

Segmentation Opportunities for the EAS Brand:  
An Account Planner's Perspective

Katherine B. Macon

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Approved by:

Joe Bob Hester

Heidi Hennink-Kaminski

Sean Jecko



## **ABSTRACT**

Katherine Macon  
Segmentation Opportunities for the EAS Brand: An Account Planner's Perspective  
(Under the direction of Joe Bob Hester)

The aim of this research study was to identify the best segmentation opportunity for the EAS brand, which provides nutritional protein products, from the professional perspective an Account Planner. Three segmentation opportunities were identified through secondary research discovered during the SWOT Analysis: (1) women who work out regularly, (2) competitive student athletes, and (3) people trying to lose weight. A study was set up for each of these three groups to learn more about their lifestyles, beliefs, and attitudes to understand if and how they might serve as a profitable target market to the EAS brand. For two groups, active women and those trying to lose weight, qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted. Focus groups were carried out for the final group, student athletes, to determine market fit. The final recommendation was for EAS not to market its product as a weight-loss product. EAS would likely benefit from both student athletes and women who work out regularly as target markets, but they should prioritize student athletes as the cost would be lower.



*To my many mentors at UNC and McKinney who have helped me develop professional research and strategic thinking skills not only as I prepared this thesis but also throughout my entire time at UNC. Your thought provoking, idea-bouncing minds have provided a constant reminder that I've found the right career path.*



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## CHAPTER 1:

### The Account Planner's Perspective

To successfully sell a product and brand, it is essential to understand who might want to buy that product and engage with the brand. Simply identifying them isn't enough. Their attitudes, beliefs, values, and typical behaviors all play a role in the products that they choose to buy. Therefore, uncovering these unknowns is a key step in the process of marketing any product. The purpose of this paper is to study the market fit of three target groups for one single brand, EAS, from the perspective of an account planner. Ultimately, a recommendation will be made to the client, EAS, explaining if and how each of the target groups might fit well with the EAS brand. First, there will be a detailed explanation of the role of an account planner. Then there will be an overview of the client, EAS, as well as a SWOT analysis based on available research. From the SWOT analysis, three potential target markets will be identified for further study. Finally, for each of the three, a small research study will be proposed in order to determine which, if any, is the best fit for the EAS brand.

## **I. Value of Branding**

Because the account planner plays a vital role in branding, it's essential to understand the value of branding. On April 22, 1993, Marlboro was the first to prove the monetary value of a brand. *Marlboro Friday* is the day former CEO, Michael Miles, announced that Marlboro would drastically cut prices, switch to simple brown packaging, and compete with generic cigarettes. Such a move suggested that there might be no purpose to branding, and it may be better for a business to halt all advertising and compete on a basis of price and taste alone. However, Philip Morris's stock plummeted 26%, and they lost about \$10 billion in market value in a single day. Investors not only

valued the product, but also the brand. Consumers didn't want to smoke just any cigarette. They wanted to smoke a Marlboro cigarette, and they were willing to pay more in order to do so. On this fateful day in April 1993, advertising and branding had proven a strong association with monetary value, affirming that developing and maintaining a brand image is an essential and lucrative element of the business model.

Of course, the value that branding brings to a company is not only monetary. American businesses have used branding not only to increase sales but also to penetrate and become a part of American culture, instilling the value of their brand into what it means to be American. For example, diamonds, though beautiful, were an almost useless product that lasts forever, which is not an ideal economic situation. However, the De Beers campaign of the 1930s transformed them into a romantic expression and advertised the diamond engagement ring as an essential part of a marriage proposal (Twitchell, 2000, p. 88-101). Of course, the practice of proposing with a diamond ring is now a well-known cultural practice. Clearly, when brand promotion is done well and strategically, it has the power to change attitudes, even to a point of creating new social norms. From a business perspective, this is an incredibly valuable possibility. Engraining a brand and product into culture would ensure loyal users, and again, brand promotion and communication can play a central role in achieving this.

## **II. Importance of understanding consumer in branding process**

Of course, most brands don't accomplish this, and many don't even set out to do so. For many companies, the goal of promotion is simply to generate awareness or a positive attitude towards a certain product or product category. So how is it done? And

more importantly, how is it done well? Acknowledging that communication can play a variety of roles for a business, it is essential to define the exact role it must play in a specific business setting. For different product categories and brands, the consumer need varies greatly, so the “message content strategy thus depends on the relevant consumer need: it can be instrumental, emotional, hedonistic, normative, or social” (Van den Putte, 2009, p. 672). Once this effective strategy is developed, advertising, PR, and other promotional functions are executed from that strategy. It is absolutely essential to define what the goal is, how to achieve it, and exactly whom the communication is targeting.

This study focuses on one element of brand promotion, advertising. Advertising could aim to increase general awareness, could suggest that the customer try a product or service, could try to get lapsed customers to reconsider, could encourage current users to use a product or service more, or could simply reinforce the customer’s current usage of a product or service. Each of these purposes would merit an entirely different approach (Cooper, 1997, p. 15-28). Jon Steel (1998), a well-recognized professional account planner, has compared the advertising process to geographical triangulation. He insists on the importance of perspective, and good advertising should triangulate three perspectives: the business point-of-view from the client, the agency’s creative angle, and the targeted consumer’s perspective (p. 1-5).

A key ingredient to this process is a full understanding of the customer. It is crucial to know and comprehend the consumer’s attitudes, values, and behaviors relative to the product or service and the advertising goal at hand. Knowing how the customer fits (or doesn’t) a product or service into their life and their mindset at the purchase point is

invaluable when it comes to determining how to speak to this customer through advertising.

At the heart of an effective creative philosophy is the belief that nothing is so powerful as an insight into human nature, what compulsions drive a man, what instincts dominate his action, even though his language so often camouflages what really motivates him.

Bill Bernbach (qtd. in Cooper, 1997, p. xiv)

Upon analyzing successful campaigns and companies such as Apple and Wal-Mart, Fortini-Campbell (1992) insists that discovery and use of a key consumer insight is the common ingredient for success (p. 12). In fact, Goodby, a famous practitioner and agency owner, emphasizes the important role of the consumer with his unique definition of advertising: “tiny reaction in someone’s head after seeing, hearing, or reading that advertising. For him, advertising is merely a means to a desired end – a person thinking or behaving differently.” (Steel, 1998, p. 5). Because the end goal is to influence and possibly change what’s going on in the target consumer’s head, professionals understand that one of the first steps is to define who we’re talking to and to truly get inside their heads.

### **III. Role of Research**

Experienced advertisers know that consumer insights are key to developing good advertising, but where do key insights come from? The answer, of course, is: research. However, research “should be employed as an aid to judgment, not as a substitute for it” (Jones, 1998, p. 107). The client’s budget and attitude toward research determine the technique and amount of research conducted for a specific agency and client, but various types of qualitative research such as focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and sometimes

ethnographic studies are most commonly used for gathering information that will eventually help to determine relevant consumer insights.

