

**FRESH MUSHROOMS
VITAMIN D POSITIONING STATEMENT
STUDY**

Prepared for:

THE MUSHROOM COUNCIL

January, 2009

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BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

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The Mushroom Council would like to test the effectiveness of a number of new positioning statements highlighting the product's Vitamin D content. Specifically, how appealing/motivating is the Vitamin D message, as well as its potential sales impact.

Accordingly, a total of 9 positioning statements were developed based on findings from previous research conducted by the Mushroom Council. While all of the positioning statements keyed on mushroom's Vitamin D content, they each had a secondary message – ranging from taste, to versatility, to price, etc., as follows:

“As few as 4 fresh mushrooms will provide your daily need for Vitamin D”

“Fresh mushrooms on a salad or in a meal are a simple solution for your daily Vitamin D needs”

“Fresh mushrooms on a pizza or in pasta are a fun and easy way to add Vitamin D to your children's diet”

“Fresh mushrooms can reduce the likelihood of osteoporosis and create a healthy immune system”

“Fresh mushrooms are one of the least expensive ways to get 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs”

“Fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs”

“Fresh mushrooms provide a low fat source of Vitamin D when compared to milk”

“Fresh mushrooms are a delicious way to get 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs”

“Fresh mushrooms are a healthy source for 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs”

METHODOLOGY

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A total of 401 interviews were conducted via the Internet in mid-November, 2008 among a nationally representative sample of respondents*. In order to qualify for study participation, respondents were screened to meet the following criteria:

- Must be responsible for at least half of the household's grocery shopping
- 18 years of age or older
- Purchased loose or packaged fresh mushrooms in the past year

Upon qualifying, the respondents were taken through the following battery of background questions:

- Frequency purchase/eat fresh mushrooms
- Using more, less or the same amount of fresh mushrooms versus a year ago
- Healthy eating habits
- Mushroom health-related attributes

Next, the respondents were exposed to a total of 9 fresh mushroom positioning statements (in a random order to eliminate bias). Each of the statements was rated on – purchase intent, uniqueness and believability. After each of the 9 statements was viewed and rated, the consumers were asked to rank them from their favorite to least favorite, as well as reasons for preferring one over the other.

* Where applicable, comparisons were made to a fresh mushroom Attitude and Usage study conducted earlier in 2008.

MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

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Positively, fresh mushrooms enjoy a positive halo with regard to nutrition/health that is consistent with previous research, as the vast majority of consumers consider them – “low-calorie”, “good to include in any diet”, “fat free”, “good to include in a heart-healthy diet”, “part of a healthy diet”, “nutritious” and “good to include in a weight loss diet”. However (and also consistent with previous findings), awareness of more specific benefits are much lower, with less than half of the respondents believing that fresh mushrooms are – “natural antioxidants”, “a nutrient dense food”, “good to include in a cancer-fighting diet”, “an immunity-boosting food”, “a superfood”, “a good source of selenium” and, of most interest – “a good source of Vitamin D”. Accordingly, while fresh mushrooms are considered to be a “good for you” product, further consumer education is warranted in order to communicate the product’s specific health benefits.

In terms of the positioning statements tested (all of which have a Vitamin D-centric message), they each achieve relatively strong scores across the board, including key measures such as – purchase intent, uniqueness and believability (either meeting or approaching our normative goals). However, a few of the positionings separate themselves from the rest as candidates for future consideration – the “versatility” message (“*fresh mushrooms on a salad or in a meal are a simple solution for your daily Vitamin D needs*”) and the “serving size” communication (“*as few as 4 fresh mushrooms will provide your daily need for Vitamin D*”).

Specifically, these two messages generate the strongest purchase intent scores and are also ranked as the two favorites, with the “serving size” message credited for telling consumers that they “only need a small amount/only need to eat 4 mushrooms a day to get their daily requirement of Vitamin D” and the “versatility” statement positively received because – “it’s easy to add mushrooms to a salad/meal”.

On the other hand, although the “serving size” statement better differentiates itself than any of the other positionings tested, it is not as credible as the “versatility” message. However, as they both perform well, we suggest using both of them working in tandem (i.e. “*as few as 4 fresh mushrooms added to a salad or a meal will provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs*”). Furthermore, the “versatility” message is in line with findings from previous research, indicating that consumers

are looking for more (convenient) ways to incorporate fresh mushrooms into their diet, while eating healthier.

Another statement that deserves further consideration is – *“fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily vitamin needs”*, as it generates high uniqueness ratings. However, the Mushroom Council should consider this statement cautiously, as it elicits some skepticism among consumers – who question the claim that “it’s the only fresh vegetable or fruit” which provides all of your daily Vitamin D needs. Accordingly, in order for this statement to be effective, the Mushroom Council will have to educate consumers about mushroom’s Vitamin D content and support these claims with easy to understand (and believable) facts.

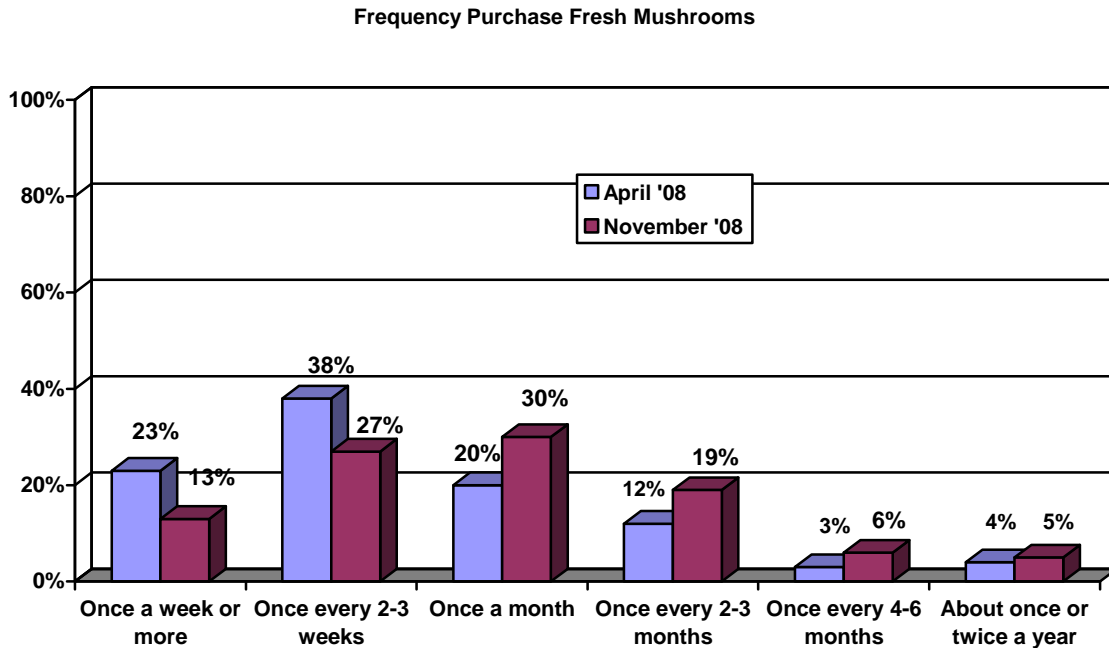
Importantly, and something that should be further explored is the relevance of the Vitamin D message, as the findings from this study indicate that consumers are not necessarily motivated by the Vitamin D message – rather, it is the “versatility”, “serving size” and/or “uniqueness” elements that seem to be the key drivers, with the health aspect serving as secondary support.

In order to confirm these findings, we would recommend that the Mushroom Council conduct a series of focus groups – exposing consumers to the 3 positioning statements – *“as few as 4 fresh mushrooms will provide your daily need for Vitamin D”*, *“fresh mushrooms on a salad or in a meal are a simple solution for your daily Vitamin D needs”* and *“fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs”* – to further flesh out their strengths and weaknesses and dig deeper into consumer awareness of Vitamin D/other health-related benefits of mushrooms.

