



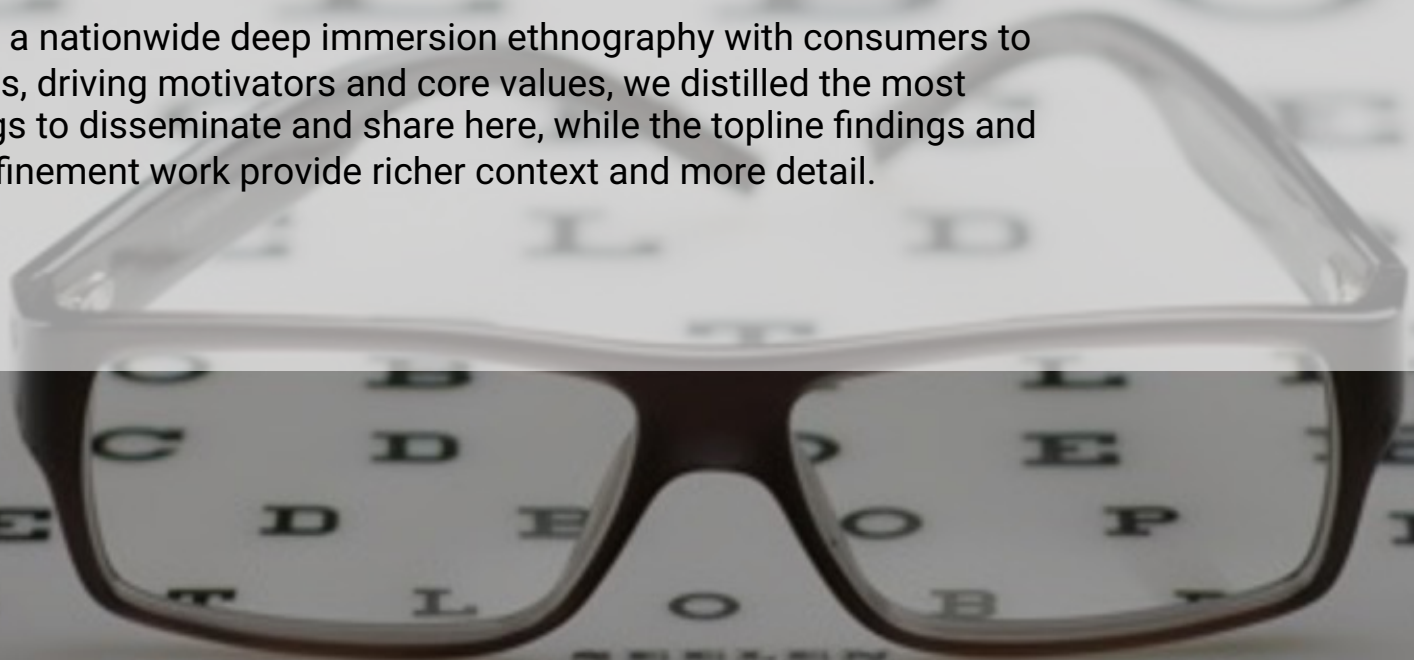
10 THINGS WE DIDN'T KNOW or thought we knew

Core Design Research 2017

A New Lens

While the industry knows a great deal about dairy consumers, a new lens and perspective shift allow us a more nuanced understanding of consumer behavior, which in some cases, can make all the difference

After conducting a nationwide deep immersion ethnography with consumers to examine attitudes, driving motivators and core values, we distilled the most important findings to disseminate and share here, while the topline findings and segmentation refinement work provide richer context and more detail.





1. The Perfect Storm

Consumers love choice, and yet are confused and overwhelmed by the explosion of food and beverage products. When it comes to what we eat and drink, we're uneasy with new technologies that seem unproven, suspect or even dangerous, adding to the stress of decision making.

Mission:

Cut through the clutter, simplify decisions and resolve contradictions in ways that make sense to people. Position the industry and production methods through the lens of natural and basic with little human or technological manipulation while positioning alternatives as unnatural, mysterious and overly processed. In any intervention, ask if you are clarifying things for the consumer.

