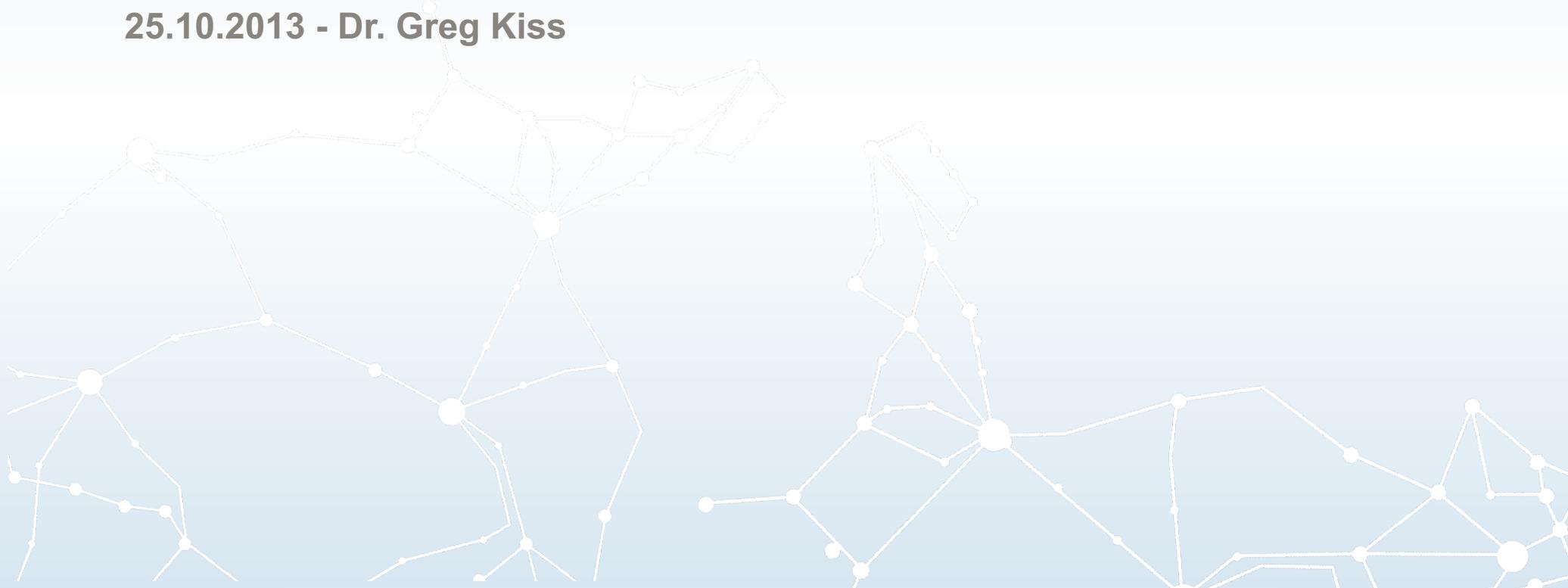


Pre-testing of product packaging by focus groups

25.10.2013 - Dr. Greg Kiss



Aim of this lecture: Pre-testing of product packaging by focus groups

- Understanding the following terms:
 - Market research, qualitative research methods, psychological tests and qualitative survey, focus group interviews, product packaging, corporate brand and product brand.
- Understanding the **advantages and disadvantages of qualitative market research methods** especially in case of focus group interviews.
- Understanding **how and why to use focus group interviews** for pre-testing of products, advertisements or packaging designs etc.

Literature:

- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2010). Qualitative Communication Research Methods, 3rd Edition

Agenda



Theoretical framework

Qualitative methods within market research

Advantages and disadvantages of focus groups

Practical implications

Design and pre-testing of product packaging

Test results and implications

General definition of market research

Market research is the systematic and objective approach to the **development and provision of information** for the marketing management **decision-making process**.

Source: Kinnear, Taylor, 1996.

