

Buffalo Case Study

We began our transformation of buffalo, at the time an unknown (and in the consumers' mind, possibly extinct) mystery meat, into a "Tender, Tasty and Healthy" beef alternative by performing extensive primary and secondary research. The full range of the buffalos' history was integrated into our working theories. Consumer demand at the start of the project was so low that buffalo were being slaughtered in the fields and left to the elements. It was a dying industry.

20 ways of talking about buffalo were generated out of the working theories, and presented one-on-one to a number of consumers. The winning idea – "Buffalo – Tender, Tasty and Healthy" had all the elements to rebrand buffalo and strengthen its ad positioning. The criteria for vetting the ideas was very simple – we asked, "Would you try it?" based on each branding idea, and iterated our ideas by listening closely to what respondents had to say.

One thing we learned in our one-on-one interviews was that it wasn't enough that buffalo was tender. It wasn't enough that it was healthy or tasty. But, combine all three and you have an idea that, when monetized, helped develop nationally and internationally successful buffalo products. We developed new positioning for buffalo – as a product that fits consumers' renewed interest in health and wellness-enhancing products – and as a tender, delicious kitchen staple. The long-term result has been higher buffalo prices, based on stimulating consumer demand.