

Unilever

How Unilever used Latana to track the growth of a key competitor to Dove in rural Colombia



Client overview

Dove is a leading personal care brand under Unilever, positioned in the market as a premium yet accessible option focused on skincare and hygiene. With a product portfolio that includes body washes, soaps, shampoos, deodorants, and lotions, Dove differentiates itself through its commitment to moisturizing formulations and dermatological care. Strategically, the brand leverages purpose-driven marketing, notably its "Real Beauty" platform, to build strong emotional connections with consumers, promote body positivity, and reinforce brand loyalty. Dove consistently ranks among Unilever's top-performing power brands, contributing significantly to its beauty and personal care segment.

Challenge

Colombia is a comparatively small but rapidly growing market in the beauty and personal care segment, particularly in the shampoo, conditioner and hair treat category. Unilever struggled to generate high quality, timely and efficient brand insights there for its Dove brand:

- 1. Lack of representativity**
Traditional sampling channels were heavily skewed towards the urban population centred around Bogota and lacked representativity for the rest of the country, which makes up roughly 80% of the population.
- 2. Difficult to reach target audience**
Dove required a complex segmentation approach, considering factors such as hair type (e.g. straight, wavy, curly, or afro), dandruff experience in the past six months, household decision-making for hair care purchases, and current use of hair treatments. Creating quota cells for each of these segments that would also enable an analysis of combinations thereof (e.g. women with straight hair and recent experience of dandruff) was extremely difficult.
- 3. Limited budget**
With over 20 brands in the beauty and personal care segment - each with its own set of competitors across different categories - brand tracking budget for "tier two" markets like Colombia was limited and the insights teams had to rely on infrequent brand health dips.



Solution

To give Unilever's beauty and personal care insights team access to high-quality insights that would meet their budgetary constraints, Latana implemented the following approach:

Attracting casual respondents

Latana scripted a mobile-optimized survey that captures all the required audience segments but eliminates "nice-to-have" questions to focus only on those KPIs that were essential for Dove to measure. The goal was to create a user experience that would attract casual respondents to the survey.

Interactive survey ads

Latana then turned this survey into an interactive ad where users can answer questions directly in the ad, without having to leave the environment where they saw the ad.

Ad targeting

To reach the required target audiences, Latana used ad-networks and targeted over 50% of these ads to rural areas to enhance the geographic spread of the data collection. Overall, 32,000 answers were collected from 3,400 people through over 2,000 individual apps every month.

Bayesian statistics

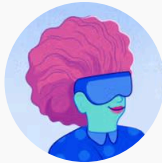
To provide reliable estimates on difficult audience combinations, Latana employed a technique called multilevel regression and poststratification (MRP), a Bayesian statistical model to estimate subgroup relationships within a sample and to adjust them to match population demographics. By leveraging MRP, Latana significantly reduced the margin of error, providing for example estimates on brand consideration among young women in rural areas with curly hair who use hair treatments, with a margin of error below 3%.

Results

By using Latana, Unilever was able to get much deeper insights into the Colombian hair care market than they previously had. Access to monthly updates enabled them to quickly react to a 5% decrease in consideration of one of their key brands and adjust their marketing. It also enabled them to understand in almost real-time the brand impact of the market entry of a key competitor - NutriBella15 - who spent heavily on marketing and captured market share and sales in record time.



"Latana's brand tracking insights have helped us better understand how our brands performed in Colombia within the Shampoo & Conditioner and Haircare category. Their data gave us granular monthly updates to core KPIs to assess the impact over time and within key segments based on hair type."



Insights Professional at Unilever

Key takeaways

Improved rural reach at low cost

Latana's mobile-optimized, interactive surveys allowed Unilever to collect quality data from underrepresented rural segments in Colombia—without relying on expensive traditional panels.

High-precision insights for niche segments

Using advanced Bayesian modelling (MRP), Latana delivered reliable insights for complex audience combinations

Faster response to market shifts

Monthly data updates enabled Unilever to quickly react to a 5% drop in brand consideration and track the rapid rise of competitor NutriBella 15 in real-time.

Interested in optimizing your marketing strategies and driving measurable growth?

Reach out to learn how Latana's custom segmentation and actionable insights can help your business achieve stronger market positioning, improved ROI, and greater audience engagement.

Contact our team