



GU Energy x Berkeley Haas

Focus Group:

FORMER COLLEGE ATHLETES



METHODOLOGY

Research Setup & Goals

INTERVIEWEE OVERVIEW

Demographics and Segments

KEY FINDINGS

Overview of Research Findings

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

Implications from Key Findings



Meet the Team



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Overview

Research Focus & Context



Research Focus & Goals

Examine what former college athletes value in health, fitness, and sports nutrition, including their beliefs, goals, and concerns.

Key Questions

Health, Nutrition, & Fitness Post-Grad: How did this evolve from high-intensity performance to a less demanding routine?

The Role of Sports Nutrition: How does this demographic perceive sports nutrition + what nutritional aspects do they prioritize?



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Meet Our Players Off the Field

Interviewee Demographics

Demographics

13

Total Interviewees

6

Women

7

Men

7

White

3

Asian

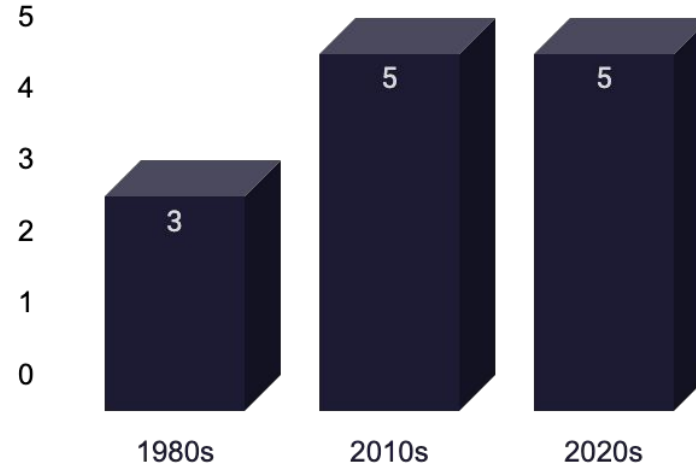
2

Black

1

Hispanic

Graduation Year



Level

9

D1

2

D2

1

D3

1

Nationals



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Our Players - Masterclass

MASTERCLASS

Age Range: 60-63

Habits:

- Exercise **4-6x** / week
- Mobility & longevity
- Diet <-> Performance



Fred Howard, 63
Grad: Yale University, **1985**
D1 Football (1989-92)



Jay Axelson, 61
Grad: U of Minnesota, **1984**
D1 Golf (1983-4)



Jin Teik Oon, 60
Grad: Brigham Young University, **1988**
D1 & Olympic Swimming (Singapore)(1984-88)



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Our Players – Youthful Elite

YOUTHFUL ELITE

Age Range: 21–34

Habits:

- Exercise **3–5x** / week
- Have some knowledge of nutrition
- Focused on **balanced** fitness & diet routines



Matt Rude, 31
Grad: UC Berkeley, 2014
D1 Rowing (2010–14)



Nik Brazley, 34
Grad: U of Kentucky, 2012
D1 Football (2007–11)



Jayla Flores, 25
Grad: Merrit College, 2020
D2 Basketball (2018–20)



Kalyn Chang, 21
Grad: Biola University, 2023
D2 Swimming (2020–22)



Rochelle Lam, 25
Grad: U of Michigan, 2020
Nationals Boxing (2018–20)



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Our Players – Weekend Warriors

WEEKEND WARRIORS

Age Range: 22–34

Habits:

- Exercise **1–3x** a week/work out casually, whenever
- No set routine regarding fitness or nutrition



Marcus Marshall, 34
Grad: Chico State, 2010
D1 Rugby (2006–2010)



Betsy Kottkamp, 34
Grad: UC Santa Cruz, 2012
D3 Basketball (2010–11)



Isabella Chen, 22
Grad: U of Maryland, 2023
D1 Swimming (2019–23)



Monica Coen, 33
Grad: Santa Clara University, 2012
D1 Track + XC (2008–12)