#### **IV. The Account Planner**

While many clients use research to feel secure about their decisions to move forward with certain advertising tactics (Steel, 1998, p. 59-60), “no amount of research will answer all questions about consumers or guarantee that an advertisement will work in the marketplace” (Jones, 1998, p. 121). To fill this gap, instinct also plays an important role in developing an advertising strategy. Here’s where the pivotal player, the account planner, comes into the picture. The account planner is “positioned as the voice of the consumer and functions as a qualitative researcher” (Jones, 1998, p. 125). Account planners not only determine what research needs to be conducted and then conduct it, but they also interpret the findings. They dig through the mounds of data and find the insight(s) that will be relevant and inspire effective creative work. Steel (1998) argues that to be a good account planner, one must adopt the “principles of simplicity, common sense, and also *creativity*, as applied to advertising research” (p. 105). Accumulating a lot of information through research isn’t necessarily the goal. Instead, it’s finding the relevant information and then, more importantly, sifting through that information to reach a new level of understanding of the consumer that can be applied to the advertising. Without the account planner, advertising would be aimless and likely ineffective.



## CHAPTER 2:

### The EAS Brand: SWOT Analysis

Abbott Laboratory's EAS brand strengths and weaknesses will be determined along with the industry opportunities and threats. From here, the target opportunities with the best fit will be established. Finally, a research plan to test the growth opportunities will be developed. Once executed, the results of this research plan will determine which opportunity, if any, would be the best investment for Abbott.

Abbott Laboratories is a pharmaceutical company with a variety of brands ranging from *Pediasure* to prescription drugs. The company would be considered an absolute success. In an October 2009 report, *Standard & Poor's* gave Abbott Laboratories four out of five stars and recommended it as a stock purchase. Some of the reasons for such high marks include the "continued strength in sales of *Humira* and *Xeience*" brands (McGraw-Hill Companies, 2009). In order for any business to remain successful, it must continually grow, so Abbot Laboratories must keep a constant check on its brand portfolio, especially "dogs," i.e. "low growth, low share businesses and products" according to Boston Consulting Group's Growth Share Matrix (Armstrong & Kotler, 2009, p. 40-41). If a "dog" brand or product starts to cost more money than it's bringing in, the parent company will likely get rid of it over time.

One Abbott-owned brand that could be considered a "dog" is EAS, a sports nutrition brand, providing products such as protein shakes and energy bars. Abbott Laboratories acquired the EAS brand in 2004 from North Castle Partners for \$320 million (Thompson Financial, 2004). Since then, the brand hasn't changed much, and revenue has remained stagnant and certainly hasn't been noteworthy as compared to the rest of Abbott Laboratories' many successful brands. Therefore, in order to focus on high growth, EAS needs to change something. In order to determine what the most effective

change would be, it is essential to do a full SWOT analysis, determining the product's strengths and weaknesses as well as the industry opportunities and threats. Next, it is important to develop a research plan and implement it in order to make an informed change in business strategy. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to complete a SWOT analysis for the EAS brand that would lead to an effective research plan.

The EAS brand was founded in 1990 by Bill Phillips, author of *Body-for-LIFE: 12 Weeks to Mental & Physical Strength* and a well-known name in the fitness industry. The brand prides itself on science, stressing its scientific knowledge and understanding of health and nutritional products. The EAS website is packed with articles and tools to inform their users how nutrition works with their bodies as well as a glossary that defines confusing terms related to supplements, training, and nutrition. EAS also emphasizes the Body-for-LIFE philosophy of its original founder, encouraging a lifestyle of nutrition and fitness that includes EAS products. The Body-for-LIFE program includes fitness tips and testimonials as well as before and after images of successful consumers (EAS). The scientific principles of the EAS brand line up well with Abbott Laboratories company, so Abbott acquired EAS in 2004 to be part of its Ross Line Division (Kehoe, 2004).

## **I. EAS Product Overview**

EAS provides a range of sports nutrition including protein shakes and energy bars. All products generally fall into one of four categories: Strength Building, Maximum Precision, Recovery, and Daily Nutrition. The Strength Building line includes a number of powder shakes for building strength. The Precision product line is intended to perform uniquely with your goals whether that's endurance or energy. The Maximum Recovery

line includes products such as Muscle Armor, which are intended to minimize protein breakdown after intense workouts. However, these products do not bring in significant revenue, and there is a lack of available data surrounding their market performance.

Most revenue comes from the Daily Nutrition category, especially Myoplex products. The Myoplex product line including shakes, bars, and protein powder intended for daily use. Myoplex is a protein shake, intended for use 30-minutes post workout in order to refuel and recover, and it be considered the brand's hero product. Myoplex brings in significantly more revenue than all other categories combined, so the focus of this study will remain on Myoplex rather than any of the other EAS products.

*Myoplex Product Images:*



*Myoplex – new version*



*Myoplex – original version*

## II. SWOT Analysis

With a focus on Myoplex, a full SWOT analysis will be conducted. This analysis will identify the product’s strengths and weaknesses as well as industry opportunities and threats. The table below summarizes the SWOT analysis, and the details can be found in the paragraphs below.

*Table 1*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides recovery as promised</li> <li>• Full of protein (25g) and essential nutrients (23 vitamins/minerals)</li> <li>• Partnerships that strengthen the scientific foundation</li> </ul>   | <p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Image excludes anyone who wouldn’t self-describe as a ‘hardcore’ athlete</li> <li>• Scientific product names can be intimidating</li> </ul>  |
| <p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active women don’t currently use the nutritional protein products</li> <li>• People trying to lose weight are incorporating working out into their lifestyles</li> <li>• College athletes are competitive, making them much more likely to use the category</li> </ul> | <p><i>Threats</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EAS brand doesn’t fit into the natural food movement</li> <li>• Many nutritional protein products are associated with steroids</li> <li>• There are a number of fierce competitors with profitable market niches</li> </ul> |

### *A. Product Strengths:*

Myoplex has been described as a “refreshing shake” (Zendan & Matchneer, 2009). With 25g of protein and 23 vitamins and minerals, Myoplex aids in workout recovery. The original shake packs in 42g of protein to meet the needs of athletes with higher protein needs. Myoplex also comes in four flavors: vanilla, chocolate cream, strawberry cream, and banana cream, all packaged in convenient, resealable containers.

The four lines of EAS products meet the needs of very serious athletes. Aiding with energy and recovery, EAS users are able to truly maximize their workouts. For this

group of serious fitness enthusiasts, the EAS products provide the exact nutrition they're seeking.

EAS has a number of partnerships, certifications, and sponsors such as the NFL Players Association Sports Nutrition Label Certification Program. All of these help to support the product safety and scientific foundation. The Abbott Laboratories name provides the same support to EAS products.

*B. Product Weaknesses:*

Myoplex's weaknesses are not in the actual product, but rather the perception of the product. While EAS embraces "hard-training fitness enthusiasts" (EAS), serving their sports nutrition demands, it may be doing so at the expense of excluding everyone else. There was no available data regarding characteristics of current Myoplex users, but the EAS website uses language that could only be described as 'hardcore,' excluding those who wouldn't self-describe that way. The tone seems to align with males more than females, especially those pursuing body-building. This approach likely attracts a niche audience of "fitness enthusiasts and athletes," but it probably also excludes everyone else, even those who work out regularly. This is likely a key factor in EAS's hindered growth.