2. Big D Dairy

Consumers don't see dairy as a consistent and coherent category or industry, they see individual products and brands and their loyalty or rejection goes only this deep. And while consumers may understand dairy intellectually, it doesn't impact how they operate in everyday life. This means some categories are protected in the face of misperceptions about others, but can make cross-industry messaging and planning a challenge.

Opportunity:

Reframe big Ag through the lens of farmers who are trusted, authentic and close to the earth, and when possible, larger groups as cooperatives of farmers banding together. We also need to dive deep to understand the real implications and understand how consumers perceive industry level advertising to frame a strategic approach.





3. Trust & Curation

Trust is not built by facts and figures. Trust is not built by good practice and stewardship. In a time of alternative facts, trust is now highly personal, radiating out from our bodies as center -- my experience, my family and friends, my guru and the brands I vetted. It's now easier to figure out whom to believe than what to believe.

Opportunity:

Rebuild trust in an industry by telling a good story rather than presenting a good argument. Figure out what the dairy industry stands for and take a stand. When so many are shifting to commodity or brand driven marketing, speak in ways that transcend brands and tap into established, trusted curators and influencers to share that story.

A black and white cow is shown in a barn stall, eating hay. The cow's head is in the foreground, and its body extends into the background. The stall has metal bars, and the floor is covered with straw. The lighting is natural, coming from the side.

4. Social Responsibility for Whom?

Consumers claim to make decisions based on corporate responsibility and care about humane land and animal management, and environmental concerns. But what really drives us is a visceral aversion to practices that strike us as disgusting. We measure impact against perceived bodily harm and for most, care only in so far as doing good for animals or earth results in a safer, healthier product for me.

Opportunity:

Reframe sustainability practices not as good for all but good for us. Examine opportunities to develop strategies beyond communications to drive social responsibility platform.

5. Food Philosophies & Nutritional Science

Most consumers don't understand and even distrust the language of nutritional science. Shifting nutrition and dietary guidelines has bred skepticism in institutional authority and the idea of absolute axioms. There is no longer one right way to eat and people develop personalized food philosophies as guiding principles to navigate decision making. It's not about what's healthy for everyone, it's what healthy for me. Yet the industry still speaks in scientific terms and concepts that don't resonate.

Opportunity:

Speak in the language of philosophies to resonate with consumers and be more useful and approachable. Create products and messages that not only resonate with contemporary concerns but transcend them to connect with the enduring values that ground behaviors.





6. Learning Stages

Products and messages are often targeted at people along demographic or psychographic indicators regardless of their willingness or ability to absorb new information. Consumers move in and out of stages where they are more or less open to new idea and messages and are better understood by these learning stages and more effectively targeted during times of active learning and openness.

Opportunity:

Understand what stages people are in, what are influencers at that stage and what messages will resonate. Use common life circumstances and the behaviors they inspire to decide when to send what messages. The accompanying influence map identifies most promising stages and channels.

LIFE & LEARNING STAGES INFLUENCE MAP

Data collected through direct observation, interaction and interviews with the participants in the nationwide Core Values Foundational Study directed the findings shown here. These are not exhaustive lists of needs, influences or channels, rather they represent the most important and productive ones at play in a particular life and learning stage.