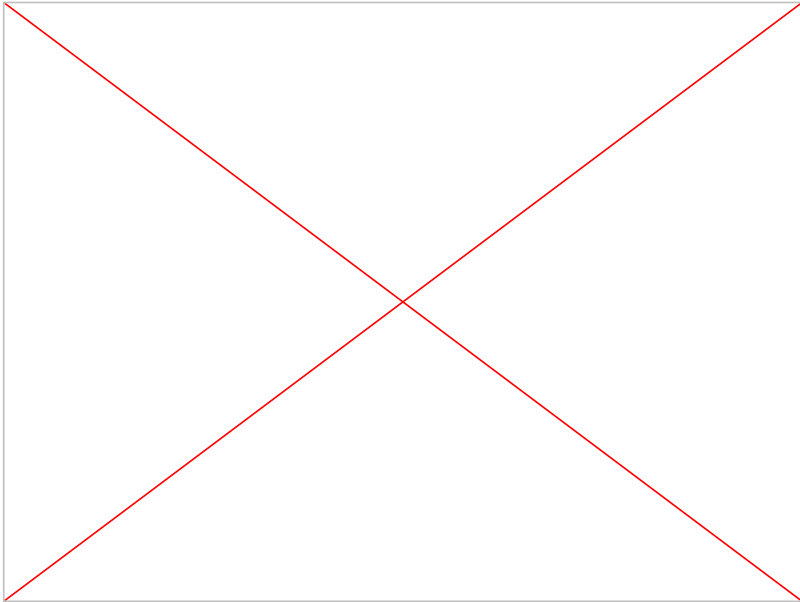
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Key Findings & Marketing Implications

1. Ex-college athletes still adhere to values of discipline developed in college & apply it to their everyday lives.



Jay Axelson, 61, Masterclass



Fred Howard, 63, Masterclass

Consumer Behavior Concept – Value System (VS)

DETERMINANTS OF VS

Values affect behavior ~

One's value system is influenced by numerous forces:

1. Sociography
2. Reference Groups
3. Life Stage
4. General Economic & Social Environment
5. Mass Media

APPLICATION

During college sports:

- Reference groups:
 - coaches + teammates → discipline & competitiveness

After college sports:

- Life stage:
 - have families now
 - → still value discipline
 - → being active with & for family

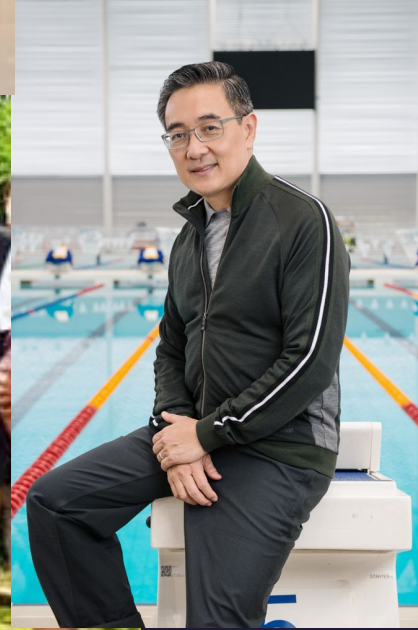


Implications

Opportunity for GU to position crossover products that integrate and **enhance** other aspects of their life outside of competitive sports/related activities.

Think differently about target:

- Don't overlook the **Masterclass**
- Possibly think about target in terms of **attitudes & values** → maybe age shouldn't be such a big factor



2. Post-grad athletes prioritize **product effects** over **product benefits**.



Monica, 34, Weekend Warrior



"[Products that are] consistent, I can have it and **not feel queasy or uncomfortable** in any way afterwards... I'm **not sure** what ingredients achieve that"

Matt, 31, Youthful Elite

Interviewees care more about how the product makes them **feel** when they consume it over the **key benefits**.

Not all products make you feel good but they all provide a promised benefit.