The product names could also be considered a weakness. Names such as Myoplex and L-Glutamine sound like complicated chemical compounds. For the 'hardcore' audience, these names are instantly recognizable and associated with the safe, scientific ingredients they're seeking through sports nutrition products. However, for those who don't immediately understand the names' meanings, the names are likely confusing and intimidating.

### *C. Industry Opportunities:*

In more recent years, fitness, nutrition, and overall health have become increasingly important to the American population. Americans have read studies and witnessed or experienced the negative health effects of obesity, so the population is moving towards healthy lifestyles. In June 2006, *Time Magazine* reported “physical fitness is upon us like a wet spaniel, bigger than talking plants, more numbing in the fervor of its adherents than encounter-group therapy. This is a startling development for the nation that invented the electric golf cart, the pushbutton car window and the drive-in mortuary, but it is happening.” (Lacayo et al.). In fact, in 2007, there were a total of 26,830 health and fitness clubs in the U.S., which was a 75% increase from 2000. In 2005, weight lifting participation increased 35.5% and jogging participation increased 18.2% (Mintel, 2007). The federal government along with the Centers for Disease Control and the privately owned Produce for a Better Health Foundation have created campaigns such as the “5 Day” or “Fruits and Veggies: More Matters” to promote more fruits and vegetable intake (Painter, 2009). In fact, it’s difficult to find a general news source without a health section today, so it seems that being health conscious is a long-term addition to American culture.

Of course, many market and business opportunities come with this new mentality. There are countless nutritional products that align their brand with the health movement. Such products come in the form of shakes, smoothies, hydration drinks, and bars. Some are diet aids, which promote calorie burning. Some are designed specifically to help the body before, during, or after physical activity. And others promote general wellness and

market more to the generally health conscious consumers. For the purpose of this study, EAS's industry will be defined as sports nutrition products. This industry includes nutritional protein shakes and energy bars. It excludes the immense industry of hydration drinks such as Gatorade, because EAS doesn't currently have a hydration product.

In examining the current state of the sports nutrition product industry, it becomes obvious that the industry grows as consumers trend towards healthier lifestyles. Whey protein, which many consider the “gold standard” of protein for serious athletes,” became a \$114.8 million industry by 2007, which was a 17.4% increase from the previous year (Mintel, 2007). The nutritional and energy bar industry reached over \$1 billion in 2008. Nutritional and energy bars have also found many purposes in today's society; they serve as diet aids and also play a role in providing energy and recovery for athletic activity. Many sports-related products are also adding vitamins for added health benefits as well as the marketability of vitamin-enriched products (Mintel, 2009a). The interest in a healthy lifestyle seems to correlate with the purchasing of sports nutrition products.

In its current state, American culture is clearly open to the sports nutrition industry. Several specific opportunities seem particularly valuable to the EAS brand: active women, people losing weight, and college athletes. Below these target opportunities are explored.

*i. Active Women Currently Not Using Product Category*

In a study, “Sports Food and Beverage Consumers,” the findings suggest that “the market could grow substantially if there were products, such as protein powders, that



specifically target women with both nutrition and sports performance benefits” (Mintel, 2007). Studies indicate that 81% of the female population works out (Mintel, 2009a). However, currently only 22% of women are using nutritional protein products, which is significantly less than 32% of males using such products. Males are much more likely than women to have at least tried a variety of nutritional protein products in a variety of forms such as shakes, bars, and powders (Mintel, 2007). It would seem that women aren’t interested in such products, but, in fact, the male-centric product category is simply missing a valuable target market.

Interestingly enough, 45% of women claimed to have had a nutrition/meal replacement bar in the last month, but only 20% claimed to have had a protein bar in the last month (Mintel, 2009a). The term, ‘nutrition bar,’ seems to be much more appealing to women than the term ‘protein bar,’ though the actual products aren’t that different. Women may not eat protein products in conjunction with their workouts as frequently as men, but they are certainly eating the competitors’ bars for other reasons. One study indicated that 64% of women “would be willing to try a beverage that promises to increase [their] metabolism and burn calories” (Mintel, 2007). Here again, women are motivated by different factors. This suggests that if EAS were to appeal to women’s motivations, whether that means a new product line or repositioning current products, they would likely be successful.

#### *ii. The Weight Loss Trend*

It’s no secret that the U.S. is overweight as a country. In fact, 34% of adults over 20 are classified as obese, assuming that a BMI of 30+ indicates obesity. According to a self-report, over 80% of adults exercise, and of all adults who exercise, 51% are doing so

to lose weight, and 53% list looking better as another reason they work out. Americans have weight to lose and about 40% of them are motivated to do so through exercise (Mintel, 2009b). Even more impactful, 70% of respondents to one study, “Sports Food and Beverage Consumers,” claim that they exercise to burn calories/lose weight. These numbers are significant in terms of opportunity, and it’s not surprising that consumers are demanding products that help them to burn calories and lose weight. In fact, many reports suggest the desire among consumers for products that recognize the calorie-burning goal. Of those motivated to work out to lose weight or burn calories, only 23% use a sports food/beverage every time (Mintel, 2007).

Here, EAS has the opportunity to position their lower-calorie products, such as Myoplex Lite, as a potential meal replacement or snack or aid in weight loss. They could even develop a new product line that helps with calorie burning. Simply educating consumers about the products in terms of their ability to help them work out longer, faster, and to have more energy may be beneficial since all of these aspects contribute to calorie-burning and weight loss. There is certainly potential for EAS to meet the needs of this group, but further research would need to indicate how they might effectively do so.

### *iii. Competitive Groups & Individuals are Heavy Users of Product Category*

Some research indicates that people who are motivated to be active by competition are the ones using sports food/drink most frequently (Mintel, 2007). It is logical that these products would be used to get an edge, and it therefore makes sense that competitive people are more likely to use these products. The extra mile or extra push matters most in a competitive situation. Therefore, it would be logical that highly

competitive groups be considered for marketability. One example of a highly competitive group would be college athletes, who are constantly competing with each other and other teams. This group would also be very valuable in that gaining access to one individual may mean access to an entire team or league of competitive athletes.

#### *D. Industry Threats*

There are several trends in the industry that would be considered threatening to the EAS brand. The EAS brand stands for strength and scientific research, and some current trends work against the EAS brand and may be responsible for keeping market share away from EAS. These should be addressed to be sure that the negative impact is avoided or remains low.

##### *i. Natural Food Movement*

As Americans become more educated about health-related issues, general health and well-being have become more of a priority. With this trend, the popularity of natural food stores has increased. In recent years, there has been a 21% growth in energy bar sales as the natural and organic stores such as Larabar and Clif bar have been introduced. In fact, natural is perceived as simply better. In an increasing amount of consumers' minds, the more natural, the less processed, the better (Mintel, 2009a). Twenty-eight percent of those surveyed in one study prefer soy protein to whey (16%) or caseinate (3%).