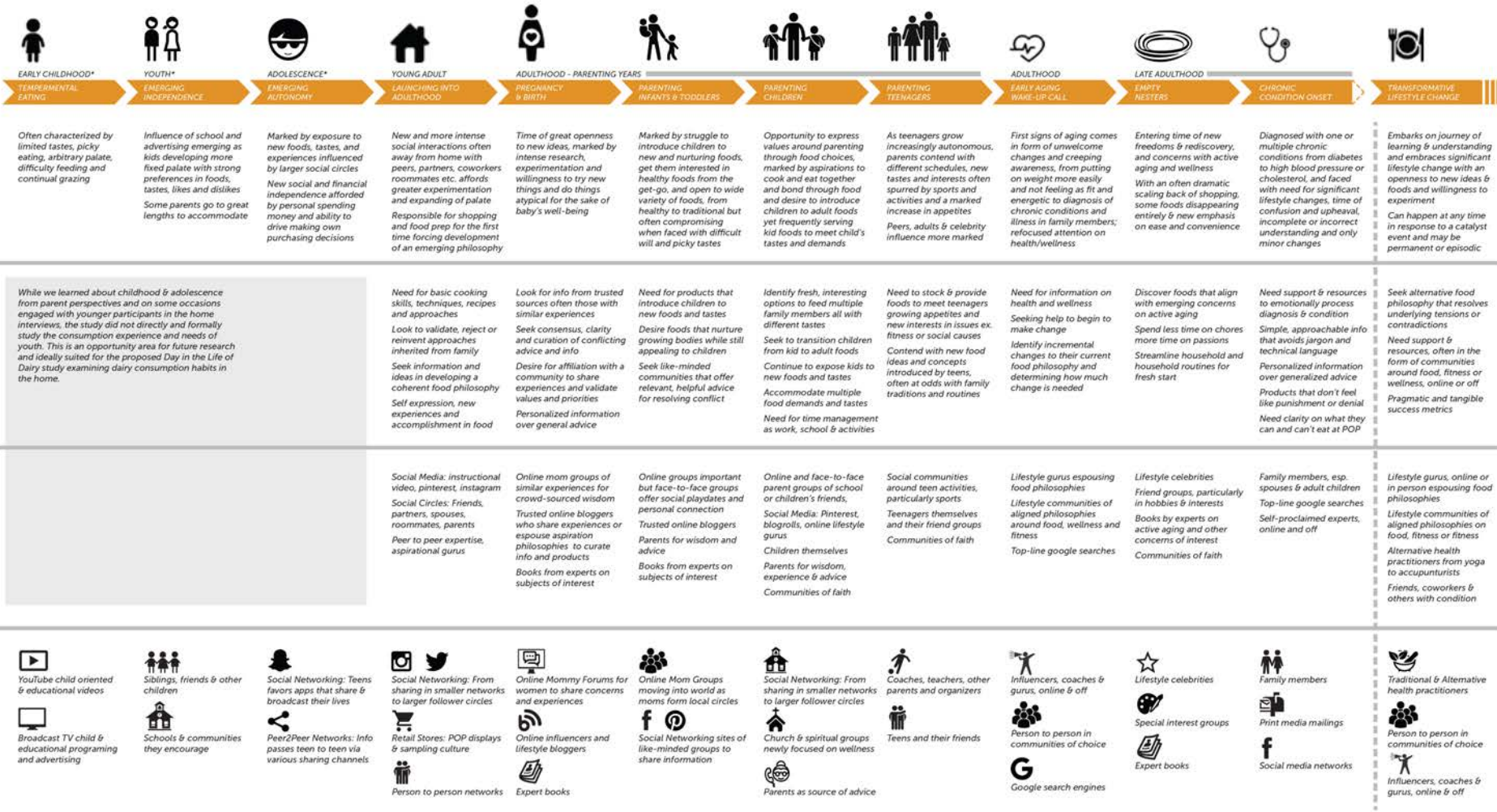
LIFE STAGE

EXPERIENCE

NEEDS

INFLUENCES

CHANNELS



7. Mass Consensus

Google front page headline consensus and crowd-sourced wisdom is often enough to convince something of a claim's validity. Consumers readily admit to only knowing something in vaguest terms, acknowledge little effort in validating claims and often don't read or take in information beyond headlines. Personal stories emanating from social circles and messages that connect dots in reasonable, common-sense ways are easily internalized as fact. And algorithms in social media only amplify the echo chamber without any effort on one's part, creating a bubble filter.

Opportunity:

Understand and direct resources to ensure dairy is in the space where people are engaging ideas about food and consumption. Identify where dairy is and isn't particularly when googling claims about dairy. Initiate proactively conversations about dairy and popular food philosophies.

