

Method to Determine Aesthetic and Functional Consumer Benefits by Market Segment:

Case Study – Synthetic Wine Closures

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Introduction

A sensory experiment was designed to measure consumer reaction to aesthetics and function of co-extruded and injection molded wine closures. Consumers were classified as “traditional” or “adventure seeking” based on purchase behaviors.

Research Objectives

- Determine how consumers rate overall opinion and their experience on a variety of functional and aesthetic measures for injection molded and co-extruded wine closures
- Determine if consumer preferences exist between closure types in “traditional” versus “adventure-seeker” brands
- Determine reactions to, and importance of, the aesthetic impact of color, branding and wine closure designs before and after use
- Evaluate differences in reactions to synthetic closures by demographics (age, gender, location) and broad psychographic group (traditional vs. adventure seeking brand buyers) to better

understand how the synthetic closures market is segmented

Methods

Consumers first opened bottles of wine to evaluate functional aspects—ease of extraction, re-insertion, and re-extraction by hand. Next, they were presented with an array of closures and bottles to evaluate aesthetic aspects—look and feel, and closure/bottle combinations relative to wine label style and brand.

Key Findings

Consumers had strong preferences on all aesthetic measures, including premium imagery, appearance with package, and fit with “essence and spirit” of brand. Consumers classified as “traditional” versus “adventure seeker” reacted similarly, with 75% preferring injection molded closures (neutral and colored) across wine label styles.

Summary

Results demonstrate successful adaptation of sensory methods to understand consumer perceptions of aesthetics and functionality, by market segment.

Test Methodology

270 Target Consumers In San Francisco And Chicago Opened And Evaluated 8 Bottles Of Wine Blocked And Rotated By Brand, Closure Color, Closure Type

CO-EXTRUDED VS. MOLDED CLOSURE		
Neutral and Color		
4 samples total for each brand, Traditional Wine Brand X and Adventure Wine Brand Y		
EVALUATIONS	FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS	AESTHETIC ASPECTS
Sequential Monadic All 8 products Traditional/Adventure – Color vs. Natural – Co-Extruded vs. Molded	First removal from bottle Ease of corkscrew insertion Ease of removal from bottle and cork screw Ease of reinsertion by hand into bottle Second removal from bottle Ease of corkscrew insertion Ease of removal from bottle and cork screw	Attractive appearance met expectations
Paired Comparison Co-Extruded vs. Molded	Ease of reinsertion	Closure Preferences Feel, Color, Fit with label type Shape, Fit to bottle “Premium” look Fit to “essence and spirit” of brand Overall preference
Brand Comparison Color vs. Natural Co-Extruded vs. Molded		Preference of closure-packaging combination Purchase Interest Overall Preference ranking of all 4 samples

