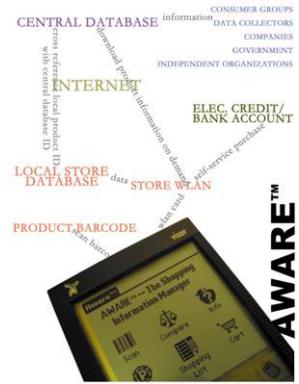


Marketing Research Design and Analysis University of Michigan Business School

Course Project Information Form

AWARE THE SHOPPING INFORMATION MANAGER



Section 1: Company Description

Aware is not yet an established company. A small group of product designers from the United States, England, South Korea, and Venezuela have developed a product concept for a shopping information manager called Aware. The group has performed some preliminary research, but lacks the tools and experience to predict the demand and interest in this product and to determine which variation of the product concept to pursue. The group would like to examine some marketing research predictions and recommendations in order to decide whether or not to invest further time and venture capital to start a company and pursue the product concept further.

Section 2: Project Description

Aware – The Shopping Information Manager - Description

The main purpose of Aware is to help consumers make more informed decisions about products by providing customized information on-location and on-demand. We believe Aware will improve the shopping experience while making it easier, faster, and more fun. Simultaneously, we believe Aware will excite stores and product manufacturers by giving them the opportunity to gain competitive advantage, and also by providing them with new kinds of detailed feedback. Our initial product domain will be focused on grocery products, but the concept could be extended to clothing, electronics, appliances, etc.

Our design is a shopping information manager that can be used with a standard consumer-owned PDA or can be purchased by stores as stand-alone units. The device contains a barcode scanner and a wireless Internet connection (WLAN) for real-time downloading of product information from a central database. Users customize the device by choosing which kinds of product information they are concerned about. For example, people with dietary needs can watch for specific ingredients or nutritional information; conscientious consumers can set alerts about production processes and corporate policies such as genetic modification, animal testing, or environmental issues; shoppers can check for endorsement information from organizations like Consumer Reports and Greenpeace, or from other shoppers; and consumers can find recipes, check for preparation information, or search for best price. The device could also be used to purchase products using electronic payment so that the shopper can avoid waiting in queues to check out. Additionally, for marketing purposes, the barcode data that is collected with Aware can be associated not only with actual purchase behavior, but also with the rules and preferences entered by the individual consumer so that manufacturers gain information as to *why* their products were or were not purchased (i.e., how many consumers actually care about genetically modified foods and are willing to alter their purchase behavior based on it?).

Section 3: Specific Research Questions

We have a lot of marketing questions for this product concept, and answering all of them may be prohibitive for the scope of the MKT 618 course; however, we would like to work with the team to determine which questions are most interesting and most feasible for the team to address, and also which will be most helpful to us. The primary question areas are:

1. **Demand and Interest:** We need to understand how many consumers would be interested in using this product, and how much the price of the product and database service would affect their interest. Preliminary research suggests that there are several niche groups who would show interest (Whole Foods shoppers, vegans / vegetarians, people with strong allergies, etc), but we need to have a good, objective understanding of how strong this interest is and how large the potential market is.
2. **Product Form:** We have developed many variations of the basic product concept (inspired by cultural differences between countries). In one version, the consumer purchases the product and the service. In another version, the store purchases Aware devices for shoppers to use in order to gain competitive advantage. Some versions of Aware are handheld, while others are cart-mounted, end-of-aisle, or clerk operated. One version even redefines the layout and shopping method of the supermarket. We need to understand which version of this product concept is most promising so that we know where to invest our resources.
3. **Product Options:** We have generated a list of issues that may be important to different types of consumers including ingredients alerts, nutritional alerts, production process information, corporate policies, endorsements, preparation and maintenance information, packaging preferences, and prices. We will not be able to implement all of these informational features in our first prototype, so we need to understand which features are most important. Also, we have identified several different classes of shoppers based on their shopping styles. We would be interested in further understanding these clusters and their characteristics and needs as they relate to the product features.

Section 4: Other pertinent information

One of the Aware product designers, J Michalek, is auditing the MKT 618 course and will be able to work closely with the team that chooses this project. He will be exposed to the same material that the team is learning, and he has a very good understanding of the needs and questions for the Aware project.

A preliminary prototype has been designed to work on the Handspring Visor. It is helpful for explaining the concept, but would probably not be useful as a marketing survey tool. Additionally, the team will have access to a report and Power Point presentation about Aware.

Section 5: Contact Information

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