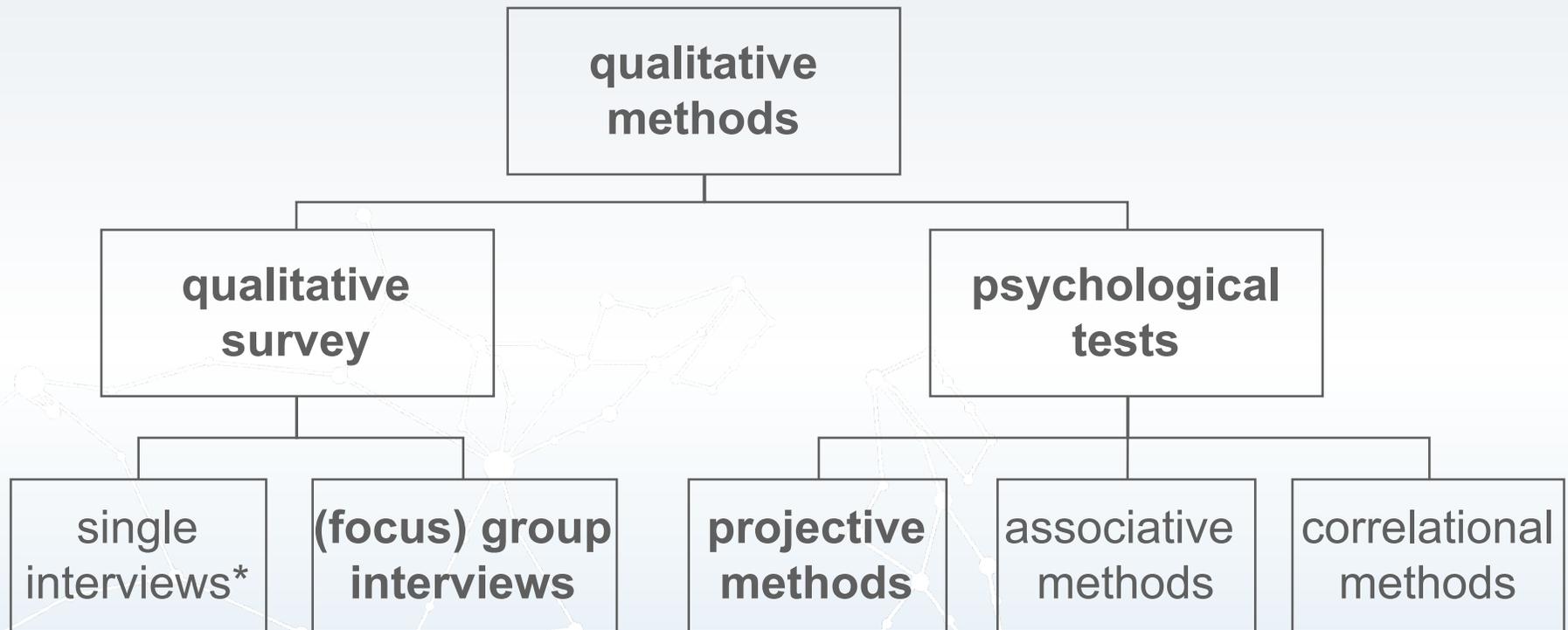
Market research is the systematic and objective **identification, collection, analysis and dissemination of information** for the purpose of **improving decision making** related to the identification and solution of problems and opportunities in marketing.

Source: American Marketing Association, 2004.

Steps and responsibilities during a market research project

Definition of a marketing challenge, that should be explored by market research.		
	Marketing Manager	Market Researcher
1. Defining the objectives of market research	■ ■ ■	■
2. Designing the market research study - by the used qualitative/quantitative method - by the size of the general sample	■ ■	■ ■
3. Developing a research plan - by timeline - by test design, stimuli & e.g. questionnaire - by samples and sub-samples	■	■ ■ ■
4. Conducting the market research study - field work - analysis - conclusion and interpretations	■	■ ■ ■