A group of diverse people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are sitting in a circle in a bright, modern office or meeting room. They are looking at books and talking to each other. The background shows large windows and a clean, professional environment.

8. Communities of Food

Industry professionals often focus on communities directly related to health and fitness. Yet food is fueling communities in a broad spectrum of ways. Communities that promote spiritual and mental health (churches and support groups) communicate values, norms and inspiration around food. Online communities around shared interests (parenting or body positivity) promote and support food philosophies.

Opportunity:

Identify partners for promoting the value of dairy outside of traditional health and fitness communities. Look for ways for dairy to support and amplify social bonds among communities. Let those communities carry the story of dairy.

A woman in a grey sweater is standing in a grocery store aisle, looking at a shelf of milk cartons. The cartons are arranged in rows, with some labeled 'temp!' and others 'Almond Breeze'. The woman's hands are resting on the shelf. The background shows other aisles and shelves of products.

9. Milk Among Many

Traditional views see milk as the default starting point for a beverage. It sees any other choice as a vote against milk. Understanding the way people approach decisions around milk requires a paradigm shift. Consumers see milk as one of many options; one with a weak and limited value proposition against more contemporary, resonant choices.

Opportunity:

Rebuild fluid milk's value proposition. Communicate what you do better than anyone else, and promote the ways in which milk lends itself to variety and choice while being the most wholesome option.



10. Milk Grows Up

Consumers see milk as a transitional beverage from breast milk/formula to adult drinks. Most do not see a reason to drink milk throughout the lifespan and traditional benefits of milk (strong bones and teeth) are out of step with contemporary conceptions of adult health (gut, brain and skincare health) and active aging.

Opportunity:

Rebuild the value proposition and reconnect adults with milk. Establish more appropriate scenarios when milk is good for adults and reposition dairy in line with contemporary conceptions of health by owning particular concerns like gut health. Develop and position portfolio of milk products for every life stage.

CORE VALUES AS LIFE'S COMPASS

A hand holding a compass, symbolizing guidance and direction. The background is a soft, green-tinted image of a hand holding a compass, with the compass face clearly visible. The text is overlaid on this image.

Our core values guide us on our life's journey. They help to determine what direction we're heading in, what roads to take along the way. We're not always aware of our core values at work, but they impact decisions both big and small. They help orient us and ensure that when we feel lost *we can find our true north.*

