

## Package design & shelf placement

*“Eye tracking opens up the “black-box” in the middle of the sales cycle, providing detailed objective data about consumers’ actual purchasing behavior and decision-making patterns. For example, it allows promotion managers to carry out more varied and subtle planning of planograms when arranging retail sales space.”*

Richard May, Director, Japan Consumer Marketing Research Institute (JMR)

**Among the visual clutter of a Tokyo convenience store shelf, a product needs to really stand out from competitors to be noticed. Facing short product cycles and relatively low brand loyalty among Japanese beer consumers, JMR’s large multinational beverage clients needed a powerful tool to objectively evaluate package design and shelf layout. Eye tracking of consumers’ actual gaze paths at the point-of-purchase was the answer. In its studies, JMR used a Tobii X120 Eye Tracker.**

### Key questions

A major Japanese beer maker wanted to evaluate the work done by their creative agencies on package design and by their retail partners on shelf layout before introducing a new product. The new, low taxed beer with low malt was planned to be offered in two varieties: Ginger Draft Green (in green theme cans) and Ginger Draft White (in white theme cans).

JMR set up a series of eye tracking studies to evaluate the effects of product allocation and package designs.

The following questions were asked:

- Is there a “golden zone” in the middle of a typical reach-in beer cooler, attracting proportionally more visual attention than other locations?
- Are there any clear, beer selection choice patterns?
- Does gender and age influence visual attention and choice patterns?
- Does brand loyalty influence visual attention?
- What is the relative visual effectiveness of different design components?

### The study

40 Japanese regular beer drinkers, gender and age group balanced, were recruited based on their beer brand loyalty (classified as high, medium and low) and actual buying habits.

In an initial test, individual package designs for three different beers (the soon to be introduced Ginger Draft Green and White, and a third already on the market: Kirin Zero) were placed in the center of three otherwise identical coolers.

Life size projections of the three coolers were shown to all respondents for 15 seconds each and in randomized order.

Respondents were instructed to “look for an

item they intended to buy” and being eye tracked while doing so.

The projections were followed by debriefings, based on traditional questionnaires. Respondents answered questions such as: Which products do you recall well? Why? Which stood out the most? Why?

In a second test, respondents were shown close-up images of different beers. The beers were seen in isolation outside the shelf context and in randomized order.

### The result

The initial test confirmed the assumption of the existence of a “golden zone” in the middle of the beer cooler, getting the most overall gaze attention (the same region where the products were placed).

The Ginger Draft Green and White products attracted more attention than the Kirin Zero product. This suggests that newness of the Ginger Draft products grabs attention.



Heat map showing male respondents’ view of Plan G incl. Ginger Draft Green.

Heat map showing male respondents’ view of Plan Z incl. Kirin Zero.

The Ginger Draft Green package was more successful than Ginger Draft White in terms of gaze duration (fixation length) and quickness of location (time to first fixation) within the initial 5 seconds window.

Overall, women engaged more in “visual searching” than did men; i.e., their gaze covered a wider area of the cooler case, with more fixations for longer times.



Heat map showing male respondents' view of Plan G.

Heat map showing female respondents' view of Plan G.

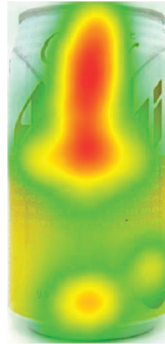
As expected by the maker's product taste and image planner, the the Ginger Draft products got better results within the intended group, 20's and 30's generation respondents.

Consumers sought out, and generally did find their stated favourite brand, within the first 5 seconds of seeing the cooler case.

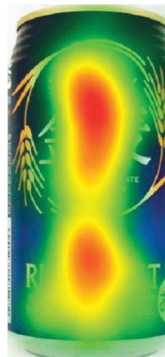
The second package appraisal test showed that arge logos got lots of gaze attention. Brands where logos were frequently looked at also succeeded in getting buyers to see the makers' text messages.

Specifically well performing package elements, frequently seen and gaining long gaze times, were the beer foam and wave motif on the Clear Asahi product and the “Rich Malt” message on the Kin-Mugi product.

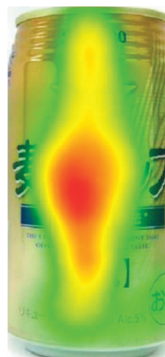
Men showed a strong tendency to look at the logo and message. Females tracked along a vertical line; for the Mugi-to-Hop beer they seemed to be confirming the product name.



*Clear Asahi*  
Gaze concentration from mid-to-upper; indicates viewing of the brand logo and beer bubbles motif in the center, which includes a brand message.



*Kin-Mugi*  
Gaze concentration in a straight line in the middle; brand logo and message “Rich Malt” viewed.



*Mugi-to-Hop*  
Gaze concentration at center; brand logo and the entirety of the message text seen.

## General conclusions

It takes less than a second to be seen and for the consumer to make a decision. The eye tracking tests showed just how brief the scan time is across the entire scene.

Maximum time spent looking at any of the many products shown in the cooler was 0.53 seconds. Even 0.30 seconds of visual dwell time on a package was enough for consumers to find their product.

Differences were found among males and females. Females used a wider visual search range, while males were more heavy-handed, focusing in fewer spots for longer times. Also, between medium and low loyalty beer buyers, differences were found in viewing patterns, visual dwell times, etc.

The makers' channel marketing staff successfully incorporated findings from the study into the retail level roll out promotions.

## About Japan Consumer Marketing Research Institute (JMR)

Japan Consumer Marketing Research Institute specializes in strategies for consumer marketers throughout Asia.

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