DETAILED FINDINGS

FREQUENCY PURCHASE FRESH MUSHROOMS

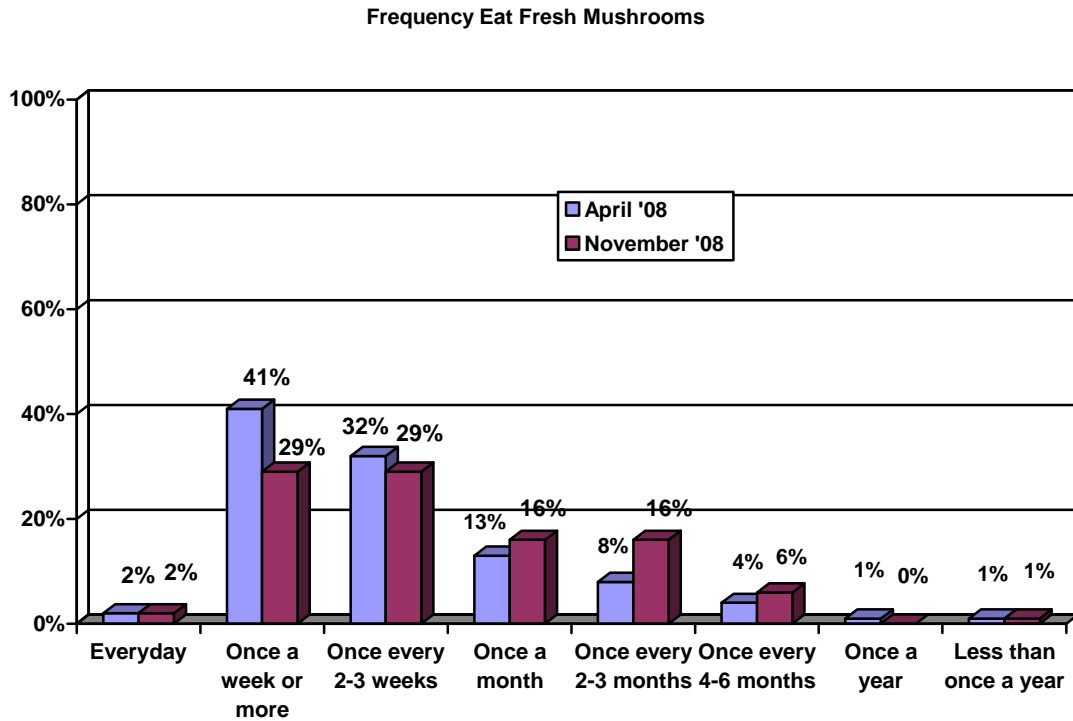
Not surprising, considering the current economic environment (with consumers less likely to be buying non-essential items), fresh mushroom purchase frequency has dropped since early in the year, with fewer consumers buying them more than once a month.



Q1. On average, how frequently do you purchase loose or packaged fresh mushrooms? (CHECK ONE ONLY)

FREQUENCY EAT FRESH MUSHROOMS

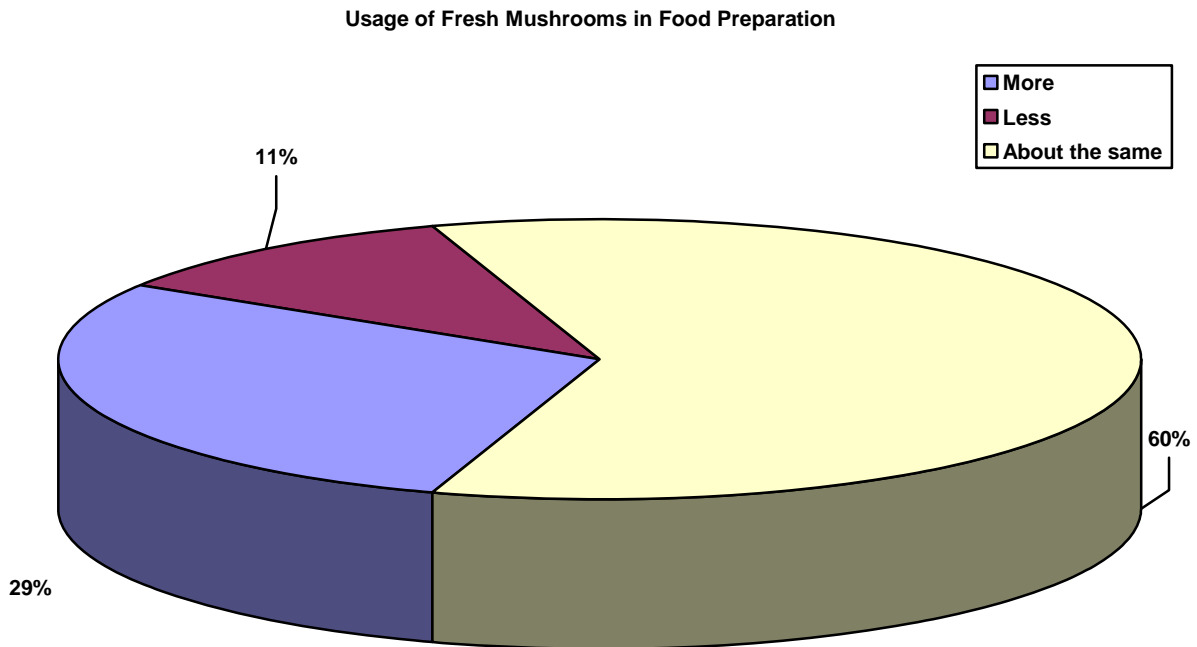
Similarly, consumption has also decreased somewhat from previous findings – particularly incidence of eating fresh mushrooms once a week or more often.



Q2. On average, how frequently do you eat fresh mushrooms? (CHECK ONE ONLY)

USAGE OF FRESH MUSHROOMS IN FOOD PREPARATION

On the other hand, three-fifths of the respondents indicated that they're using "about the same" amount of fresh mushrooms in their food preparation compared to a year ago (60%), with 29% reportedly using more.



Q3. Would you now say you are using more, less or about the same amount of fresh mushrooms in your food preparation compared to one year ago?

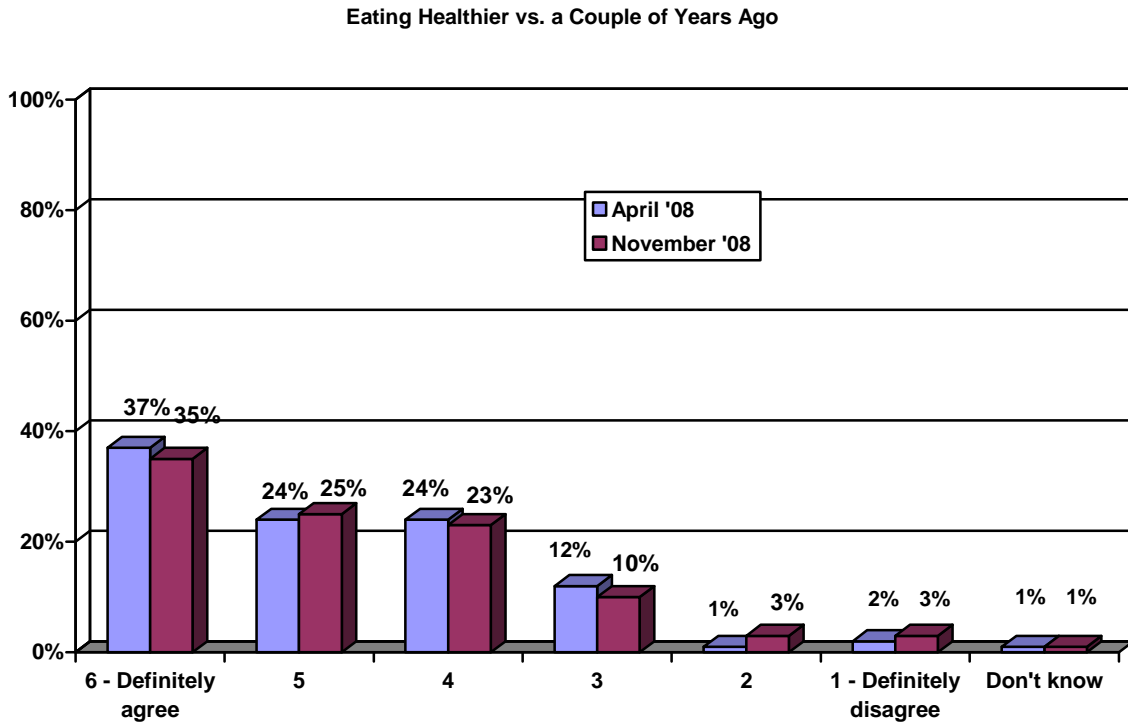
Notably, a significantly greater number of younger consumers (18 – 44 years of age) have reportedly increased the amount of fresh mushrooms they use in their food preparation vis-à-vis their older counterparts (40% vs. 17%).

	<u>AGE</u>	
	<u>18 – 44</u> <u>%</u> <u>(a)</u>	<u>45 +</u> <u>%</u> <u>(b)</u>
More	40 b	17
Less	11	11
About the same	49	72 a
BASE	(207)	(194)

a-b Significantly different than corresponding subgroup at the 95% confidence level.

EATING HEALTHIER VS. A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO

More or less mirroring findings from April '08, 60% of the respondents agree that they're eating healthier compared to a couple of years ago.