This natural food movement doesn't line up with EAS's brand as it is. As mentioned before, names such as Myoplex, Phosphagen Elite, and Betage sound much more chemical-based than natural, which gives them a disadvantage when competing

against the natural energy bars and shakes. There is a growing market that is attracted to natural energy bars and shakes, and this is a group that EAS as it is will have a difficult time reaching it.

## *ii. Steroid Association*

There seems to be a stigma attached to the term ‘supplement,’ which is a term used to describe some EAS products. In fact, 54% believe that “there are many sports foods and drinks on the market that don’t sound safe to use” (Intel, 2007). Some consider it a form of cheating yourself in the sense that you’re not necessarily working for the physical benefits that you’re gaining. On the extreme of this opinion, some associate protein products, especially those with names that sound like manufactured chemicals, with steroids, which leaves a bad taste in the public’s mouth. In January 2004, President George Bush addressed the issue in a state of the union address: “It sends the wrong message that there are shortcuts to accomplishment and that performance is more important than character. So tonight I call on team owners, unions representatives, coaches and players to take the lead, to send the right signal, to get tough and to get rid of steroids now” (McCallum, 2008). Performance enhancing drug usage has become such a prevalent issue because it is estimated that 15 million in the U.S. are using such products (McCallum, 2008).

As mentioned before, many of the EAS products sound like complicated chemical names, which makes them seem less natural and much closer to steroids. Product users are mostly likely highly educated in terms of what EAS products can do for their bodies and therefore not worried about the name, or they’re actually looking for something

similar to steroids. While attracting a highly educated and nutrition-conscious market is desirable, alienating the rest of the market isn't the goal.

### *iii. Industry Competition*

As with many industries, the competition is fierce within sports nutrition products. In fact, defining the 'industry' is difficult, because hydration, nutrition, and supplement products overlap in terms of what drives people to use them.

First, those who will not be considered competition for the purpose of this study will be defined. Hydration drinks such as bottled water and Gatorade are not in competition with EAS products, because they're hydrating the body while EAS products are fueling and replenishing the body with nutrients. However, Gatorade, with its 80% market share, should not be ignored when it comes to partnerships and marketing opportunities. Bottled water is also a complicated industry because water products have been enhanced with vitamins and electrolytes in recent years. Regardless, the focus for this project will remain more narrowly focused on the sports nutrition industry. Energy drinks such as Red Bull and Monster will also be excluded. At one point, such energy drinks tried to market to the athletically active crowd, but instead these products are more recently associated with alcohol and partying, which may or may not be intentional (Mintel, 2007).

Nutrition or energy bars would definitely be considered competition to EAS products, even though this encompasses many products. One competitor of interest would be Power Bar, who positions exercise as a very serious pursuit (Mintel, 2009a) and holds the largest market share in the category. Power Bar owns the 'Ironman' brand, and it also

launched a fruit smoothie energy bar, Fruit C2 Max, with “17 vitamins and minerals” (Mintel, 2009a), suggesting that it constantly changes its brand to keep up with trends. In 2008, Power Bar brought in \$50 million of the \$107 million segment (Mintel, 2009a).

Another nutrition bar brand that has seen tremendous growth in recent years is the Clif Bar brand. Behind Power Bar, it is the second largest manufacturer of health bars (Mintel 2009a). From 2005 to 2006, sales increased 23% (Mintel, 2009a), and from 2007 to 2008, sales increased 17%, or \$18 million (Mintel, 2009a). Much of the recent success has been Clif Bar’s push to appeal to women, which is another reason for EAS to explore this segment. They have also added vitamins to their products and incorporated an environmental message to keep up with trends. Clif Bar positions their products as ‘wellness’ bars rather than strictly athletic or diet. The ‘wellness’ category has been growing much more than any other nutrition or energy bar since it encompasses athletic and diet bars as well as promotes general health. Clif even has a line of products for children (Mintel, 2009a). They have truly created and blanketed the ‘wellness’ category, which could threaten some athletic bars, such as EAS’s, which typically appeal only to a single niche market.

## CHAPTER 3

### Objectives & Research Plan

## **I. Objectives**

With a full understanding of the EAS brand, its products, and the industry in which it operates; the purpose of this project will be to determine the best business opportunity in which EAS should invest from the perspective of an account planner.

## **II. Research Plan**

The research plan, outlined next, will help to determine next steps in growing the business and strengthening the brand. It would be most beneficial to take advantage of industry opportunities, especially those that line up best with the current EAS brand. While steps should be taken to expand the brand's reach, it is essential not to lose the essence of the brand or to alienate the current and loyal users. There are consumers making demands that EAS is capable of meeting, and these opportunities should be seized. As with every company, EAS has resource limitations and will not be able to pursue all industry opportunities, so this research will prioritize targeting decisions in terms of what is most valuable to the company from a branding position.

The research plan will consist of pursuing further information regarding the three target opportunities with the best fit. These target opportunities consist of new markets that may make sense for EAS to pursue. Gaining understanding of the new markets and how EAS may fit into their lives will be the specific goal of this research. Per the market analysis, there are plenty of statistics available regarding sports nutrition, the people who use it, and the people who don't. Uncovering rich detail and insights into the consumers' lives will be the goal, so a multi-method qualitative approach is most appropriate. The goal of this marketing research is to have enough information to form insights. For that



reason, large samples will not be necessary. Instead, resources would be better spent exploring three groups rather than exploring one group extensively. Below, each industry option is explained with a research objective and method.

#### *A. Target Active, Health-Conscious Women*

One clear opportunity for the EAS brand would be to target active, health-conscious women. This could mean a simple change in packaging and marketing, or it could mean a line of new products. As mentioned earlier, the EAS brand doesn't reach this group with such high potential as a profitable target market. The EAS brand already attracts men who are dedicated to fitness, so it shouldn't be a far leap to reach out to women with the same attitude. However, it is important to distinguish that women approach fitness differently – with different personal goals and different physiological needs from their sports nutrition. For these reasons, the same branding that appeals to men may not appeal to women. Therefore, it's essential that the research discover what motivates these women to incorporate exercise into their lifestyle.

According to one study, "Exercise Trends in the U.S.," women are working out for overall health/wellbeing (71%), to feel better about themselves (61%), to look better (58%), and to lose weight (59%) (Mintel, 2009b). Significantly fewer men made the same claim, and, in fact, 39% of men work out to build muscle (Mintel, 2009b). Previous research in the exercise psychology has indicated a few exercise motivations unique to women. Mathes and Battista (1985) found that women claimed health and fitness to be the number one motivation followed by social experience and then competition. Another study revealed that most women who run regularly see "themselves as stronger, happier,

more relaxed and more energetic as a result of running” (Harris, qtd. in Willis & Campbell, 1992, p. 8). The same study reported that “running made the women feel more attractive and feminine” (Harris, qtd. in Willis & Campbell, 1992, p. 8). These quantitative studies, which are typical of this field, indicate a list of reasons that women choose to exercise. However, much of this data is too shallow for EAS’s purposes. For instance, women who exercise regularly claim to do so for positive benefits such as feeling attractive, so would this mean that women who don’t exercise don’t want to feel attractive? Of course not. For the women who are committed to having fitness in their lives, what is it that actually gets them to the gym? How do they maintain their motivation? And why is exercise a priority?