Overview of qualitative methods within market research



* e.g. laddering technique, critical-incident-technique

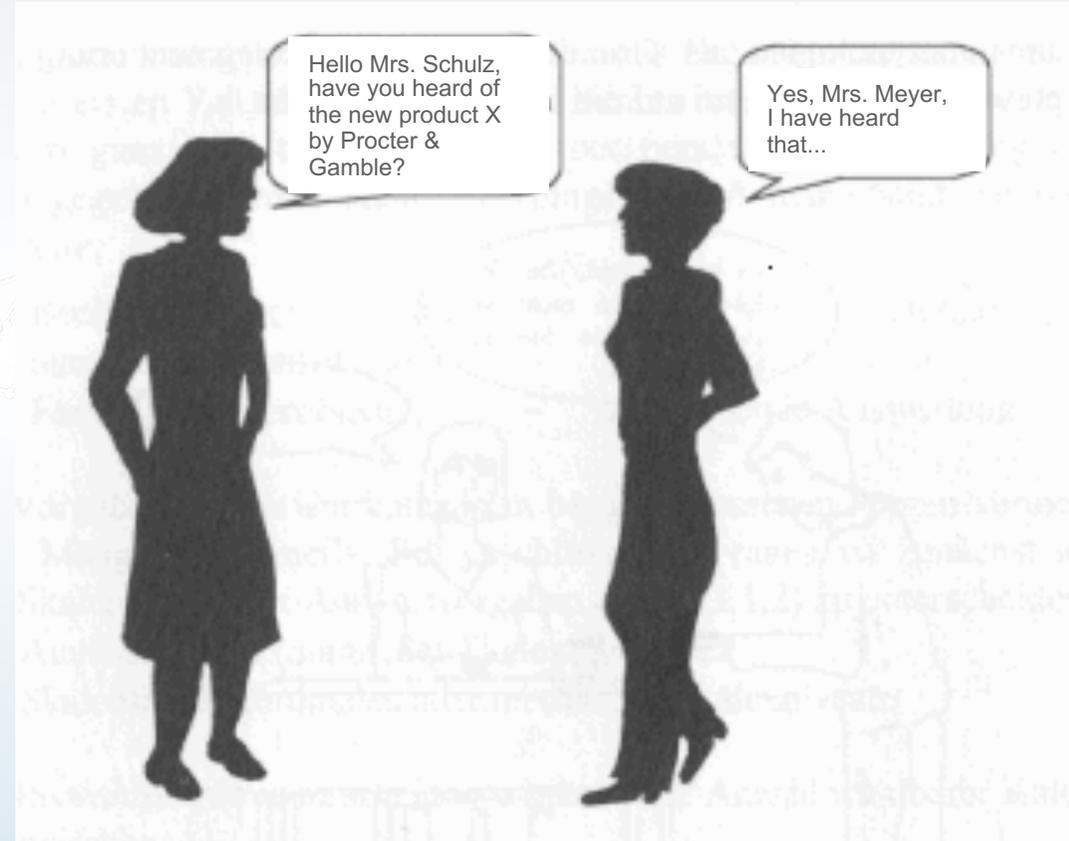
Advantages of projective methods within market research

➔ projective methods overcome:

- non-awareness
- irrationality
- gentleness

➔ used methods are:

- **completing-of-sentences**
- picture-frustration-test
- unreal situation test
- painting pictures
- interpretation of pictures (Rorschach-Test)



Source: Hammann/Erichson, 2006.

Advantages of focus group interviews

Small number of people (usually between 4 and 12, but typically 8) brought together with a **moderator** to focus on a specific product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging.

Focus groups **aim at a discussion** instead of on individual responses to formal questions, and produce **qualitative data (preferences and beliefs)** that may or may not be representative of the general population.

Source: Lindlof, Taylor, 2010.

What should be considered by analyzing results of a focus group interview:

- There is always a **context of a message** (e.g. “I like isotonic beer – after workout!”)
- There is always a message and a **tonality** (tonality is never part of written protocols)
- Different people mean **different things by the same term** (e.g. „good service“)

Roles and responsibilities during focus group interviews

How?