- Q4. Using a 6 point scale, where 6 means you definitely agree and 1 means you definitely disagree, how would you rate the following statement...? *"I am eating healthier now compared to a couple of years ago"*

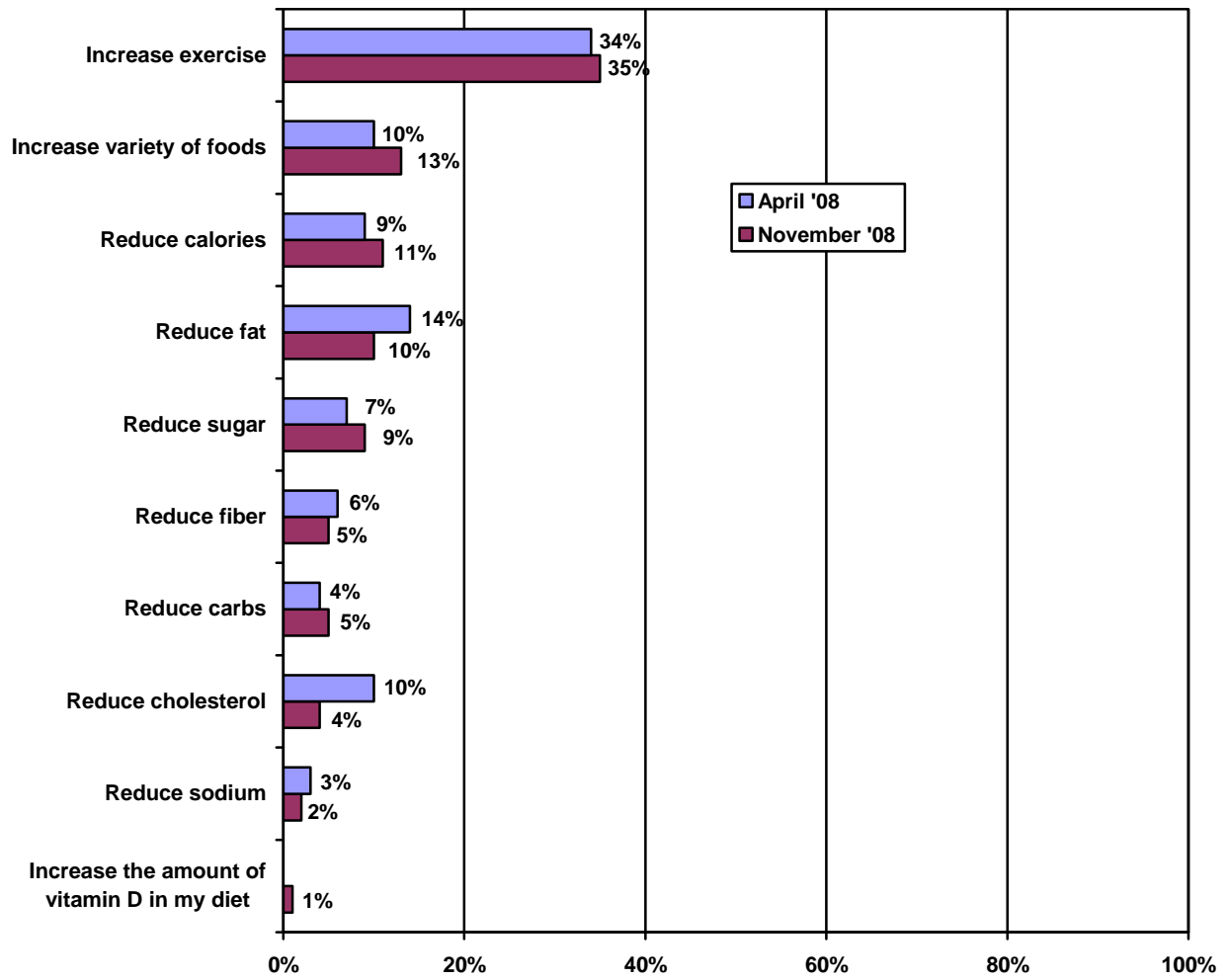
MOST IMPORTANT STEPS TO EATING/LIVING A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

Also in line with findings from earlier in the year, “increasing exercise” is considered to be most important to living a healthier lifestyle (November ’08 – 35% vs. April ’08 – 34%), followed by a number of dietary changes, including – “increasing the variety of food”, “reducing calories”, “reducing fat” and “reducing sugar” – all played back by about 1 in 10 of the respondents.

Only 1% of the respondents believe that increasing their Vitamin D consumption is the most important thing they can do to eat/live healthier.

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Most Important Steps to Eating/Living a Healthier Lifestyle



Q5. Which of the following do you think is most important for you to do in order to eat healthier or live a healthier lifestyle? (ROTATE LIST. CHECK ONE ONLY)

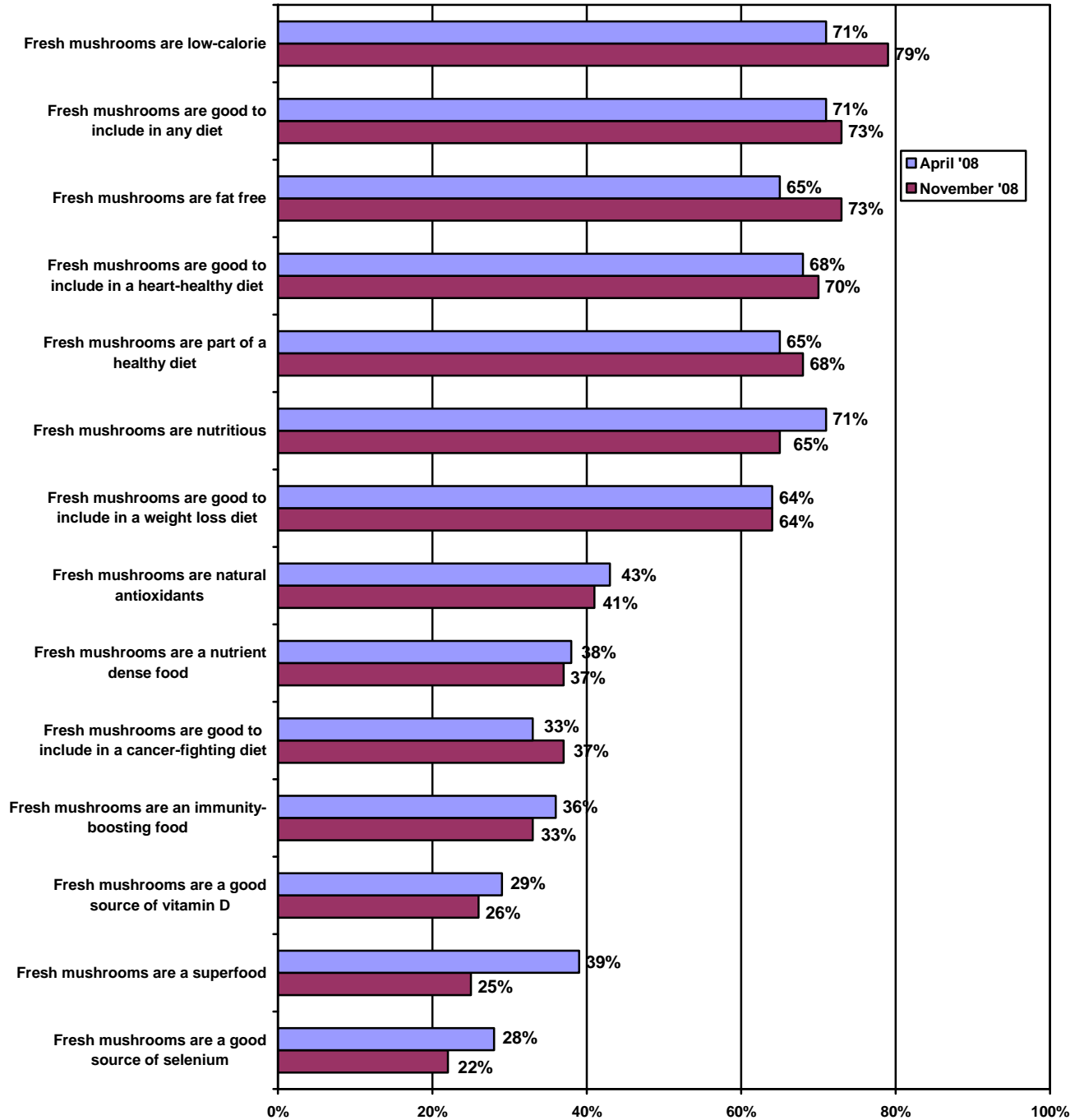
FRESH MUSHROOMS ATTRIBUTE RATINGS (HEALTH) – TOP-2 BOX SUMMARY

In terms of health related attributes, the vast majority of the respondents agree that fresh mushrooms are – “low calorie”, “good to include in any diet”, “fat free”, “good to include in a heart-healthy diet”, “part of a healthy diet”, “nutritious” and “good to include in a weight loss diet”. Furthermore, with few exceptions, findings from November are in line with those seen in April, '08.

