

Case Study

Window Treatment Company Uses Online Research and In Home Product Placement Tests to Test Installation Process and Product Quality

HunterDouglas

Challenge

Hunter Douglas had an aggressive new product development and production schedule in the 2005-2007 time period. Up to that point, they had not been able to identify many product and installation problems in advance of full production and launch. Several products had gone into full production without glitches in design and use being identified, resulting in poor early customer experiences and high customer support burdens.

Solution

We partnered with research experts BrandJuice to design a comprehensive national product usage and the testing program. For each product line, we recruited higher income target households in 1-2 major metro areas. We recruited and profiled them, then had them measure their windows and enter them at a custom website. We also coordinated professional installers who came to households to measure and install the shades when appropriate. Consumers then took 2 online surveys, one for their shipment, installation and early use experience, and second, for full usage, experience and satisfaction feedback. We coordinated all installations, provided front line support for ordering, installation, problem shipments, returns, and ongoing use.

Results

The research provided Hunter Douglas with information from shipping and packaging problems, expected pricing, installation concerns, likes and dislikes and usage. Hunter Douglas was able to identify problem designs and fix them before full production and shipment. They were also able to better understand strengths, best uses, and previously undiscovered benefits to be highlighted in launch and early marketing communications. Some lines were discontinued before launch because of poor test results, saving millions in customer support expenses and poor customer experiences, avoiding significant brand reputation damage.