Consumer Behavior Concept – Decision Making

DETERMINANT ATTRIBUTES

Definition: Features that help us differentiate among alternatives and make a decision on what to choose

Noncompensatory: rigid adherence to determinant attribute

Compensatory: allows alternative to make up for shortcomings on determinant attributes with strength on other evaluative criteria

APPLICATION

Determinant attributes:

- Post-consumption effects
- Performance benefits
- Pricing
- Accessibility/convenience
- Ingredients, etc.

Interviewees use **compensatory decision making** in selecting sports nutrition products instead of having strict standards since they understand **there are trade-offs**.

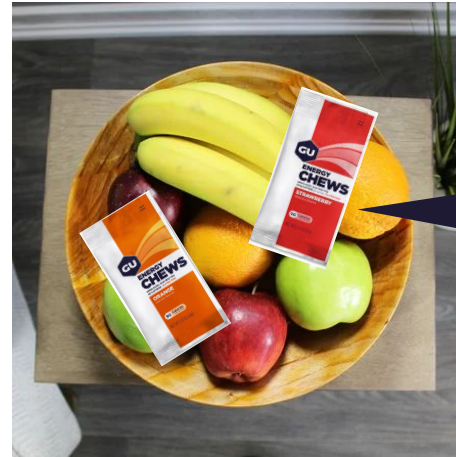


Implications

GU should differentiate themselves from other sports nutrition offerings by focusing their marketing on how their product **makes athletes feel** after consumption.

“What does clean and natural mean to you?”

FROM MY BACKYARD
WHOLE FOODS FRESH PRODUCE TRANSPARENT
FRESH PRODUCE NO PSEUDO SUGARS LIGHT ON THE STOMACH ORGANIC NO CHEMICALS
"INGREDIENTS I CAN PRONOUNCE"
FARM-TO-TABLE ORGANIC FDA-APPROVED
NOT HEAVILY PROCESSED FARM-TO-TABLE TRANSPARENT LIGHT ON THE STOMACH FDA-APPROVED



“Mmm... light & energizing. GU makes me feel GU!”



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Thank You!
Q&A



Segment Summary

Masterclass

Average Age:
62

- Have been in charge of their diet & exercise for a while
- Fitness goals include maintenance
- Know what workouts & nutrition products they like
- Believes diet is very important to performance

Youthful Elite

Average Age:
28

- Most former athletes fall in this category
- Generally familiar with fitness & nutrition, adapting that to their current lifestyle
- Actively working toward specific fitness or performance goals + Have a fitness routine
- Generally open to changes in diet & routine

Weekend Warriors

Average Age:
30

- Former athletes but didn't think about nutrition or diet or how their diet affected performance
- Know little about nutrition, but starting to learn
- Recently took charge of their diet & exercise
- Fitness goals generally revolve around staying active and healthy



Consumer Behavior Concept

Determinant Attributes

Definition: Features that help us differentiate among alternatives and make a decision on what to choose

Noncompensatory: rigid adherence to determinant attribute

Compensatory: allows alternative to make up for shortcomings on determinant attributes with strength on other evaluative criteria

Application

Determinant attributes: post-consumption effects, performance benefits, pricing, accessibility/convenience, ingredients, etc.

We found that most interviewees use **compensatory decision making** in selecting sports nutrition products instead of having strict standards since they understand **there are trade-offs**.

Implications

GU should differentiate themselves from other sports nutrition offerings by focusing their marketing on how their product makes athletes feel after consumption.



Consumer Values

Price & Convenience

“I got married and had kids, so family life has affected working out. As for brands, I just **grab whatever is at the store and convenient.**” –Nik Brazley (Youthful Elite)



Snackability

“I’ve had those Gatorade and GUs, I’ve eaten them before my swim meets a lot. But I **don’t really need that anymore because I’m not working out that much** or consistently. I’m not exactly sure if I would take those supplements again, unless I have a goal or competition I’m working towards.” –Isabella Chen (Weekend Warrior)