Closures

Traditional Brand X Closures



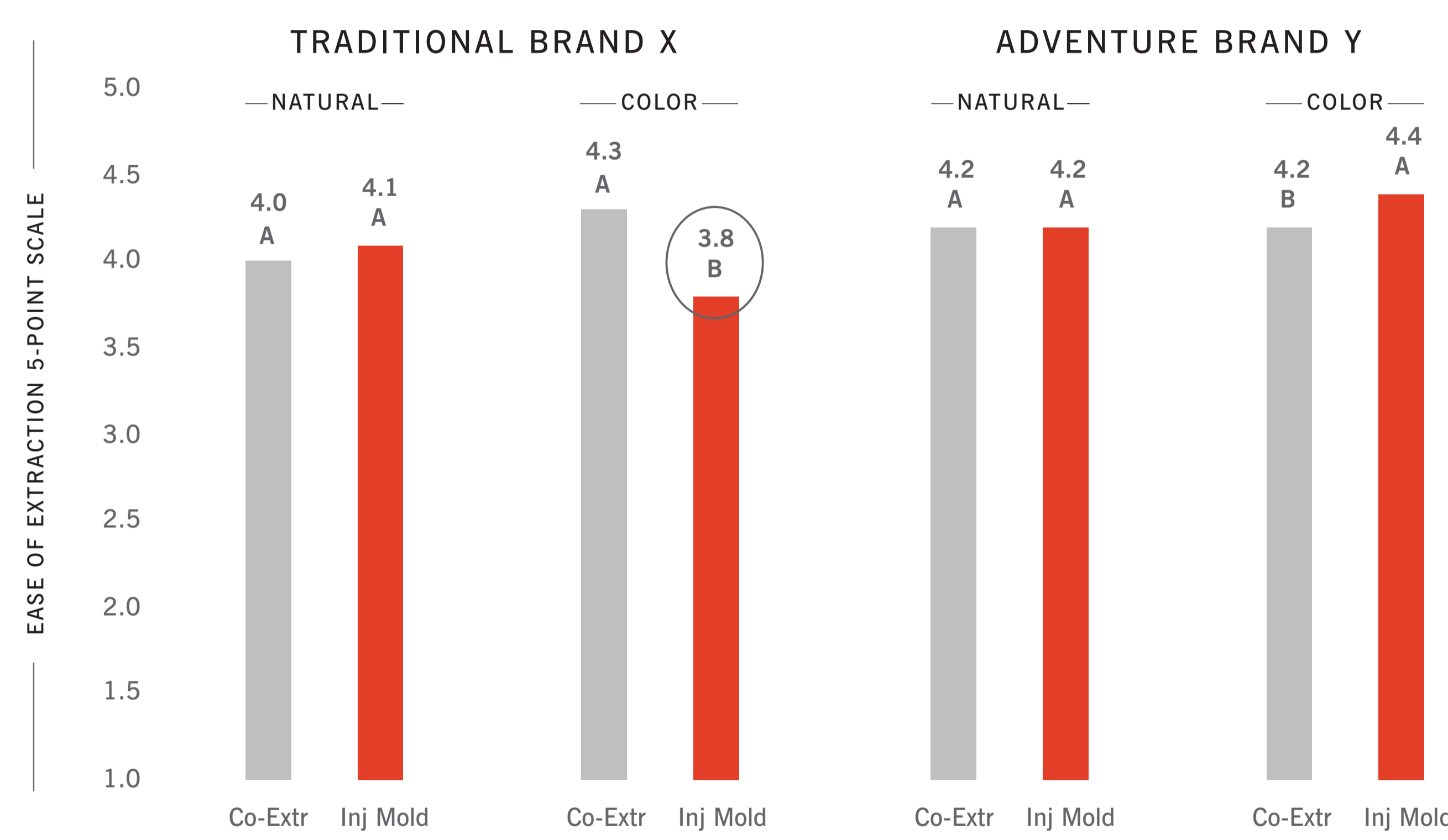
Adventure Brand Y Closures



Functional Evaluation – Sequential Monadic

How easy was it for you to remove the closure from the bottle with the corkscrew?

