

For Immediate Release

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**Sampling Can Be Even More Powerful in A Pandemic:
A New Product Launch Provides Insight to Marketers**

Cary, N.C., SEPTEMBER 30, 2020 –Walk into a grocery store or a club store today and what you will experience when it comes to food sampling is quite different than in the recent past. You won't see people lined up around a table, tasting samples of food put out on a small plate or in a cup. What you will see is a person with an unopened sample of the product, talking about its great taste and benefits, but from behind a mask for safety reasons.

While this approach may sway some consumers, most want to try before they buy, especially when it comes to purchasing products for picky kids.

Marketers know that sampling is an effective way to drive trial and lift sales. In fact, a study entitled *Report on In-store Sampling Effectiveness*ⁱ, showed the average cumulative trial for the sampled item was more than 58 percent over 20 weeks and first repeat purchase for sampled products was more than 11 percent and more than 6 percent for the brand franchise during the same period.

So, what's a marketer to do with a new or revitalized product that needs introduction to the public in the thick of a pandemic where social distancing is a must and in-store sampling is not ideal?

For *Creative Roots*,™ a new, plant-based flavored water for kids, the answer wasn't the traditional venues for sampling but a more targeted approach.

“We had originally planned to run a sampling program for *Creative Roots* at grocery stores, but when the pandemic hit, we had to press the reset button. Our goal was to find an alternative solution that more effectively leveraged our marketing dollars,” said Olivia Jameson, brand manager for *Creative Roots*.

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Enlisting the help of CoOptions' Sampling Store™, a Cary, N.C.-based agency specializing in the sampling of consumer lifestyle brands, *Creative Roots* was able to achieve its goal by utilizing the agency's Access Health™ propriety network of pediatrician offices as a sampling venue.

“When *Creative Roots* approached us, we knew we had a solution that would deliver on their goals,” said Brian Sockin, Chief Executive Officer of CoOptions' Sampling Store™. “Not only could we get the product into the hands of the parent decision-makers from a trusted source, we could also provide valuable insights to help the brand in their future marketing and sales efforts,” he added.

The sampling took place during August 2020, utilizing 700 U.S.-based pediatrician offices from its network of more than 20,000 pediatric practices, with about 330,000 samples distributed to parents who visited their offices.

Sockin explained that the process his agency uses is unique. Out of their 600,000 practitioners and 200,000 health care practices in their nationwide network, the locations are narrowed to those that most adequately fit their client's consumer and demographic needs by specialty and zip code geo-mapping using Spectra data. According to Sockin, every location that participates opts into the program through a dedicated project portal, requesting sample volumes that match their patient loads, which ensures a more efficient process, with no products returned and samples actually distributed.

In addition to the sampling, the agency also conducted a survey of parents to glean further insights into the sampling program and the product itself.

The survey revealed that approximately 92 percent of the parents who took the product had their children try it. More than 70 percent of parent respondents said they were very likely to most certainly planning to purchase the product in the next three months, with another 14 percent indicating they were likely to buy. A follow-up survey to initial respondents found that 43 percent had already purchased the product within a 3-week period of receiving the sample and another 36 percent who had just received it were planning to buy.

Said Sockin, “Sampling is one of the most significant financial commitments for any brand. We are methodical in our approach, from making sure we understand the vision to creating and executing a plan that furthers our clients marketing strategy beyond the sampling event. When programs yield metrics of this magnitude, they can be powerful tools with the trade.”

Sockin, whose agency has been a leader in sampling business for 26 years, believes its critical for sampling programs to be more than just a mechanism for distribution.

“The *Creative Roots* program was an ideal scenario for physician office sampling—the combination of a powerful health narrative and a solution-based product payoff,” said Sockin. “In fact, it generated organic dialogue between parents and their pediatricians on the importance

of hydration in children—the kind of consumer/shopper engagement that every product manager dreams of for their brand,” he explained.

Sockin recommends that whenever possible, brands should conduct in-program and post-program consumer and venue research for their sampling programs. “We lend our extensive marketing research expertise to our programs, conducting in-depth consumer research to generate insights that can be leveraged by both brand and sales teams. For the Creative Roots program, enmeshing an important health-related story with the brand, the immediate 43% trial-to-purchase conversion result demonstrates the efficacy of sampling through targeted lifestyle venues, exceeding even typical in-store conversion rates,” he added.

The consumer survey revealed key insights into consumer demographics, intent to purchase, as well as hydration knowledge, product knowledge, and product experience. Highlights of the survey results can be found at <http://bit.ly/CRsurveyresults>.

“We were so excited when we learned CoOptions has the ability to sample through pediatricians’ offices. It was a great environment to hand out samples, build trust with consumers, and educate them on the importance of hydration in children, which is a top priority for our new brand,” said Jameson.

The follow-up survey also revealed that 82% of parents said the program increased their awareness and concern about dehydration in children, an intrinsic goal of the program.

About CoOptions' Sampling Store™ and The Survey

CoOptions' Sampling Store™ is a Cary, NC-based marketing agency, specializing in the sampling of consumer lifestyle brands. As part of the sampling program, 188 parents opted-in to conduct online research to provide feedback on kids' hydration, the product and program, with 142 participants fully completing the survey. A longitudinal follow-up survey invitation was sent to 113 initial survey respondents at the time of the invitation, with 44 households responding. The agency used accepted consumer research practices, including the 11-point Juster scale for purchase intent. The Juster Scale is widely recognized as the most consistent in accurately predicting actual purchase rates.ⁱⁱ a description which can be found at <http://bit.ly/JusterScale>.

About *Creative Roots*™

Creative Roots is available in four kid-approved delicious flavors, including Watermelon Lemonade, Peach Mango, Orange Pineapple and Mixed Berry. The product sells in singles and four-packs with a nationwide suggested retail price of \$1.29 for singles and \$3.69 for a four pack. Each variety contains 15 calories per 8.5 fluid ounces to help kids get closer to their recommended daily fluid intake. *Creative Roots* contains naturally occurring sugar from coconut water as well as a sugar substitute called Stevia. Stevia contains no carbohydrates, calories or artificial ingredients. For more information about *Creative Roots*, the Sploots and more, please visit www.drinkcreativeroots.com or follow along on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

ⁱ <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20090803005049/en/Groundbreaking-Study-Redefines-In-Store-Sampling-Impact-Usage>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.forethought.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Forethought-Client-Briefing-The-Juster-11-point-Probability-Scale-1.pdf>