Of course, the concept of general motivation has been studied relentlessly. The field of psychology, especially exercise psychology, has addressed exercise motivations in a number of ways. First, it must be acknowledged that motivation is a complicated concept, concerning “all aspects of activation and intention” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 69). One theoretical approach, the Self-Determination Theory, suggests that motivation ranges depending on the level to which it’s autonomous. This theory contrasts intrinsic motivation, i.e. doing an activity for the simple satisfaction of doing it, versus extrinsic motivation, i.e. doing an activity to reach an outcome separate of the activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 71). There is a continuum ranging from amotivation (lack of motivation) to external motivation to internal motivation, and different regulatory styles are used to maintain different kinds of motivation. For example, if you’re motivation is ‘somewhat external,’ then you would use self-control, ego-involvement, and internal rewards and punishment to stay motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 72). This theory naturally lends

itself to apply to exercise motivations, especially for understanding how women maintain their motivation for a regular exercise routine, but no such study has been conducted. Using the Self-Determination Theory as foundation, this study will explore the exercise motivations of women who are dedicated to fitness.

Qualitative interviews will be the best research method option to meet the objective of exploring women's motivation to incorporate fitness into their lives. Interviewing will uncover "people's internal experiences" (Weiss, 1995, p.1). This study will consist of 10-15 one-on-one in depth interviews. A detailed description of this study, including findings, can be found in chapter 4.

#### *B. Target Competitive Student Athletes*

Another opportunity would be to target college athletes, particularly males participating in team sports. Research indicated that those who are physically active in order to compete with others were very likely (66%) to use sports food/beverages at least most times that they exercise relative to others motivated to be physically active for different reasons (Mintel, 2007). It seems logical that college athletes would be naturally competitive, but research could confirm this. The same study indentified a group called Teamers, defined as "those who are active at least once a week AND who play a team sport 'every chance they get,'" and 73% of Teamers use a sports food/beverage at least most times they are physically active (Mintel, 2007). One study indicated that males are "more competitive and win-oriented than females" (Gill & Dzewaltowski, 1998, p. 215), so for that reason it makes sense to at least start with men's teams. Finally, from a logical perspective, college athletes don't seem very different from the current EAS audience

comprised mostly of ‘hardcore’ body builders. College athletes, especially at competitive schools, would likely have the same, if not higher, level of dedication to fitness. Also, making deals with a single college team, conference, or league for a season would result in a high volume of sales considering the number of players, practices, and games.

The relatively new field of sports psychology has provided research regarding competition and team sports, most of which involves the traits of competitive athletes and ‘what types of people’ become competitive athletes. Nicholls took a goal perspective approach, labeling actions in terms of task orientation or ego orientation. Under Ego Orientation, individuals defined success in sport in terms of being better than anyone else, scoring the most points, or others messing up. Under Task Orientation, sport success is defined in terms of learning something new, feeling good about trying hard, or doing one’s personal best (Smith & Bar-Eli, 2007, p. 81). Under this framework, the authors note that those who strive to win and be competitive fall under Ego Orientation most of the time. There has also been extensive research on competitive state anxiety, studying the moments on the field where decisions are made and anxiety levels fluctuation. However, these won’t be relevant to this study for EAS. There has been an attempt to apply psychology’s trait theory to sports psychology, but this has been disputed. In fact, the field of psychology cannot even agree on how to define ‘trait,’ and it is likely that this will remain unresolved for now. Without much information to start with, there is an opportunity to explore many areas of competitive college athletics.

Because statistical information regarding competitive peoples’ use of sports nutrition as well as Teamers from the various Mintel reports already exists, there isn’t a need to seek such data through new research. Here, a qualitative approach is most

appropriate in order to gather rich details and personal stories. However, in this case, focus groups will be the method of choice. Focus groups can often obtain a lot of information and detail much like in-depth interviews and can even be thought of as group interviews. However, the group energy and interactions can only be obtained through focus groups (Berg, 2007, p. 147). This is what makes them particularly valuable in this case since we are studying the phenomenon of competition, and group dynamic will be very revealing. A detailed description of this research plan along with the results can be found in chapter 5.

### *C. Target People Trying to Lose Weight*

A third valuable opportunity for EAS would be to engage the brand with people trying to lose weight. As mentioned earlier, there is a trend toward attempting weight loss and trying to counter the obesity epidemic in the U.S. EAS is in a unique position to take advantage of this trend and help people to lose weight. EAS provides a number of resources, including its Body For Life program, which aids its users in reaching their fitness goals. Of course, now, it's only reaching the 'hardcore' audience who is already fit and hoping to get more fit. Since they already have the resources, it wouldn't be difficult align a similar (but separate) program for those getting started with fitness and trying to lose weight. EAS also provides a Myoplex Lite option, which may be suitable for people trying to lose weight.

Some research has been conducted in the psychology field in terms of weight-loss. In truth, most weight that is lost is eventually regained, but cases of success typically correlate with "self-monitoring, goal setting, social support, and length of

treatment” (Foreyt and Goodrick, 1994, p. 209). Research has indicated that certain types of motivation are key indicators for which individuals will succeed (Sobal & Stunkard, 1989). The Self-Determination Theory also provides theoretical foundation for weight-loss motivation, suggesting that the more autonomous people are in terms of their motivation, the more likely they are to succeed and maintain weight loss. In other words, if a person believe that he’s in control of his weight loss, he’s more likely to succeed (Williams et al., 1996, p. 116). Weight loss success has also been attributed to attending an intervention class, though motivation still remains to be the highest indicator (Foreyt and Goodrick, 1994, p. 210). Again, previous research is based on quantitative studies producing statistics regarding weight loss, and much research is exclusive to obese or morbidly obese patients. These limitations indicate that it would be best for EAS to fill in some of the missing gaps with details and insights from personal stories from qualitative research.

Further research should indicate how EAS could successfully fit into the life of a person trying to lose weight. The products could serve as a meal replacement like many other energy bars and shakes do, or it could be part of an exercise program designed for beginners. The objective of further research in this area would be to determine the permanent behavioral and mental changes that take place during weight loss and maintenance. Therefore, we will conduct 10-15 one-on-one in-depth interviews with people who have lost weight and maintained the weight loss for a period of time. A detailed description of this plan including findings can be found in chapter 6.

The next three chapters will outline each of the three studies in detail including: recruitment methods, findings, and conclusions.