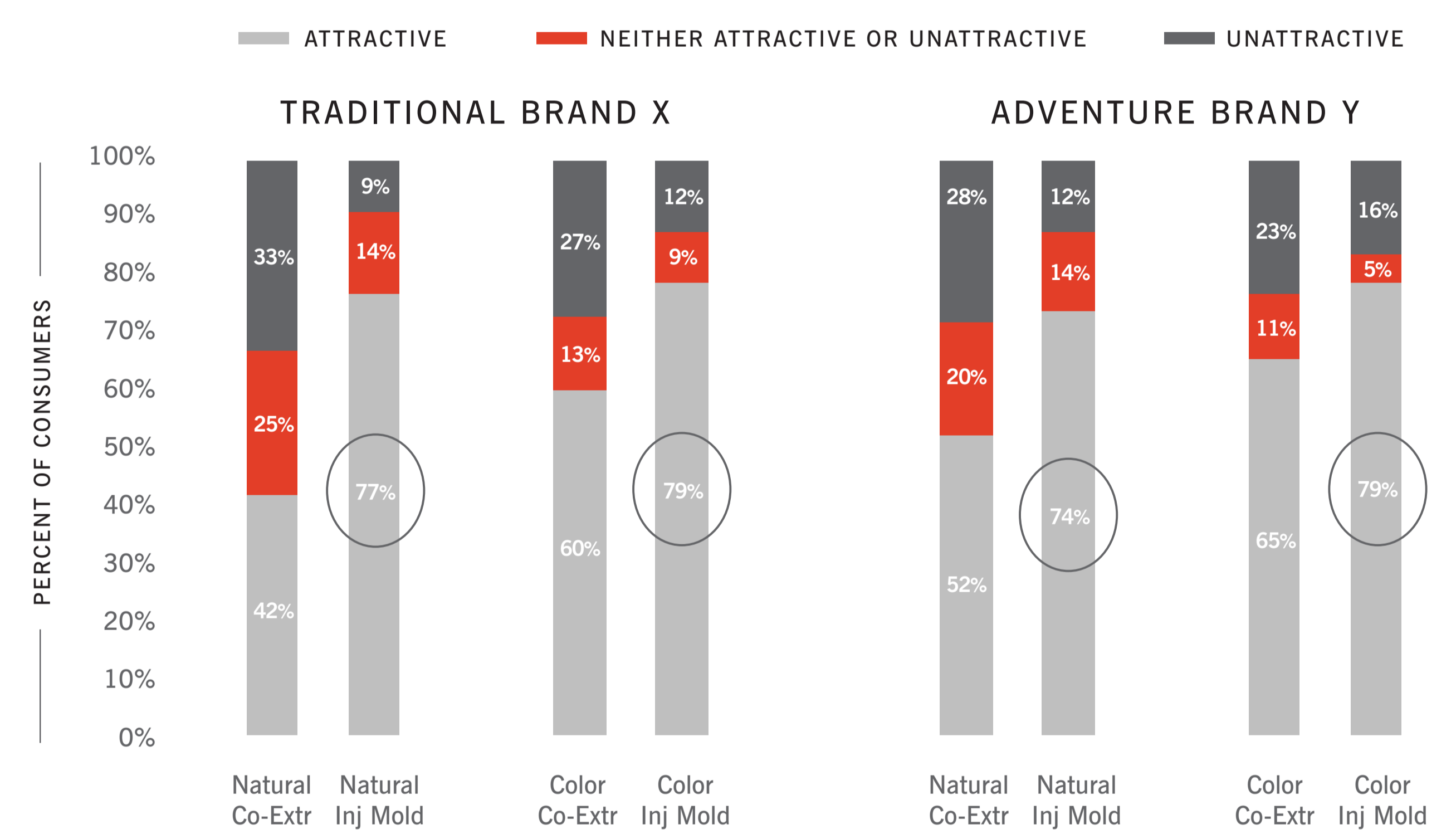
- All closures except Traditional Brand X Colored were equally easy to remove for the first time



Aesthetic Evaluation

How attractive do you think the closure looks with the bottle, label and foil combination?