Also consistent, only about one-quarter of the respondents are aware that fresh mushrooms “are a good source of Vitamin D” (November '08 – 26% vs. April '08 – 29%), while 50% were unsure in November compared to 42% in April.

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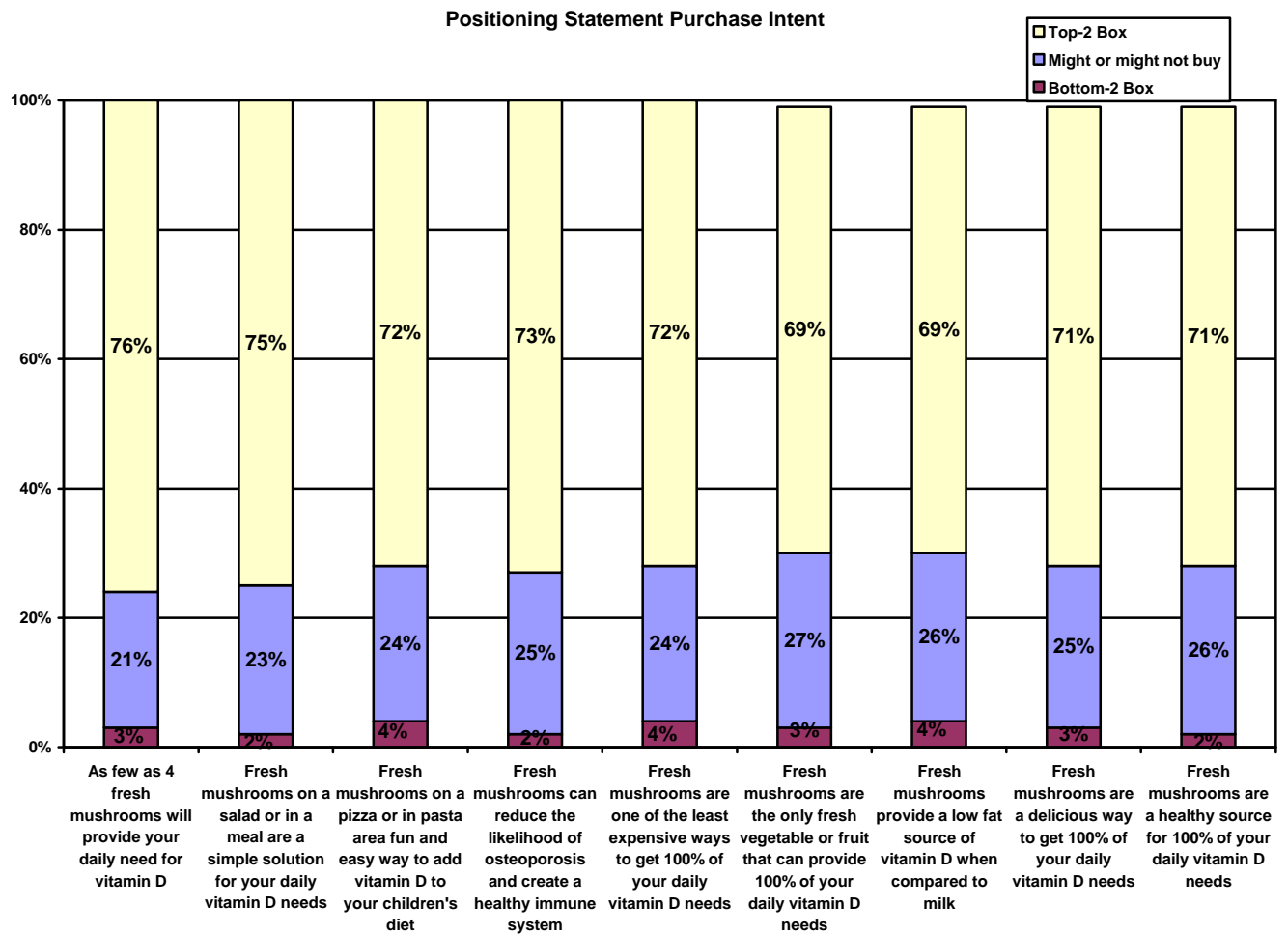
Fresh Mushrooms Attribute Ratings (Health) - Top-2 Box Summary



Q6. Using a 6 point scale, where 6 means you definitely agree and 1 means you definitely disagree, how would you rate fresh mushrooms on the following health related statements... (CONTINUE TO ROTATE STATEMENTS) You may use any number in between.

POSITIONING STATEMENT PURCHASE INTENT

Positively, all of the Vitamin D related positioning statements generate strong purchase interest, with at least about 7 in 10 of the respondents indicating that they'd be likely to buy fresh mushrooms after hearing them – exceeding our normative goal of 60% (top-2 box) for this measure.

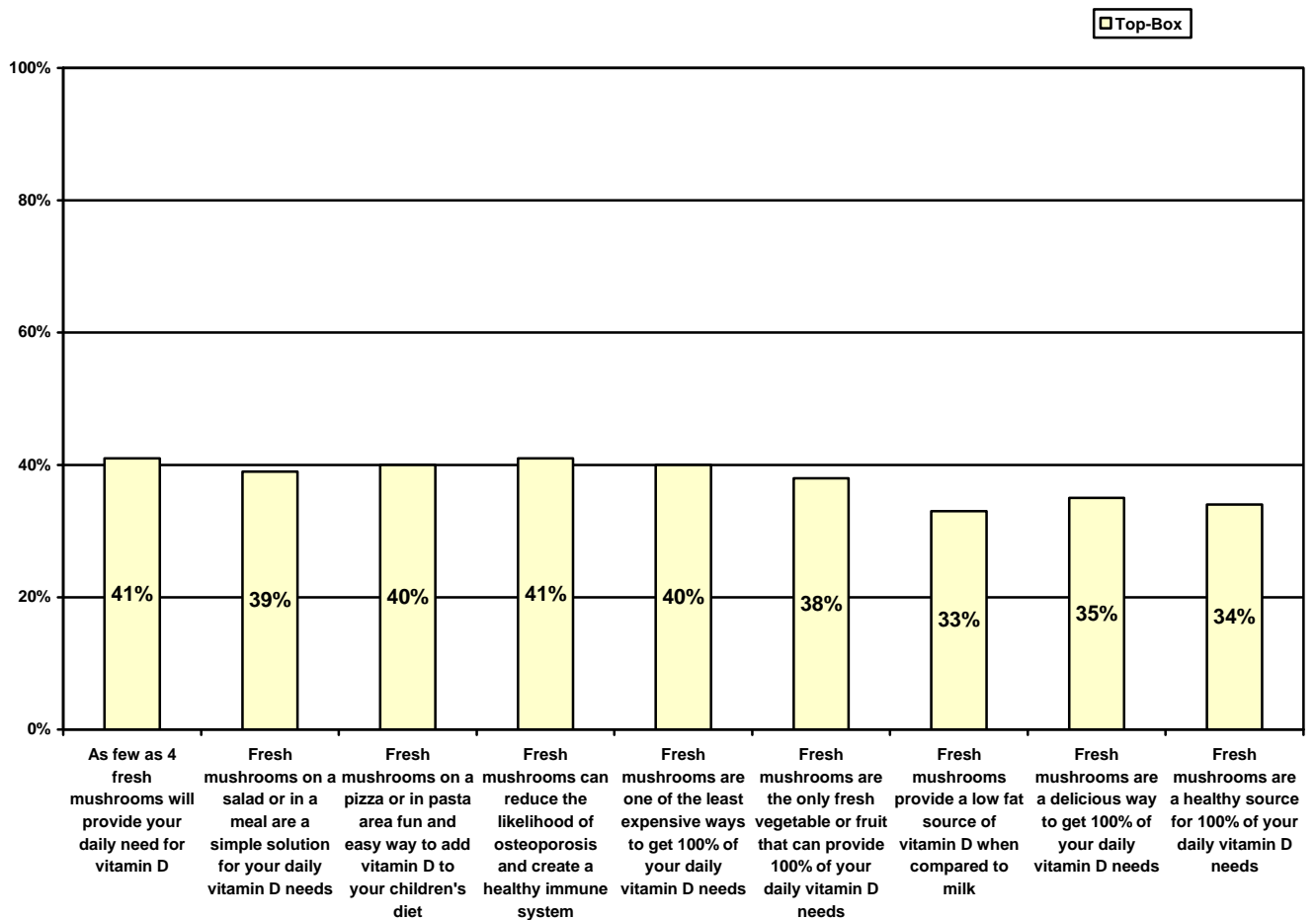


Q7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31

Based on the description you just read, if you were shopping today and fresh mushrooms were available at an acceptable price, how likely would you be to buy them? Would you say you... (SHOW CHOICES, CHECK ONE ONLY)