UNCOVERING CORE VALUES

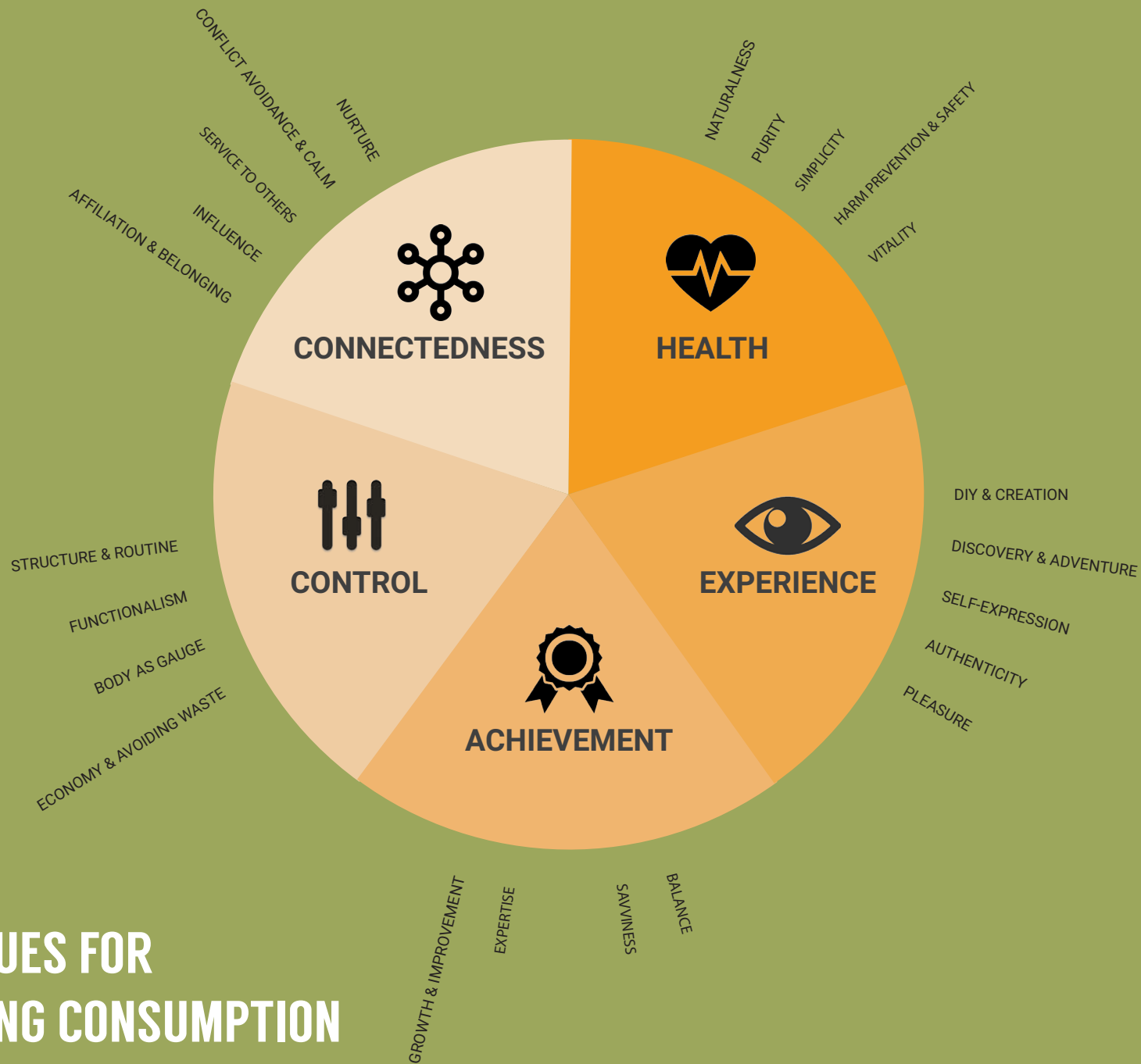
The Core Values Foundational Study was designed to reveal the guiding principles that underpin consumer thinking and behavior. Core values are distinguished from other, more transient motivators by the strength and consistency of their influence across a range of situations, circumstances and consumption habits.

By spending 5 hours, and 2 visits with each participant, researchers were able to directly observe how values manifest themselves in the daily lives of consumers.

Researchers analyzed the data of 50 people across the country selected to represent a cross section of the contemporary American experience, and identified those core values that are most powerfully at play when consumers make decisions around food and beverages.

Core values provide deep insight and empathy into the consumer and serve as a scaffolding on which to build long-term strategy and innovation.

KEY CORE VALUES FOR UNDERSTANDING CONSUMPTION



CONNECTEDNESS

THOSE WHO VALUE CONNECTEDNESS ARE MOTIVATED BY THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHERS

NURTURE Fosters wellbeing of others, particularly children

CONFLICT AVOIDANCE & CALM Desires social harmony, seeks to minimize tension and disagreement

SERVICE TO OTHERS Finds satisfaction in sacrifice and in devoting oneself to help or please others

INFLUENCE Enjoys having and sharing knowledge, looks for ways to impact others

AFFILIATION & BELONGING Seeks rich bonds and sense of community with others based on shared identity

EXPERIENCE

THOSE WHO VALUE EXPERIENCE PRIORITIZE EVENTS THAT STIMULATE THEIR SENSES AND EMOTIONS

DIY & CREATION

Enjoys hands on experience, making something oneself and in being creative

DISCOVERY & ADVENTUROUSNESS

Seeks novelty and variety

SELF-EXPRESSION

Makes an effort to reveal one's inner self in outward manifestations

AUTHENTICITY

Desires what is true and original, seeks products, stories and experiences that feel real and genuine

PLEASURE

Prioritizes that which feels good

A close-up photograph of a woven basket filled with fresh blueberries. The berries are a deep, vibrant blue with a slight white bloom. The basket's texture is visible, and the background is softly blurred.