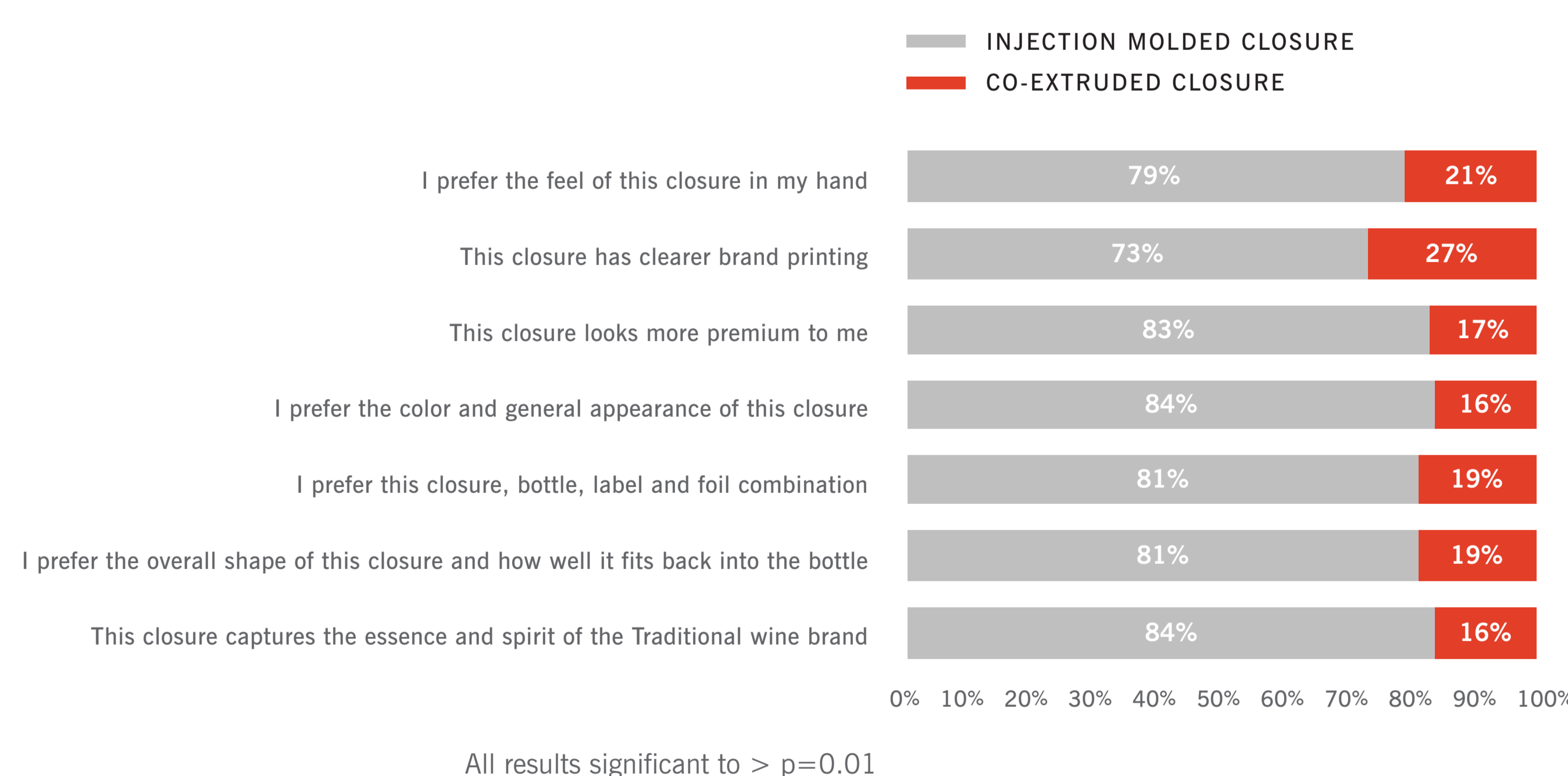
- Most consumers rated Injection Molded closures as more attractive
- Differences in attractiveness were most pronounced with natural closures, especially for Traditional Brand X



Aesthetic Evaluation Traditional Closure – Paired Test

Which natural color closure do you feel best describes each of the following statements?

- The vast majority of the consumers preferred Injection Molded natural closure compared to Co-Extruded across several attributes
- Injection Molded was considered more premium, and fit the “essence and spirit” of the Traditional wine brand better.