- Typically between 4 and 12 participants, 1 moderator.
- At least two different focus groups.
- Interviews should be conducted for a maximum of 90 minutes.
- Interviews should be recorded by video or audio.
- Moderator is responsible for interaction between participants as well as controlling the flow and direction of the discussion.

Why?

- Stimulation of new ideas to existing products or designs.
- Collection of ideas or moods to existing product designs, advertisements or packaging.
- Development of hypotheses for further research.
- Interpretation of existing quantitative study results.

Whom?

- Participants have to be users of a product or customers of a company etc.
- Groups should be as homogeneous as needed (e.g. citizens of same country) but...
- as heterogeneous as possible to achieve a discussion between loyal and less-loyal customers regarding specific features of a product, for example.

Advantages and disadvantages of focus group interviews

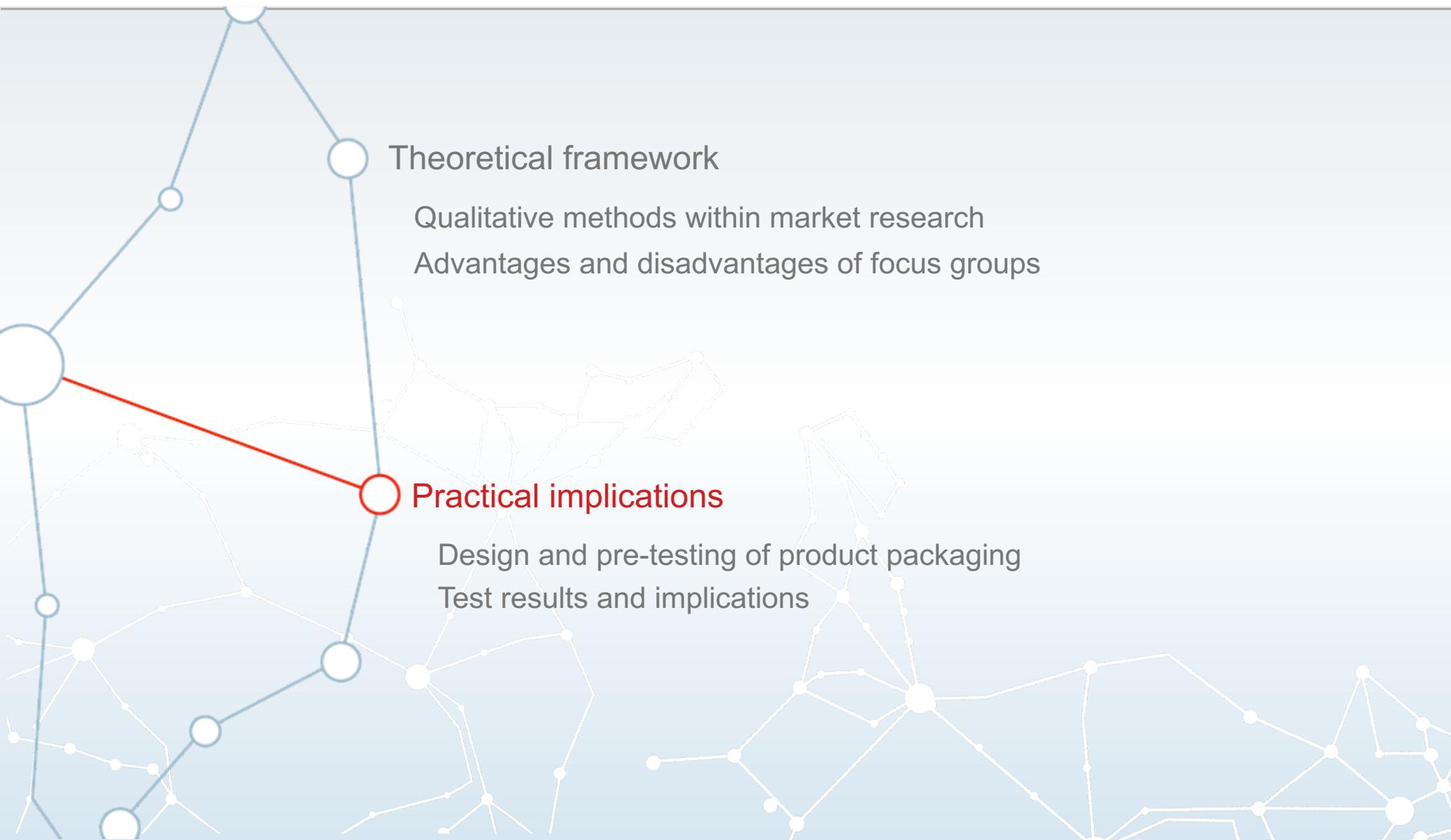
Advantages

- Stimulation of participants (by moderator or by themselves)
- Snowball effect (one answer leads to another one)
- Research synergies and higher productivity of groups
- Spontaneous answers as well as no forced answers
- Fast results and cost efficiency

Disadvantages

- Not enough time for understanding deeper insights (compared to laddering technique)
- Group impact on individual answers possible
- Limited use of stimuli (compared to single interviews)
- Date coordination might be more complicated

Agenda



Theoretical framework

Qualitative methods within market research

Advantages and disadvantages of focus groups

Practical implications

Design and pre-testing of product packaging

Test results and implications

Pre-testing of product packaging by Nestlé

Defining the objectives:

Nestlé is planning to change the packaging of KitKat chocolate. Due to loss of image (e.g. Greenpeace campaign), they want to find out how visible the Nestle corporate brand should be on KitKat product packaging.

Designing the pre-test:

Focus groups with 8-10 participants each will be conducted in four different countries (Germany, France, Italy, Spain) to get feedback to three different KitKat packaging designs.

Research plan, timeline and stimuli:

In September 2011 three slightly different KitKat packaging designs were developed by famous agency. In October 2011 a total of **8 focus group** interviews (two in every country) were conducted with a total of **70 participants**. On the 9th of November there will be a presentation of the pre-test results.



