

### Methodology

An online qualitative study to learn about a target audience's attitudes and behaviors using exploratory questions and moderated discussion boards.

### Our Approach



Define targeted audience group(s) of 20+ respondents



Align on discussion guide and key exploratory activities



Observe and probe respondents for additional discussion

### Deliverables in 6-10 days

**IMPLICATIONS**  
How can QSRs effectively communicate “freshness” to Millennials and Gen Z?

- Freshness is important to almost all of the respondents, but they have differing impressions of what it means. Emphasizing both the “farm fresh” and “fresh cooked” aspects will drive the most interest from the most customers.
- Financial savings via loyalty and rewards programs appeal to both Adults and Teens. Focusing on coupons, deals, and accumulating rewards will keep customers coming back and build appreciation for cost-consciousness on the part of brands.
- Some in each group are also interested in more in-depth app offerings from brands, specifically with mobile ordering and increased communication with brands. Offering these capabilities will allow customers to tailor their experience and also build brand investment.
- Customers associate bright pictures of just-picked produce with the idea of freshness. Continuing to focus advertisements and in-restaurant signage on these sorts of images will keep freshness top-of-mind and help cement the idea of freshness in a brand’s QSRs.

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**PERCEPTIONS OF FRESHNESS**  
Fresh is all about produce - fruits and vegetables, describing them as just picked, crisp, and natural

**Adults** focused more on **clean, not frozen, without preservatives**

Freshness is when fresh ingredients are used to make the food. **No expired** products used and when everything is fresh and clean. ...**Clean and just picked or prepared** ingredients.  
-Male, 24, Jonesboro GA

I associate fresh ingredients with food **not previously made**. Like a burger made with that bright red beef instead of with a grey frozen patty. They slice the tomatoes, lettuce, and pickles themselves, and then assemble the burger.  
-Male, 25, Lawrenceville GA

**Teens**, on the other hand, thought of cooked to order and temperature as elements of freshness

**Freshly prepared food cooked to order**. Fresh veggies such as fresh crisp lettuce, tomatoes, etc.  
-Male, 17, Opp AL

When I think about **freshness**, I like to think **naturally grown** but not absolutely excluding bio-engineering and other things like that. I mean- say, farm grown. Grown on some type of farm and then preserved well.  
-Male, 15, Crossville TN

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**FRESHNESS CUES**  
In-view prep, restaurant cleanliness, and quality of taste gave the impression of freshness

Freshness is a feeling of transparency to consumers

By showing consumers how the food is prepared or cooked goes a long way in establishing perceptions of freshness. If a QSR has nothing to hide in prep, then consumers trust that the ingredients are high quality, fresh, and will taste good.

Places like Subway, Jimmy Johns, and In-N-Out get extra credit on freshness because food is being prepared right in front of the consumer.

“ A great way to know that a restaurant provides freshness is that it has an **open kitchen concept** and I can see the food being prepared. I can see the ingredients being prepared... it provides a **transparency that earns my trust**.  
-Male, 29, Carson CA

I know the restaurant is using fresh ingredients **when I watch them prepare** it. But sandwich places, like Subway, Jimmy Johns and the likes use fresh ingredients because you see them make them, and before you order that particular sandwich, in retrospect, it doesn't really exist, so it isn't pre-made.  
-Female, 34, Louisville KY

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