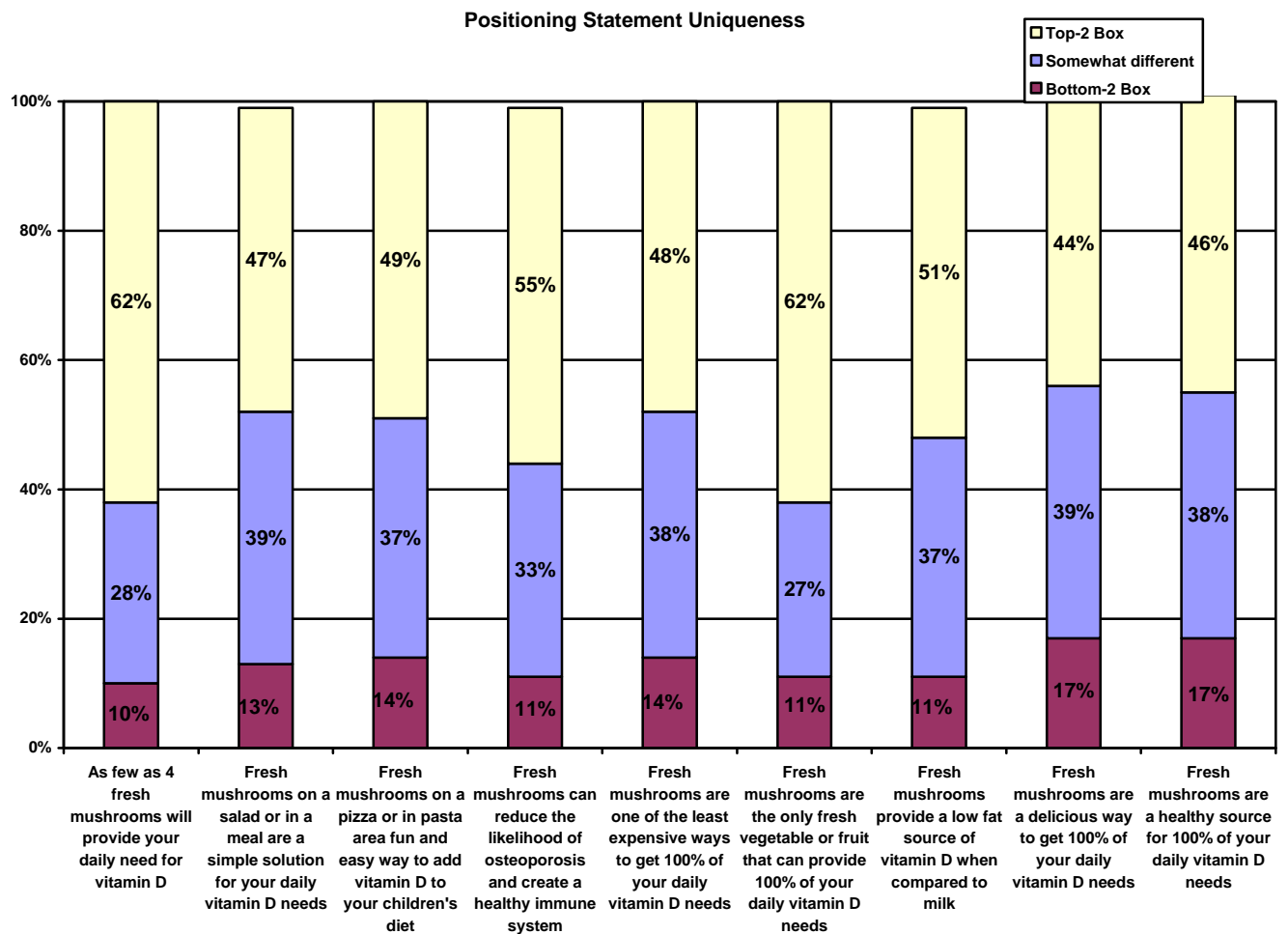
While top-box intensity ratings (“definitely would buy fresh mushrooms”) for most of the positionings are similar, the following achieved directionally higher purchase interest – “as few as 4 fresh mushrooms will provide your daily need for Vitamin D”, “fresh mushrooms can reduce the likelihood of osteoporosis and create a healthy immune system”, “fresh mushrooms on a pizza or in pasta are a fun and easy way to add Vitamin D to your children’s diet”, “fresh mushrooms are one of the least expensive ways to get 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs”, “fresh mushrooms on a salad or in a meal are a simple solution to your daily Vitamin D needs” and “fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs”.

Positioning Statement Purchase Intent - Top-Box Summary



POSITIONING STATEMENT UNIQUENESS

However, different than purchase intent (where each of the statements generated similar ratings), the following two positioning statements stand out in terms of uniqueness, with better than three-fifths of the respondents rating them as “extremely” or “very different” – “as few as 4 fresh mushrooms will provide your daily need for Vitamin D” and “fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs” (62% each) – both exceeding our norm of 50% top-2 box.



Q8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32

And, how unique, or different, does this statement make fresh mushrooms compared to other fresh produce? Would you say that it makes fresh mushrooms...? (SHOW CHOICES, CHECK ONE ONLY)

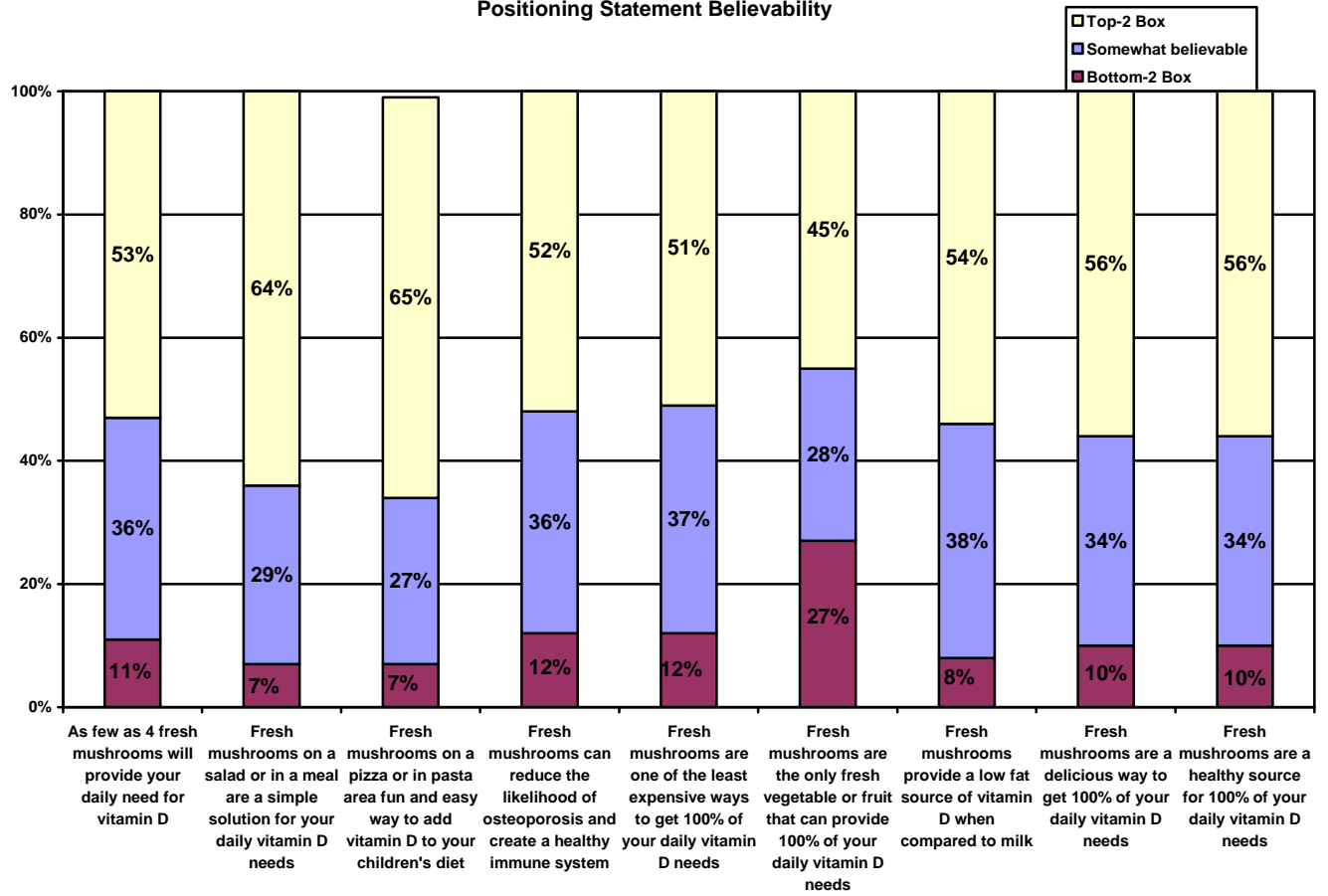
POSITIONING STATEMENT BELIEVABILITY

In line with purchase intent and uniqueness, for the most part, each of the nine statements tested were considered credible and approach our normative goal of 65 – 70% top-2 box, while the two usage/versatility statements (“fresh mushrooms on a pizza or in pasta are a fun and easy way to add Vitamin D to your children’s diet” and “fresh mushrooms on a salad or in a meal are a simple solution for your daily Vitamin D needs”) elicited the highest scores (65% and 64% top-2 box, respectively).