Development of KitKat stimuli by Nestlé's agency

Packaging Design 1	Packaging Design 2	Packaging Design 3
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Very simple design▪ the brand Nestlé is only visible on the backside of packaging▪ Red color and KitKat logo are main visual elements of packaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Still simple design▪ The brand Nestlé is visible on the front side of packaging▪ Red color and KitKat logo are still main visual elements but chocolate is added	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ More emotional design▪ The corporate brand Nestlé is part of the KitKat logo▪ Brand logos (Nestlé and KitKat) are main visual elements of packaging added by chocolate image

Associations of focus group participants to different design versions

Packaging Design 1	Packaging Design 2	Packaging Design 3
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Good taste▪ KitKat is currently quite cheap at REWE stores (11x)▪ KitKat ice-cream tastes good as well (3x)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Good taste▪ Have a break, have a KitKat (18x)▪ Nestlé is producing palm oil by destroying Indonesian forest (13x)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Good taste of KitKat chocolate▪ Greenpeace (21x)▪ Nestlé “is killing orangutans” (15x)▪ Swiss company and Swiss chocolate



First implication: Nestle should use the companies brand name on KitKat products very carefully due to negative associations of customers. There seems to be no country specific difference of these negative associations at the time.

Summary: Pre-testing of product packaging by focus groups

Qualitative market research

- Focus group interviews are a **powerful method of qualitative market research** to overcome non-awareness and irrationality problems of a classical questionnaire.

Four steps to great results

- **Defining the objectives of a focus group interview, designing sample sizes and developing stimuli is as important as** conducting the study and analyzing the – more qualitative than quantitative – results.

Advantages of focus groups

- Focus group interviews are **cost efficient and produce fast results in a short time**, fruitful results are possible due to snowball effect and higher productivity of groups.

Pre-testing by focus groups

- Focus group interviews are appropriate method (see Nestlé example) to pre-test and evaluate specific designs of products, advertisements or packaging for example.

Thank you for your attention!

**Please do not hesitate
to ask.**