## CHAPTER 4

### Active Health-Conscious Women: Controlled Confidence

Many women work out on a regular basis. They pay attention to their diets and balance the proportion of carbohydrates and protein they consume, and many of them are even lifting weights regularly. However, per the secondary research outlined in chapter 2, they do not use nutritional protein products at the same rate as men do. Men who lift weights are much more likely to drink protein shakes or eat protein bars than women who lift. The EAS brand's current market consists of mostly men who are trying to build muscle mass and these men are often competitive. According to EAS, women's bodies would also benefit from nutritional protein products such as Myoplex, but it's likely that women have different motivations.

### **I. Research Method:**

This study set out to discover that motivates women to work out because finding a common motivation or attitude among women who work out regularly may be the key for nutritional protein product brands to penetrate this market. The term 'active and health-conscious' was operationalized as women who work out at least four hours per week and have kept up this routine for at least three months. Dedicating that much time in the gym signals that the gym is a priority in their life. Of course, many people dedicate hours to the gym for a short period of time, typically before a big event or at the beginning of a new year, so a minimum of a three-month routine was required for participants to be eligible for this study. The final requirement to be eligible for this study was that the woman considered herself 'health conscious' by her own definition. Being conscious of one's health in terms of both fitness and nutrition increases the chances that the best candidates will be found.



Recruitment was conducted at a local gym, and fourteen total women were interviewed from October to December 2009. All of these women had been in their current workout routine for at least four months, and most of them had been working out regularly for years. Nutrition habits varied though all of them had a keen awareness of the foods they ate and what was in them. Ages ranged from early 20s to mid-60s. All of them were slim to average, no one being overweight.

Each interview was conducted in a public place of the participant's choosing, mostly coffee shops or restaurants, and a discussion guide can be found in Appendix A. Discretion was used to assure that the conversation didn't look like an interview to outsiders to assure the participant's comfort and honesty, and none of the interviewees seemed uncomfortable during the interview. In fact, many of them opened up about their families, eating disorders, and their sex lives without much prompting. As the interviewer, I played a significant role in the interviews. I am a woman who works out at the same gym where these women work out, though perhaps not to the same extent. I could relate to many of them on a number of levels, and this could have made them more comfortable. All participants will remain completely anonymous. Their names were changed to another name, starting with the letter of the alphabet that corresponds with the order in which they were interviewed. For example, the first interviewee will be called Abby; the second, Becca; the third, Connie; and so on.

## **II. The Results**

All interviews were transcribed in their entirety and analyzed through Atlas software. Every paragraph was carefully read, analyzed and coded. There were eighty-

seven total codes, some with over fifty occurrences and some with only one or two. Major themes and commonalities will be discussed below. All in all, this particular group would serve as a highly valuable target market for EAS or another nutritional protein product brand. They share the necessary behaviors, i.e. making fitness and nutrition major priorities in their lives, but they approach it with a very different attitude than EAS's current market. If EAS can tap into this attitude with either a new product line or a separate marketing campaign, they would likely achieve not only awareness and understanding among women dedicated to fitness but also relevance into their lives, which would increase the chances that these women actually try an EAS product.

#### *A. Account Planner's Overview*

The results of this study will provide the necessary insight and understanding of women dedicated to fitness in order for EAS to effectively communicate with this group about their products. To follow the practice of Account Planning, a brief key insight will summarize the key findings, and it will be followed by a fictional profile of a woman that exemplifies this group. Such tools are often used by account planners to communicate with the creative teams and other departments since they are often brief and can bring the research to life. These summaries will be followed by more detailed explanation of the findings.

*Key Insight:*            *Women who truly make working out a priority believe they control their self-confidence by controlling the way their body looks and feels.*

*Target Profile:*       *Jenny is a confident 29-year-old professional living with her boyfriend. She has a short, stylish haircut, and she regularly gets it colored. She has a slender figure and likes to wear fashionable clothes both to work and out with friends. Work is*

*stressful and often demands long hours, and she also tries to maintain an active social life.*

*Jenny is pulled in many directions and constantly feels the weight of all of her responsibilities. She maintains control and sanity by keeping a planner, where she constantly updates her detailed schedule.*

*Almost every day after work, Jenny takes one hour to herself to go to the gym. Her Tuesday kickboxing class and Thursday spinning class are in the planner along with general gym time. The gym is her 'me time,' where she doesn't have to think about work or anything at all. She always leaves sweaty, feeling accomplished and de-stressed. She mentally checks 'workout' off of her list and switches gears to what she'll be cooking for dinner.*

#### *B. Control:*

The women interviewed for this study work out for a variety of reasons. Some admit to simply wanting to look good in a bathing suit or to remain their clothing size. Others claim that they're worried about their long-term health and would like to do everything possible to remain healthy and live as long as possible. The older women discuss maintaining their lifestyles as motivation, i.e. being able to travel and move around and remain independent as long as possible. However, these findings aren't interesting, because it can't be assumed that overweight women or women who don't work out don't *want* these things. Of course, it's likely that an overweight woman *wants* to be a certain clothing size and that older women who don't work out also *want* to maintain their health and lifestyles as long as possible. Wanting these things and actually achieving them are two different things.

As the key insight suggests, the women interviewed actually feel in control of their goals, which motivates them to work toward these goals. If looking good is their

goal, they feel that prioritizing fitness and nutrition helps them achieve this goal. If long-term health is their goal, they feel that working out regularly helps them maintain health. Therefore, they do actually work out regularly. Some respondents actually mentioned the feeling of being in control as an important factor in their workout routine:

“... a feeling of sort of control over my long term health. You know – you can’t control like, you know, what kind of illnesses or injuries or whatever might befall you in the future, but if you take care of yourself everyday, you can kind of rest somewhat easier, knowing that like ‘I’m not going to get Type 2 Diabetes because I ate donuts and sat on my ass all day.’ ~ Felicity

“You know, it’s like, when things get really crazy at work and I get pulled in a whole bunch of different directions, it’s kind of like I feel like I don’t have any control ... over my life, and I’m just kind of having to take care of all these things for all of these other people, but taking care of myself is like the one thing that I do that makes me feel ... more in control” ~ Isabelle

“It’s just something I can control. I can’t control the fact that, you know, my parents have heart disease. I can’t control that they have high cholesterol. Unfortunately, those genes came to me, but I can control whether I don’t smoke, whether I’m not obese, whether I don’t get diabetes. so I can control whether I don’t have high blood pressure, and I can control those things by being physically fit and active. And that’s just, I mean, a no-brainer for me”  
~ Becca

And others simply acknowledged the link between their fitness routine and their personal goals, which suggests that they feel in control of these goals by the choices that they’re making:

“I mean I can tell a difference in the way things fit, and I don’t like how things fit when I’m not in good shape.” ~ Abby

“More than anything, it raises my self-esteem. I see the way that people look at me, I see the way I look in the mirror, I see the way the clothes fit.” ~ Connie

“I know I wouldn’t be a size 4 if I didn’t work out” ~ Felicity

In the examples above, the participants are attributing their appearance to their workout routines. If their clothes aren’t fitting as well, they attribute this to their workout routine

or lack there of not being enough to maintain their size. They are not attributing their clothes being tight to stress or age or any other common scapegoat. They feel in control of the outcomes, which motivates them to do something about it when clothes get tight.