However, one statement (“fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs”) generated skepticism, with less than half believing it.

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Positioning Statement Believability



Q9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33.

How believable do you feel this statement is? Do you think that it is...? (SHOW CHOICES, CHECK ONE ONLY)

FAVORITE POSITIONING STATEMENT – TOP-3 SUMMARY

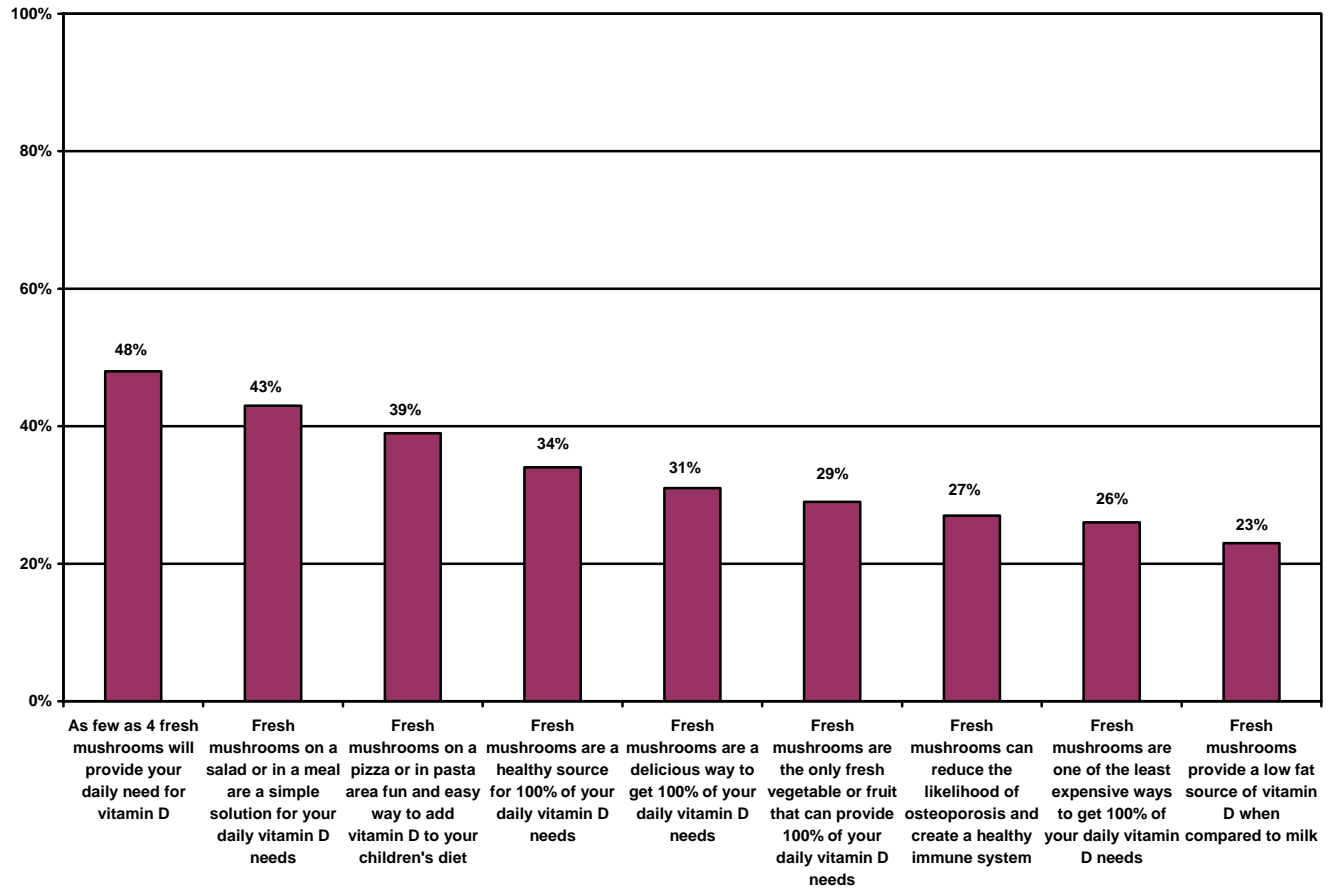
After rating each of the statements independently in terms of purchase intent, uniqueness and believability, the respondents were asked to rank them from their favorite to least favorite.

Accordingly, when their top-3 choices are combined, the following statements generate the greatest appeal – “as few as 4 fresh mushrooms will provide your daily need for Vitamin D” (48%), “fresh mushrooms on a salad or in a meal are a simple solution for your daily Vitamin D needs” (43%) and “fresh mushrooms on a pizza or in pasta are a fun and easy way to add Vitamin D to your children’s diet” (39%).

On the other hand, only about 1 in 5 consumers like the comparison to milk, rating the statement “fresh mushrooms provide a low fat source of Vitamin D when compared to milk” as one of their three favorite positionings.

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Favorite Positioning Statement - Top-3 Summary



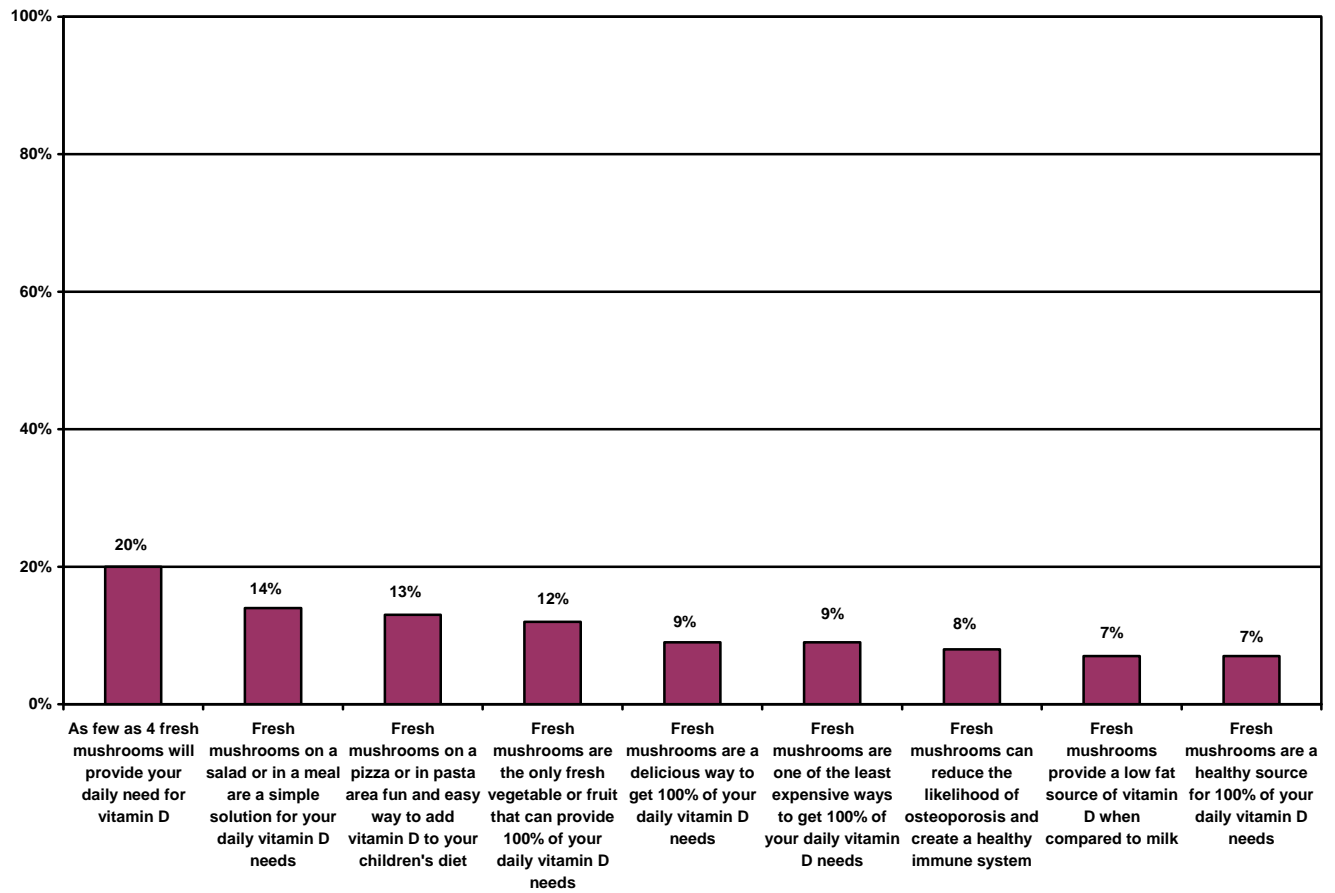
Q34. I would now like you to rank the positioning statements from the one that you like the most, to the one that you like the least. Please rank your favorite a "1", your second favorite a "2", etc.

