

## **Synovate and Prevar™ win a prestigious NZ Marketing Effectiveness Research Award**

By Jonathan Dodd

It's common lore now that product development cycles are faster than ever. That brings its own stresses but spare a thought for those charged with developing products that won't be launched for fifteen to twenty years. To make matters even more difficult, try identifying what consumers around the world will be wanting so far into the future, in a market where there is no way of showing the potential products that could be developed!

That's the challenge that Synovate overcame, in the project that saw them and their client Prevar™ awarded the Platinum Award for Consumer Products Research.

Prevar™ is the New Zealand-based global joint-venture company charged with the worldwide development and commercialisation of new apple and pear varieties. The company came to Synovate looking to understand what pipfruit consumers around the world would value in their apples and pears in the future. The options to be researched were wide – from different skin and flesh colours, through to functional benefits such as appetite-suppressing apples, or heart health boosting pears; all bred by natural means, without any genetic engineering.

An extensive design period saw the birth of a project that typified Synovate's "3 I's", brand values of Internationalisation, Integration, and Innovation. The project involved an online survey, seamlessly implemented by GMI, of 1200 people, in 10 countries and 7 languages, and employed a range of complex techniques including choice modelling and the butterfly-cusp algorithm used to better understand consumer decision-making. Innovative use of specially-generated pictures helped respondents conceptualise possible apple and pear variations and hence answer questions more accurately.

Synovate was thus able to identify how apple and pears competes, across global regions, with other types of fruits in meeting consumer needs. The results of the trade-off analysis allowed Synovate to calculate the importance values of different pipfruit characteristics, from internal and external colour, through to shape, size, texture, and country of origin. These values are still being used by Prevar™ to guide its thinking on new varietal developments and commercialization strategies.

For the first time, the global breeding programme undertaken by world renown fruit-science company HortResearch under exclusive contract to Prevar™ has been informed by a worldwide consumer view of the market – not just in terms of which tastes appeal in sensory testing, but also in terms of how consumers view their fruit consumption in general, the problems that fruit solves in their lives, and how they could respond to future pipfruit innovations.

The research has also been used to support Prevar™'s work to build relationships with stakeholders around the world, enabling the company to gain the ear of fruit buyers and growers, on the basis of sharing an understanding of what consumers will want in the future.

In commenting on the contribution of this research and its effectiveness for his organisation, Dr Brett Ennis, Prevar™ CEO stated:

*"Prevar™ was absolutely delighted with the valuable insights and information gained through this research project...we obtained new knowledge that has significant strategic and commercial utility for distinctive market territories where Prevar™*

*expects to commercialize its intellectual property. Synovate were an absolute pleasure to work with; they demonstrated patience, resilience, were focused, and were quick learners. We received an innovative and clearly written report, a customized and "tight" presentation to Directors and a sincere promise of follow-up... I have already committed to a long association with this company, as we plan for further research work."*