In fact, they go to great lengths to control these goals. Most of them take the larger goal of looking better and break it down into a weekly goal of, for example, working out four times a week or doing forty-five minutes of cardio and thirty minutes of weights five times a week. Now, their larger goal becomes something more tangible, something that can be checked off a list rather than a mere concept. In fact, building working out into the weekly schedule and daily routine is key.

Every interviewee discussed this in detail with only two exceptions. The first exception is Joanne, a college student trying to recover from severe anorexia. She is actively trying to be less rigid about her fitness and nutrition since she can become obsessive about it, so it makes sense that she is an exception. Nancy is the other exception to this, and she is also the only participant who has been in her workout routine for less than six months. In fact, she barely meets the requirements to qualify for the study. She claims to work out 3-4 times a week, an hour to an hour and a half each time. This totals 3 to 4 ½ hours in the gym each week, but the requirement to participate was 4 hours minimum. This suggests that perhaps I should have been more strict about requirements, but it also suggests that this attitude towards control may only come with a certain level of fitness. The rest of the participants approached their routine with a serious attitude. They maintain this control through rigid discipline, which can be seen through their strict schedules and detailed calendars:

Table 2

| <i>Interviewee:</i> | <i>Control through Disciplined Routine:</i>  | <i>Time in Intense Workout Routine:</i> |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Dana                | “I have a little weekly planner, I try to at the beginning of the week look at the classes to figure out which ones I can make it to and if I can’t make it to a lot of classes, if I can fit in walks.”   | About 6 months (intense)                |
| Hannah              | “I’m a very organized person, so I have ‘I like to do this class on this night, this class on this night,’ and I want to do it at the same time and have the same thing every week. And that consistency of that routine makes me feel good, I guess, mentally.”   | About 9 months                          |
| Connie              | “I keep an exercise journal on my wall. It’s a calendar ... I write ‘bike’ when I bike regular distance, which is just 2 miles – to and from work because I’m a bike commuter. I write ‘bike minus’ if I per se got a ride there or a ride home. Or I write ‘bike plus’ or ‘bike plus plus’ depending on how far I go.”  | 1 year                                  |
| Grace               | “I guess my routine is just so ... I don’t want to say rigid, exactly [laughs], but I ... I guess that’s the right word [laughs] ... it’s as if going to the gym has taken precedence over really just small stuff and things – well, I mean, except for work, I mean but that’s part of the day too. But anything that’s extra seems harder to fit in, rather than the gym being harder to fit in ... cause that’s part of the schedule.” | 1 year                                  |
| Felicity            | “I generally just start with my schedule as it is, and then just jot – I actually use my planner and then maybe on like Sunday night or Sunday morning, I’ll sit down and think about, ‘okay, how am I going to fit everything in this week that I want to do?’”   | About 1 and ½ years                     |
| Lucy                | “It’s my routine now ... I try and go around the same time – because we get out of school everyday pretty much at 5 pm. Occasionally, we get out early ... but if I get out at like 2 pm, then I’ll go straight from the bus anyway.”  | 1 and ½ years                           |
| Molly               | “I’m a schedule-oriented person, and so, I just kind of fit it in where it fits. it’s just kind of like second nature, so, it’s just what I do.”   | 2 years                                 |

|          |  |  |
|----------|--|--|
| Emily    | “I’m just on a schedule and I’ve just gone for so long ... it’s part of my routine ... it’s like going out and getting groceries. I have to work out.”   | Over 2 years   |
| Abby     | “I have a little calendar on my fridge, and I put a sticker on it on the days I work out. So when I go and look at my calendar, it helps me visualize – I think ‘hey, you actually made it almost everyday this week, really good job.’”   | 3 years  |
| Kelly    | “It’s really a part of my day. I get up and go at 5:30 in the morning, so it’s the first thing I do in the morning. And – umm, that’s it, it’s just like part of my routine like brushing my teeth. It’s just sort of incorporated in my life.”  | About 5 years  |
| Isabelle | “Now there was one time when I was really very rigid ... I had a little notebook, and I would map out, like for the month the exercises I was going to do for that month, and I would record, in my notebook, how many sets I did, how many reps I did, what weight I did, so that I could keep track of my progress.” | 6 years<br>* <i>no longer</i><br>* <i>“rigid”</i><br>* <i>no longer has notebook</i> |
| Becca    | “Well, I just want to do something physical almost everyday. It’s just like eating and breathing.”   | All her life   |

### C. Accomplishment

In many of the interviewees’ cases, they started with a detailed “rigid” workout schedule, which was often written in a calendar or journal of some type. However, most of the women who have been working out regularly for over 2 years approach their schedule with a more relaxed attitude since working out has become truly engrained into their routines and lives. They compare it to brushing teeth and other daily activities. The women who have only had their routines for several months or a year tend to panic more about losing their routine. They spend more time organizing and planning working out into their lives than they would errands or brushing their teeth. However, starting such a routine with a rigid schedule is a tactic for getting oneself to commit. It’s a serious step toward making it a permanent part of the routine. The strict schedule and/or rigid routine

makes each workout an accomplishment or a failure, but the notion of working out regularly doesn't place the same emphasis on each individual workout. If the idea of working out is approached as a big picture concept, missing a workout wouldn't be a big deal. The thought of going the next day might be enough to dissuade one from a workout today. However, if each workout is approached as a scheduled meeting or something built into the routine like grocery shopping or brushing teeth, it becomes a bigger deal to skip a workout.

These participants expressed a sense of accomplishment after they worked out. It wasn't a major feat, but instead more like being able to check something off of lists. It was compared to getting errands done, and the theme of control lingers into this sense of accomplishment. They like the feeling of accomplishment and recognize that working out will give them that feeling, therefore they work out. They're in control of having or not having that feeling. Joanne describes it: "I will never have enough time to study and never be able to get all of the material down; [working out] is something I can do and check off the list ... and you know, 'I did that,' I can keep that kind of thing going and in order." Many women discussed being proud of themselves the moment that they finish working out, and they typically give themselves a pat on the back:

"Usually I feel really accomplished ... I love that feeling! I love being covered in sweat and feeling like I just did something worthwhile for the last hour." ~ Abby

"You feel like 'wow, I've just done something really good for my body.'" ~ Becca

"I'm always glad that I accomplished whatever goal – like I said I was going to do it, and I did it, and now I can move on to something else." ~ Felicity

Here, it should be recognized that most people probably feel some sort of accomplishment when they've completed a workout. In fact, someone who works out



once a month may even feel a greater sense of accomplishment than does someone who works out several times a week. However, what's important is that before the interviewees actually work out in a given day, these women recognize working out will lead to a feeling of accomplishment. They build workouts into their schedules and routines, so they can accomplish a workout and check it off their list like anything else.