FAVORITE POSITIONING STATEMENT – RANKED A “1”

In line with the previous findings, two in ten of the respondents were more positive toward the statement – “as few as 4 fresh mushrooms will provide your daily need for Vitamin D” (20%) – rating it a “1” (their favorite), followed by – “fresh mushrooms on a salad or in a meal are a simple solution for your daily Vitamin D needs” (14%), “fresh mushrooms on a pizza or in pasta are a fun and easy way to add Vitamin D to your children’s diet” (13%) and “fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs” (12%).

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Favorite Positioning Statement - Ranked a "1"



Q34. I would now like you to rank the positioning statements from the one that you like the most, to the one that you like the least. Please rank your favorite a "1", your second favorite a "2", etc.

Notably, a significantly greater number of consumers (age 18 – 44) liked the statement – “as few as 4 fresh mushrooms will provide your daily need for Vitamin D” best (rating it a “1”) vis-à-vis their older counterparts.

At lower levels, younger respondents are also more motivated by price, as they were twice as likely to rate the statement “fresh mushrooms are one of the least expensive ways to get 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs” as their favorite.

On the other hand, mushroom purchasers 45 years of age or older had a more favorable reaction to the positioning – “fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs”.

	<u>AGE</u>	
	<u>18 – 44</u> % <u>(a)</u>	<u>45 +</u> % <u>(b)</u>
As few as 4 fresh mushrooms will provide your daily need for Vitamin D	25 b	16
Fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs	8	15 a
Fresh mushrooms are one of the least expensive ways to get 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs	12 b	6
BASE	(207)	(194)

a-b Significantly different than corresponding subgroup at the 95% confidence level.

REASON(S) LIKE A STATEMENT THE MOST – “AS FEW AS 4 FRESH MUSHROOMS WILL PROVIDE YOUR DAILY NEED FOR VITAMIN D”

Of those who rated this statement as their favorite, the small amount of mushrooms consumed/the suggested serving size plays an important role, as it is not only perceived as “easy to do”, but also “easy to understand”.

	<u>Total</u> <u>%</u>
Only need a small amount daily	28
Tells you the exact number/serving size I should eat daily	27
Only need to eat 4 mushrooms/4 mushrooms is a small amount	17
Simple/easy to understand	16
Easy/easy thing to do	12
I didn't know this/new information	12
Sounds believable/truthful/claims aren't exaggerated	12
Good source of Vitamin D/good way to add Vitamin D to the diet	10
4 mushrooms give you your daily allotment of Vitamin D	7
BASE*	(82)

*Includes those who rated the statement as their favorite – a “1”.

Q35. Why is this your favorite positioning statement? (PROBE:) Are there any other reasons that this was the statement you liked the best? (PROBE FOR SPECIFICS)

REASON(S) LIKE A STATEMENT THE MOST – “FRESH MUSHROOMS ON A SALAD OR IN A MEAL ARE A SIMPLE SOLUTION FOR YOUR DAILY VITAMIN D NEEDS”

In addition to being credited as an “easy thing to do”, consumers who preferred the “versatility” message liked the suggestion of using fresh mushrooms in a salad, while it also serves as a reminder of the many ways that mushrooms can be used.

	<u>Total</u> <u>%</u>
Easy/easy thing to do	31
I like mushrooms in/added to salad	21
I like salad	19
Good source of Vitamin D/good way to add Vitamin D to the diet	14
Can add them to a variety of dishes/ good addition to meals/dishes	10
Healthy/good for a healthy diet	10
Simple/easy to understand	10
Sounds believable/truthful/claims aren't exaggerated	10
Gives you specific examples of how to use mushrooms	9
BASE*	(58)

*Includes those who rated the statement as their favorite – a “1”.

Q35. Why is this your favorite positioning statement? (PROBE:) Are there any other reasons that this was the statement you liked the best? (PROBE FOR SPECIFICS)

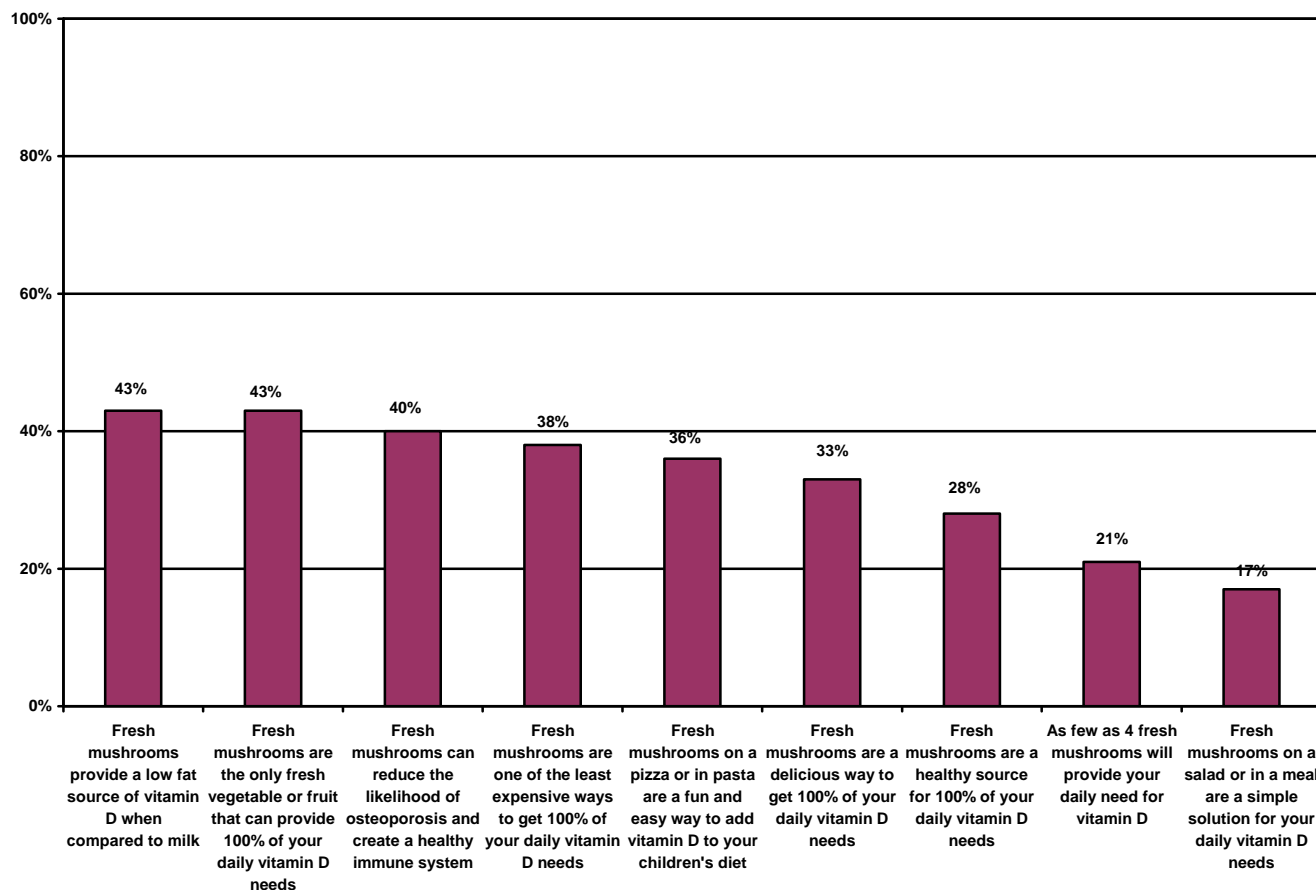
LEAST FAVORITE POSITIONING STATEMENT – BOTTOM-3 SUMMARY

Also similar to previous findings, the following positioning statements generated more negative feedback, as they were rated in the bottom-3 by about 4 in 10 of the respondents – “fresh mushrooms provide a low fat source of Vitamin D when compared to milk” (43%), “fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs” (43%) and “fresh mushrooms can reduce the likelihood of osteoporosis and create a healthy immune system” (40%).

