

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?

Why humans still matter in a data-driven world



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Any opinions or scientific interpretations expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of PepsiCo Inc.



MEANING. IS. EVERYTHING.

A vibrant collection of fresh vegetables including eggplants, zucchini, bell peppers, onions, and tomatoes, with a blue mouse chef character holding a wooden spoon.

VEGETABLES. ARE. MAGICAL.

Chef Remy from *Ratatouille* © Disney•Pixar





What Happened

How did it taste?

What was the daypart?

How was the dish marketed?

What is the dish's job to be done?

Was there friction or were there barriers in the ordering process?



Meaning isn't just how someone feels, or
what they say they like or need

MEANING. IS. EVERYTHING.

The story people
create to make
sense of their
experiences.

Everything else is just
“what happened”

What Happened

Observable

External

Singular

An Emotion



What It Means

Mental Process

Internal

Interconnected
System

Emotionall

**Frito-Lay had a high stakes problem:
*how to link emotion to flavor experiences***



EMOTION

How do we connect these?
(What's the meaning?)

FLAVOR

PepsiCo used ZMET to learn more about our consumers' meanings

→ We can capture insights based on experiences and product attributes like flavor.

→ Frequent flavored snack consumers and chefs went through flavor “missions”.

→ This 75 minute ZMET interview dove into unconscious associations between product and experiences.



The use of metaphors helps us understand the product and the consumer meaning at a deeper level



Deeper Translation of Flavors

Metaphor elicitation provided an experiential and emotional perspective

Understanding Human Experience

Demonstrated the interplay between language and senses

Differentiation of Similar Flavor Profiles

Metaphors helped consumers describe and differentiate flavors

Navigating Subtle Flavor Nuances

Research identified trends through shared metaphors

EXPLORING BOLD SENSATIONS

The world is uncertain

I want to feel less stressed

But I want to have controlled excitement

Bringing this to life = Flamin Hot!

Consumers associate ACTION and POWER with hot and spicy foods



HOT AND SPICY



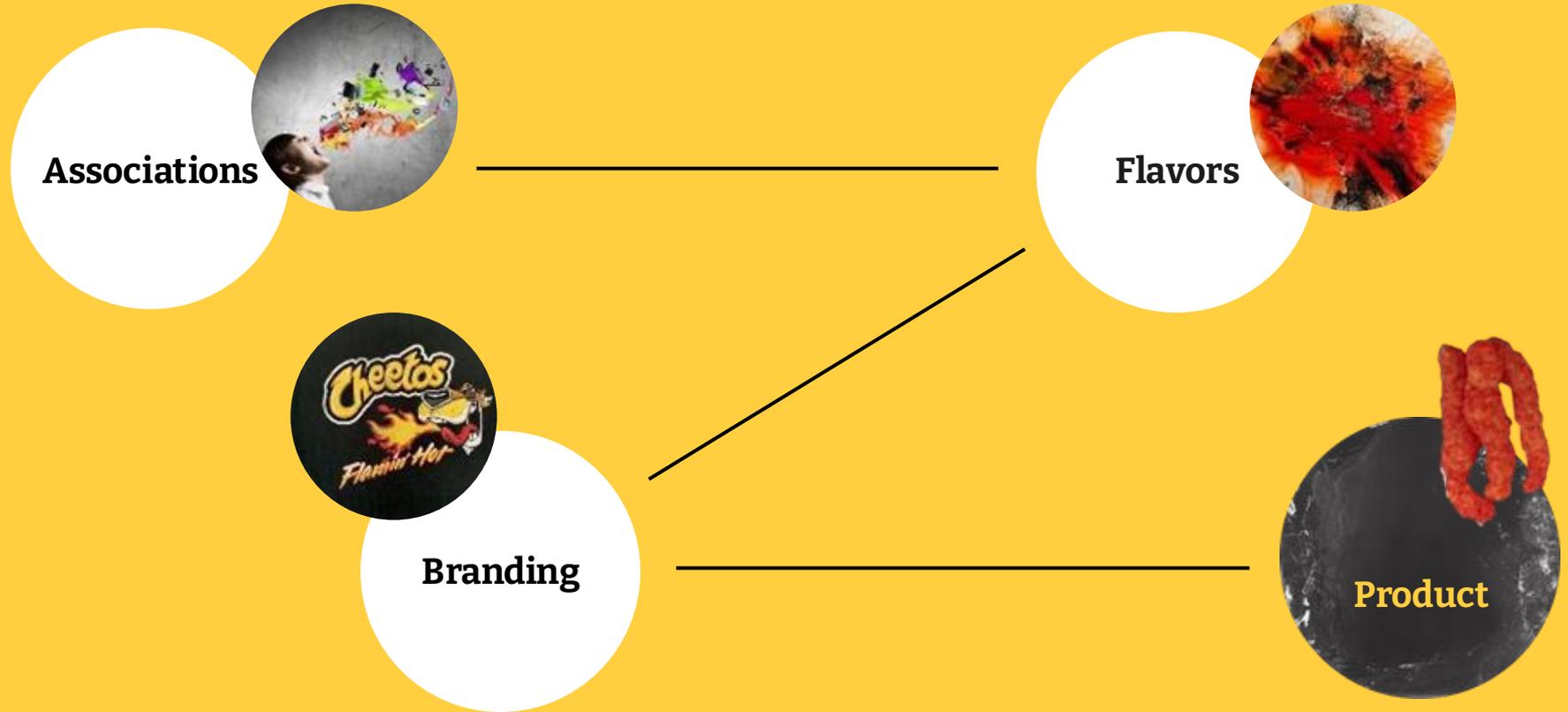
Consumers associate CREATIVITY and POWER with tangy foods



TANGY



How does it translate into product attributes?



Could you use the output from ZMET to build an **even more compelling** product?



“The heat is there but plays with the dill pickle essence really well, making it worth the hype”

- *snachwithzach* - tiktok



“These are the best Cheetos I have ever put in my mouth. Absolutely incredible. Central FL here”

- *goggles8* - reddit

Meaning is about understanding the human experience; **it's global in application!**



In Turkey, Doritos Taco flavor was designed to reflect a kaleidoscope of flavor!

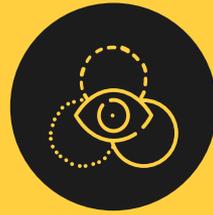


Turkish consumers expressed that this flavor made them feel like they were dancing freely, taking them to a place of fun and freedom

Metaphors help us understand the deeper meaning



The use of Metaphor in Art, Literature, and Music has been used to reveal the richness of human perception and it shows diverse ways people interpret the world



Bridging abstract Sensory Experiences and Language allows us to translate intangible sensations into relatable terms. This enhances cognitive and emotional engagement



Implicit methods allow for better interpretation of what consumers actually expect and need. This allows for product developers to connect with consumers



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EVERYTHING. IS. MAGICAL.

As researchers we often fall into the trap of trying to figure out “what happened.”

→ But no one builds a great brand by just knowing WHAT happened.

What happened



What it means

If qualitative research only reports what happened, we become **historians** of the market.

But when we understand how people create meaning, we become strategists of what comes next.





Continue the conversation at booth #406