVE ENERGY  
**R** ESPECTFUL STYLE  
**A** DAPTED LANGUAGE  
**H** ELPING HAND



Do's and Don'ts of Qualitative Research

### TIP #1 OPEN MINDSET

*The consumer is always right! Don't be judgmental.*

#### ASK SHORT OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- 'What is your favourite...?'
- 'How do you feel about...?'
- 'What do you like / dislike about ...'
- 'How would you describe ...'

#### AVOID LEADING QUESTIONS

- 'Do you have any issues with...' → 'How do you feel about...'

#### DON'T SHOW ANY SIGNS OF DISAGREEMENT

- 'Yes, and...' rather than 'Yes, but...';
- It's not a quiz so there are NO wrong answers

## DON'T ...

- Use these 1-to-1 connections like a quantitative study
  - No quotes of x% of consumers like Danette because of its variety of flavors
- Take the learning in isolation - connect it with other data & insights to find opportunities for our brands
  - Taste is a key driver in your BHT, use these 1-to-1s to understand how people talk about taste to see how we can better deliver on this driver
- Treat consumer connections as a 1-time project
  - True empathy & understanding can only be achieved with practice. The more you do it, the more you learn. **Empathy is a muscle that can only be achieved over time.**

Do's and Don'ts of Qualitative Research

Do's and Don'ts of Qualitative Research



# And we gamified it!

## Inspiring ideation and communication



The top 3 brands (most number of interviews) gifted a BRAND LOVE BOOK containing a goldmine of consumer testimonials/verbatim and key themes on why they love our brands.

# Critical element: senior leadership engagement



“

*Listening to consumers and talking to them as people always reinforces my conviction that **consumer connection needs to be a part of our Danone way** of doing business and should be done much more systematically using the efficient and effective tools and resources at our fingertips – both online and offline.*”

Antoine de Saint-Affrique  
Danone CEO





# The Impact We're Seeing

# Our efforts are paying off!

More in-depth understanding in 6 months than in the previous 6 years

**25**

Countries

**700+**

Respondents

**400+**

Interview  
hours  
recorded

**800+**

From Danone  
engaging

**5,000+**

Saved moments

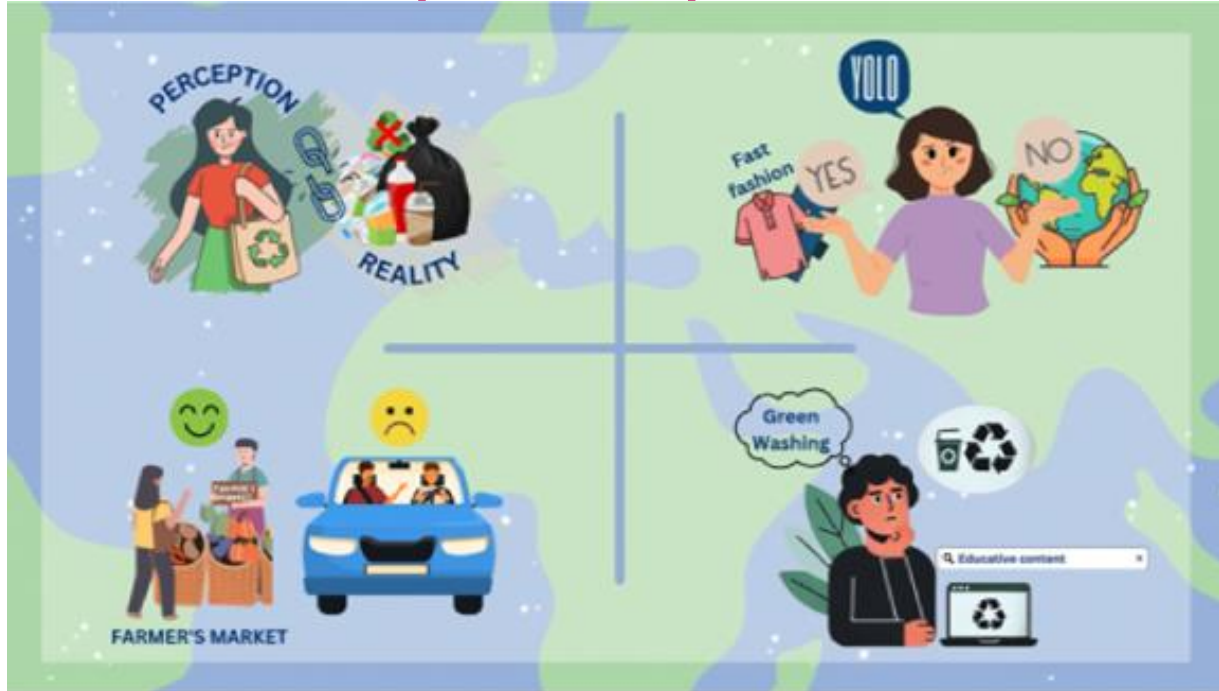
**600+**

Instant  
summaries to  
burning q's



# Example: In-depth conversations on sustainability

Goal - go beyond the investigation of our hypothesis around «action of self» vs «expected corporation action»



## Use case

Iterative hypothesis testing

## Initial focus

Explore a single tension

## Outcome

Learned about multiple tensions that people had

# Example: views related to Danone products and Ramadan from Kazakhstan

With Discuss' online platform, participants felt more comfortable sharing

## Biggest Aha moment

*Consumption trends/needs change pending how Ramadan falls on the calendar:*

- *Hotter Ramadan they look to hydration before their fast*
- *Colder Ramadan they look for satiation and nutrition products like our flavored spoonable yogurts, RTE desserts and full-fat SKUs*



# Brand Love & Sustainability Initiatives



## Brand Love Projects

**149**  
sessions

### Teams involved:

- ★ SIA
- ★ Morocco
- ★ Japan
- ★ Dairy

### Top Brands:

- ★ Activia
- ★ Danonino
- ★ Danone Dairy Yogurts

### Markets:



## Sustainability Projects

**38**  
sessions

### Teams involved:

- ★ Waters
- ★ SIA
- ★ Sustainability (SIA)

### Top Brands:

- ★ Waters (non-specific)
- ★ Danone Dairy

### Markets



# Thank you!

For a copy of this presentation and  
a chance to win a pair of Ray-Ban  
Meta Smart Glasses:

- Scan the QR Code
- Visit **booth 506** for our live  
drawing at **6:00 PM** today!