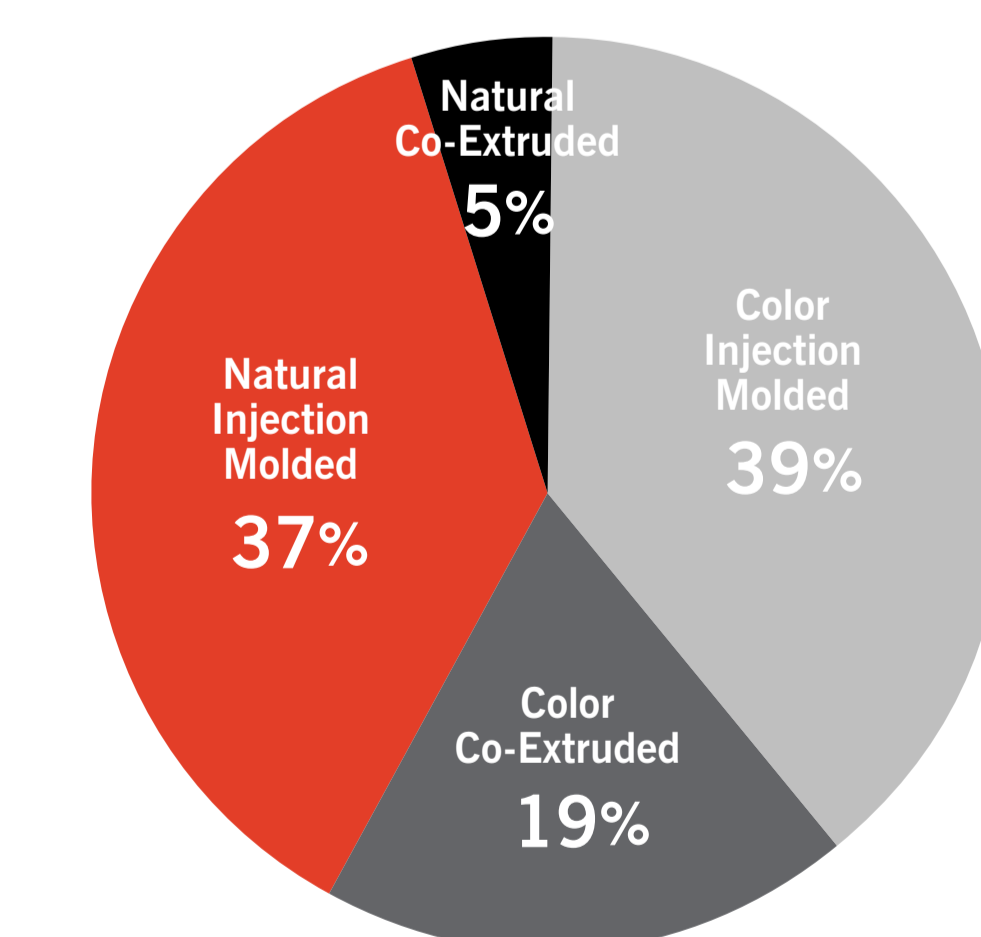


Aesthetic Preference – All Four Closures Ranked

Which closure looks best with the bottle, label and foil combination?