Again, the statements which reference “quantity” (“as few as 4...”) and “versatility” (“...on a salad or in a meal...”) generate more positive ratings vis-à-vis the other statements tested.

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Least Favorite Positioning Statement - Bottom-3 Summary

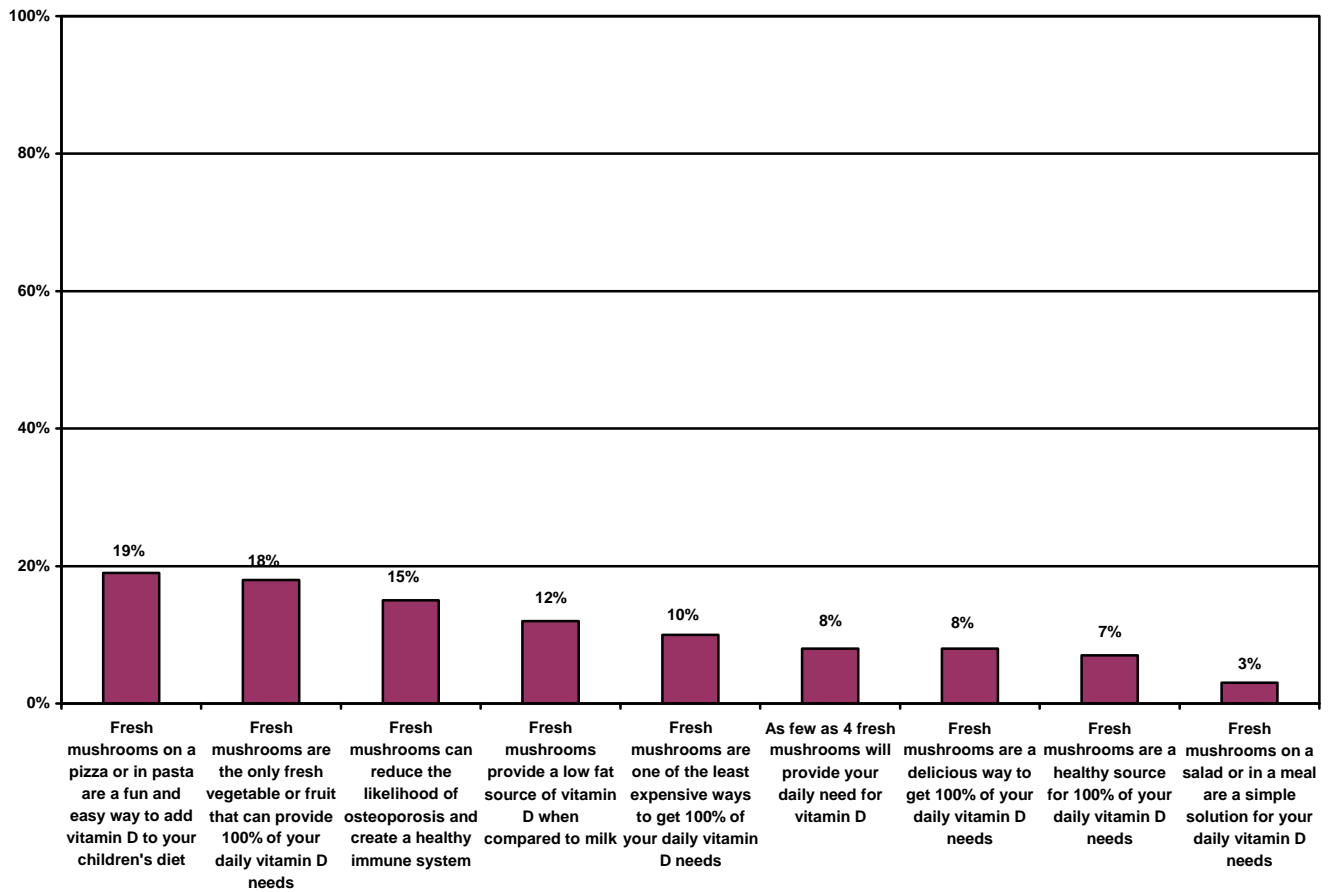


Q34. I would now like you to rank the positioning statements from the one that you like the most, to the one that you like the least. Please rank your favorite a "1", your second favorite a "2", etc.

LEAST FAVORITE POSITIONING STATEMENT – RANKED A “9”

About 2 in 10 rated the following statements as their least favorite – “fresh mushrooms on pizza or in pasta are a fun and easy way to add Vitamin D to your children’s diet” (19%) and “fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs” (18%).

Least Favorite Positioning Statement - Ranked a "9"



Q34. I would now like you to rank the positioning statements from the one that you like the most, to the one that you like the least. Please rank your favorite a “1”, your second favorite a “2”, etc.

Not surprising, older respondents are not as favorable toward the “children’s” positioning statement (more of them rated it a “9”), while a greater number of younger consumers cited “fresh mushrooms for being the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs” as their least favorite.

	<u>AGE</u>	
	<u>18 – 44</u> <u>%</u> <u>(a)</u>	<u>45 +</u> <u>%</u> <u>(b)</u>
Fresh mushrooms on a pizza or in pasta are a fun and easy way to add Vitamin D to your children’s diet	13	25 a
Fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs	25 b	12
BASE	(207)	(194)

a-b Significantly different than corresponding subgroup at the 95% confidence level.

REASON(S) LIKE A STATEMENT THE LEAST – “FRESH MUSHROOMS ON A PIZZA OR IN PASTA ARE A FUN AND EASY WAY TO ADD VITAMIN D TO YOUR CHILDREN’S DIET”

Not surprising, among those who did not like the “children’s” positioning statement, 40% “do not have children”, while along these lines, mushrooms are not considered to be an appealing choice for kids, nor are they “fun”.

	<u>Total</u> <u>%</u>
Don’t have children	40
Kids don’t like mushrooms	25
I don’t consider eating mushrooms to be fun	11
Kids don’t like mushrooms on pizza	8
BASE*	(75)

*Includes those who rated the statement as their least favorite – a “9”.

Q36. And, why is this your least favorite positioning statement? (PROBE:) Are there any other reasons that this was the statement you liked the least? (PROBE FOR SPECIFICS)

REASON(S) LIKE A STATEMENT THE LEAST – “FRESH MUSHROOMS ARE THE ONLY FRESH VEGETABLE OR FRUIT THAT CAN PROVIDE 100% OF YOUR DAILY VITAMIN D NEEDS”

Credibility is the major complaint among those who did not like the statement “fresh mushrooms are the only fresh vegetable or fruit that can provide 100% of your daily Vitamin D needs”, as it seems to imply that “mushrooms are the only source of Vitamin D”.

	<u>Total</u> %
Sounds unbelievable/not truthful	47
Falsely implies that mushrooms are the only source of Vitamin D	22
There are other fruits and vegetables that give you Vitamin D as well	16
Don't like ads that use the word “only”	11
BASE*	(73)

*Includes those who rated the statement as their least favorite – a “9”.

Q36. And, why is this your least favorite positioning statement? (PROBE:) Are there any other reasons that this was the statement you liked the least? (PROBE FOR SPECIFICS)

DEMOGRAPHICS

The following is a demographic breakdown of the sample.

	<u>Total</u> %
<u>Marital status</u>	
Married	54
Single/never married	20
Divorced	12
Living with partner	8
Widowed	4
Separated	1
<u>Number of People Living in Household</u>	
One	20
Two	38
Three	17
Four or more	24
<u>Presence of Children Under 18 in Household*</u>	
Yes	44
No	56
<u>Employment Status</u>	
Full time	46
Retired	18
Homemaker	10
Part time	8
Not employed, but looking for work	6
Student	5
Self-employed	4
Not employed and not looking for work	3
BASE	(401)

*Includes those with at least two people living in the household

	<u>Total</u> <u>%</u>
<u>Education</u>	
High school graduate or equivalent	10
Some college	30
Associate degree	13
Bachelor's degree	27
Graduate or professional degree	19
Other	1
<u>Income</u>	
Less than \$25,000	14
\$25,000 to \$34,999	13
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15
\$50,000 to \$74,999	26
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12
\$100,000 to \$149,999	12
\$150,000 +	4
No answer/refused	5
<u>Gender</u>	
Male	30
Female	70
<u>Age</u>	
18 – 44	52
45 +	48
<u>Ethnicity</u>	
Caucasian	92
African-American	4
Hispanic	3
Asian/other	1
BASE	(401)