HEALTH

**THOSE WHO VALUE HEALTH ARE DRIVEN BY THE DESIRE TO ACHIEVE
PHYSICAL WELL-BEING**

NATURALNESS Prefers that which is close to nature (not man made) and serves the purpose for which it evolved or was created for

PURITY Desires things to remain unmodified and unadulterated

SIMPLICITY Enjoys things that are straightforward, have few parts and are easy to understand and do

HARM PREVENTION & SAFETY Avoids that which seems risky or dangerous; focuses on preventing negative outcomes

VITALITY Prioritizes feeling and / or looking good

ACHIEVEMENT

THOSE WHO VALUE ACHIEVEMENT FIND SATISFACTION IN EFFORT

GROWTH & IMPROVEMENT

Works to continually better oneself, sets new goals once old ones are accomplished

BALANCE

Seeks to find and maintain equilibrium, believes in moderation

EXPERTISE

Enjoys acquiring knowledge, desires a deep understanding of subjects of interest

SAVVINESS

Finds satisfaction in knowing more than and/or outsmarting others; takes pride in making smart decisions and in being hard to fool



CONTROL

THOSE WHO VALUE CONTROL DESIRE AUTONOMY OVER THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND EXPERIENCE

STRUCTURE & ROUTINE Finds satisfaction in order, rules, and predictability

FUNCTIONALISM Focuses on the utilitarian application of things, prefers things that serve a particular purpose and do it well

BODY AS GAUGE Uses and trusts one's own body and primary experiences as as best indicator

ECONOMY & AVOIDING WASTE Desires to use resources wisely; feels distress when resources are misused or items need to be thrown out

CONFLICTS

When core values come into conflict, we experience a range of negative emotions including discomfort, guilt, confusion and frustration. Products, messages, and experiences that resolve core value conflicts are the ones that resonate with consumers; they are memorable and compelling precisely for how they go straight to the heart of the matter. While there can be any permutation of core value conflicts, some are particularly common in the realm of food consumption.

PLEASURE VS. HEALTH & VITALITY

SAVVINESS VS. PURITY

ADVENTURE VS. HARM PREVENTION

NATURALNESS VS. ECONOMY & WASTE AVOIDANCE

TRADITION & CONTINUITY VS. HEALTHY & SAFETY

SERVING OTHERS VS. HEALTH & ACHIEVEMENT

CONFLICT AVOIDANCE VS. NURTURE & HEALTH

SELF EXPRESSION VS. AFFILIATION & CONTINUITY

Tactic 1

RESONATING WITH A VALUE

I need to replenish after a work out. My protein shakes were doing the job but they just didn't taste all that great and seemed really processed. Then my trainer told me that high protein chocolate milk is a great muscle rebuilder. When I'm watching everything else I eat, it feels like a treat.





Tactic 2

RESOLVING A VALUE CONFLICT

I want a healthy option for my cereal and was using nonfat milk but with the bran flakes, it just felt like denial. Almond milk feels like more of a treat, and that I'm not denying myself just trying to do the right thing. Why do we have to sacrifice pleasure for health?



Tactic 3

INTRODUCE A CONFLICT WITH A COMPETITOR

Almond milk is often perceived as a healthier option to regular milk and especially popular with consumers who hold naturalness and purity in high regard. Introduce the idea that

almond milk is overly processed and unnatural, and unsustainable to boot. We're not meant to squeeze milk from an almond.

Real milk is pure and natural.

Tactic 4

SATISFYING SEVERAL NEEDS AT ONCE

I heard that the bacteria in your gut impacts all kinds of aspects of my health from regularity to Azheimers. Keeping my gut healthy makes me feel like I am taking care of myself now and in the future. I don't want my health to limit me, I want to age gracefully. Yogurt is an easy way to make sure I have plenty of those good bacteria, it tastes great and I love trying new flavors.