Taste

“I’ve done gels before... **I’m fine with sugar.** I value the taste more. You want the best thing you can put down. Like a candy or a chewy thing. It’s ok if there’s sugar in it if it means I’m not going to feel like I’m going to throw up after drinking it.” –Monica Coen (Youthful Elite)

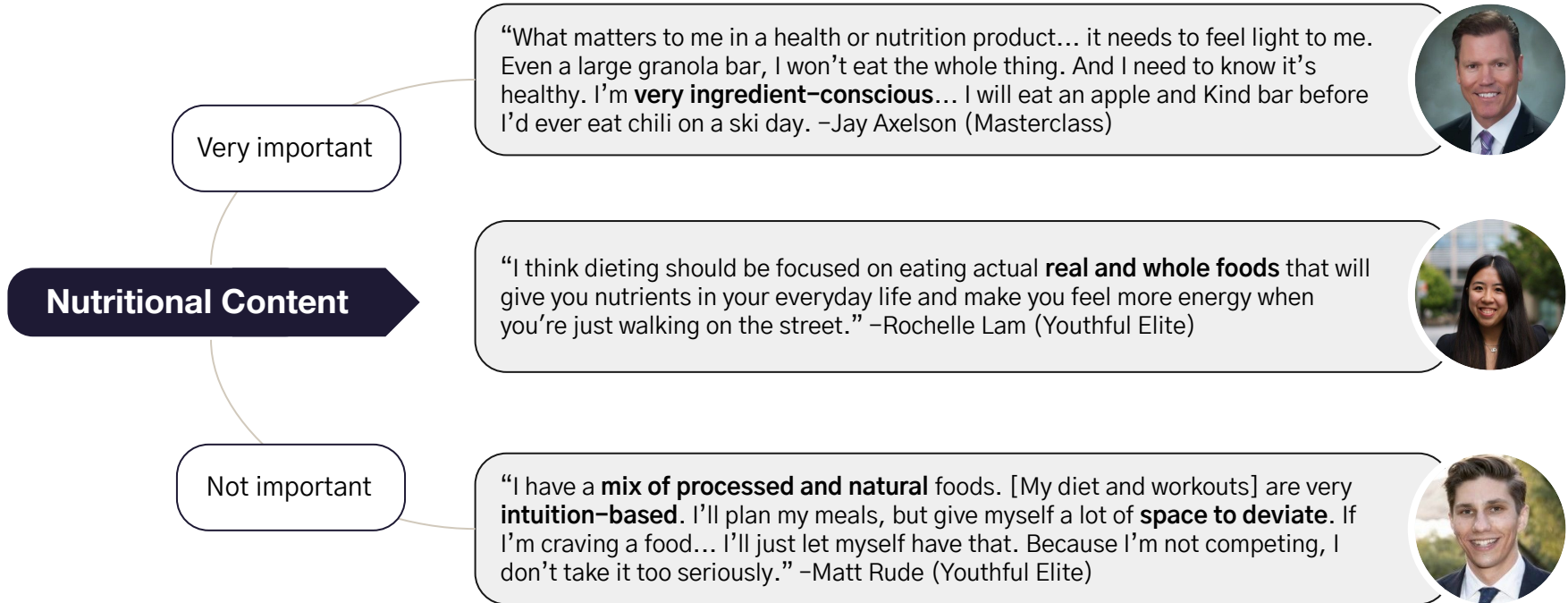


Peer Reviews






“[The sports nutrition market] is a crowded space with a lot of products outside of government regulation. I think the biggest challenge in general is to figure out what claims by a company are actually substantiated. To do so, I’ll **rely on external, neutral reviews** (e.g. Amazon) or a source I trust.” –Fred Howard (Masterclass)



Consumer Values



Competitor & Brand Perception Analysis

						
Familiarity/ Approachability	YE	Yellow	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
	WW	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green
Convenience	YE	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow
	WW	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
Daily (Non- sport) Use	YE	Red	Yellow	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green
	WW	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Light Green
Nutritional Content	YE	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green
	WW	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green
Taste	YE	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green
	WW	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green