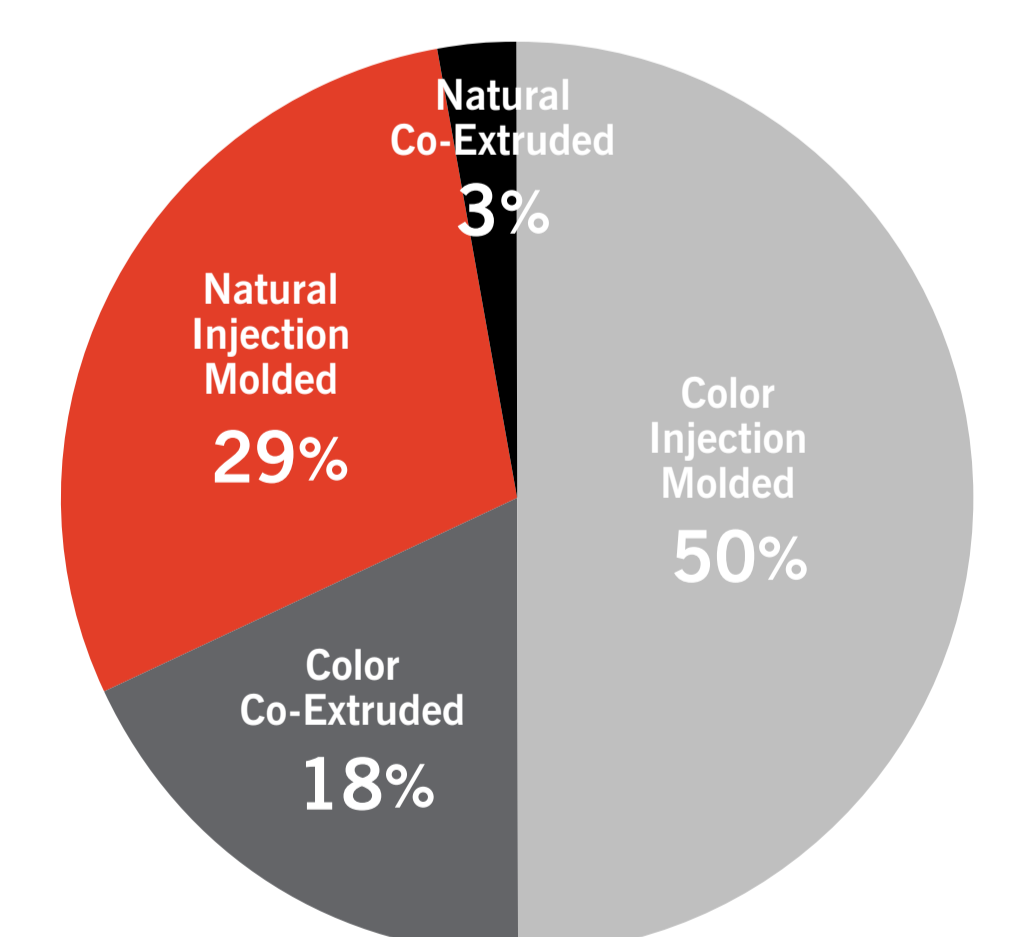
TRADITIONAL BRAND X

Both Natural and Color Injection Molded closures looked best with the Traditional wine packaging. Less than 20% of the consumers preferred the appearance of Co-Extruded closures.



ADVENTURE BRAND Y

For the Adventure Brand of wine, Injection Molded color closure looked best, followed by Injection Molded Natural closure. Less than 20% of the consumers preferred the appearance of Co-Extruded closures.



Key Findings

Functional Aspects Functionally, injection molded and co-extruded closures generally performed at parity. For all but one measure, for one pair, they were equally easy to remove from the bottle, unwind from the corkscrew and reinsert by hand. All demographic and usage groups behaved similarly to total population across all measures (r 0.95).

Aesthetic Aspects Consumers DO see and feel aesthetic based differences between injection molded and co-extruded closures. As a result, they demonstrated similar strongly significant preferences regardless of demographic, image-based or usage group (r 0.97).

Injection Molded Closures Aesthetically Preferred Across ALL Measures:

- Top rated in overall liking for BOTH Traditional and Adventure-Seeker brands
- Performed best for all aesthetic measures: highest rated for overall closure appearance, attractiveness with bottle, foil, label combination
- Over 75% of consumers preferred injection molded to co-extruded when evaluated side-by-side. Both closures. Both brands. All consumer groups – Adventure-seeker and Traditional brand users. No evidence of market segments.

In side-by-side comparisons to Co-Extruded closure, the Injection Molded closure was unanimously considered:

- More premium with clearer printing
- Better fit to “essence and spirit” of both Traditional AND Adventure brands
- More attractive in look of closure as well as with the bottle, label and foil combination

Consumers were much more likely to purchase all wines with the Injection Molded closures than Co-Extruded closures.

Do Consumer Demographic and Image Based Groups Differ?

Demographic and Image groups did NOT differ: Consumers behaved similarly regardless of gender, age, price-point, and brand-image (Traditional vs. Adventure)

Were Market Segments Evident?

No evidence of market segments: Client hypothesis was that the more “traditional” consumers might reject the brighter colored closures of the injection molded brand. This was not the case, consumers overwhelmingly preferred the injection molded brand with 75-80% preference over co-extruded for every aesthetic measure.

Significant Preference Uncovered by expanding Test Method beyond Functionality

Valuable information was gained by going beyond the functional evaluation of these closures, and incorporating aesthetic evaluations in this test. Although both closures performed at near parity with one another functionally, it was only by comparing aesthetic properties of the two closure types that client observed a significant and resounding win of injection molded closures over competitive co-extruded closures.

Marketing Team developed a winning sales story based on sensory research.



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