#### *D. The 'Me Time'*

While accomplishing the goal of working out fulfills their need for control, most interviewees employ some tactics to ensure it's a pleasant experience, which helps them to maintain motivations to reach their goals. Many of them refer to it as 'me time,' saying it's the time they regain their sanity and forget the daily stresses of work or relationships. Emily explains that she rarely watches TV except when she's doing cardio at the gym, framing the gym as an indulgence and giving her something to look forward to if she's not looking forward to the actual workout. Others make similar assertion, most of which involve the claim that they each deserve a selfish hour when they don't have to answer to responsibilities:

“If I were to go home and watch TV for an hour, then the whole time, I would be like ‘well, I should be reading, I should be doing this, but at least with the gym, it's, like, a productive way to take time for myself, I guess.” ~ Nancy

“That time is sacred, you don't mess with it ... everyone knows you just don't mess with my exercise time. It's personal, it's important.” ~ Abby

“Everyone's advice coming in [to dental school] was ‘no matter what you do, no matter how crazy a day it is, how crazy a week it is, take a human hour and just do something for yourself to keep your sanity or else you're going to lose it.’ So – that's what I've turned into my sanity human hour is the gym – just decompress, de-stress, and just sort of run out all of my frustrations.” ~ Lucy

It seems that these women typically feel guilty for taking time to themselves. If they were to just watch TV rather than study or read or anything, they may feel guilty. However, the gym seems to provide that selfish time without the guilt. Perhaps because it is associated as something we all should be doing, there is less guilt for choosing this over short-term responsibilities.

There was also an overwhelming claim, which is backed by scientific studies, that working out is a stress reliever. Problems don't seem as serious post-workout. Most of the women interviewed are juggling work, school, and a social life or family. They value this time they spend on their own at the gym immensely, and they attribute being a pleasant person to their workout routine. When asked what would happen if she could no longer work out, Lucy claims that everyone else would suffer because working out is her release, without which she would be incredibly unpleasant. In fact, most of them claim that they don't think at all while they're working out. Thoughts often revolve around muscular movement in more complicated classes that involve more coordination. This lack of focusing on problems while achieving something contributes to the stress relief.

“I'm a worrier, I'm a big-time worrier ... and it's really nice for me to get here and do this and just not have any worries, and not think about stuff.”

~ Hannah

“It became an outlet for me. I was like ‘hey this is a really good stress reliever, I feel better when I do it.’ It transitioned from a purely like ‘I gotta go to the gym because I look bad’ to a ‘I gotta go to the gym because I feel bad.’ ~ Abby

“When I work out, it's just kind of good for my mind because I'm not ... I'm trying not to focus on all the other day-to-day tedious things that are going on.” ~ Emily

### *E. Guilt*

Of course, if they feel accomplished and likely de-stressed by completing a workout, they feel very guilty for skipping a workout. Many of them have some type of reminder that triggers guilt, which often gets them to the gym. Lucy keeps a bag of gym clothes in her car, so if she chooses not to go to the gym for whatever reason, her gym clothes will remind her that she should be at the gym. Others have discussed actually writing the workout down in a planner or on a to-do list, meaning that if they do not go to the gym, they've left an appointment skipped or something undone on the to-do list. Many participants also frequent workout classes such as *Kickboxing* or *Body Pump* (a weight lifting class), and they've expressed feeling somewhat accountable to the instructor, i.e. the thought of having to explain to the instructor that they were too lazy for class on Monday provides motivation.

Interviewees deal with this guilt in a number of ways. Sometimes they skip the gym, and sometimes they force themselves to go. They often see some excuses as acceptable, while others are not. They seem to subconsciously make rules for themselves. Dana explains her thought process when she really doesn't want to:

“Usually I feel like it's more likely that I just want to [lie] around the house, which I don't feel like is a really good alternative. It's one thing if a friend is having a birthday dinner at the same time as my class. You know, I'll skip class for something that is more meaningful and not feel bad about it.”

~ Dana

Above, Dana has decided that wanting to lie around does not constitute a good substitute for the gym. She also recognizes that wanting to lie around would frequently be an excuse, and by making this rule for herself, she will be less likely to skip the gym. Moreover, if she does skip the gym, it will be to do something “meaningful,” which would alleviate some of her guilt.

This notion that some excuses are acceptable while others aren't is common to many participants. Some are harder on themselves with the guilt than others and can border on obsessive, refusing to miss the gym for anything. Grace mentions that she should buy shoes for a wedding that she's in, but she doesn't have time since she needs to make it to the gym after work everyday. Becca claims that "nothing prevents [her] from doing it. It's got to be like physically holding [her] back." Isabelle claims that she has "given [herself] permission to not be as rigid as [she] used to be," and then she takes it back, deciding that she always compares herself and her success to the time when she was rigid with herself. Here, we're seeing where this behavior can border on obsessive. They make sacrifices in their lives to prioritize working out over other things. It could be argued that they're holding onto the control and won't let it go, even to buy shoes.

Of course, some of them do skip the gym just because they don't feel like it sometimes, and they do indulge when it comes to food. However, this is carefully calculated and built into their plans. they only allow themselves to indulge or skip the gym on rare occasions. Most of them approach it with a "disciplined ... but flexible" (Felicity) attitude. They allow themselves to be spontaneous in terms of choosing an impromptu social event over the gym or indulging at a party a small percentage of the time if, and only if, they have been 'good' the rest of the time. By definition, of course, this is not really spontaneous behavior. Even the times they go against the plan is planned:

"Sunday is nacho day, where I don't do any exercise ... and I'll eat whatever I want." ~ Becca

"If I know that I'm sticking to a plan most of the time, I can just kind of roll with it when those opportunities come up for like "splurging" (air quote) or whatever." ~ Felicity

“Cheat day is Wednesday. Gumby pepperoni roll day.” ~ Connie

“I sort of keep a mental note of how often I’m like ‘alright, I really shouldn’t be eating this, but I’m having a rough day, I’ll have some ... like a cookie.’ I just sort of make a mental note, and then if I realize I’ve been having a lot of “rough day cookies” lately ... then I’m like, ‘alright, quit being a baby!’” ~ Lucy

During interviews, almost everyone refuted the word “splurge” or “bad foods” in terms of how they think about their own approach to fitness and nutrition. Abby “wouldn’t feel like it’s a splurge” when she has the occasional burger and fries with her friends. Hannah doesn’t like to think of food as “‘being good’ or ‘being bad.’” It seems as if they have such control over their fitness and nutrition plan that they don’t want to consider themselves splurging, which connotes spontaneity and lack of control. They allow these indulgences so they’re not disciplining themselves to a point of losing control.

#### *F. Confidence & Vanity*

Of course, establishing that these women seek control through their regimented workout routines doesn’t show us why they feel the need for such control. Based on these fourteen interviews, it seems that they’re ultimately seeking confidence. Because they feel they can control this confidence through this discipline and control, they do just that. These women share not only similar workout behaviors, but also similar attitudes and demeanors. First, they possess a keen self-awareness. They recognize that their clothes are fitting tightly, they don’t like it, and their reaction is to do something about that through exercise and being nutritious. They recognize that the shape of their arms has changed since beginning a weight-lifting routine, and they attribute success to that routine. In this same way, they have determined that they have more self-confidence

when they look a certain way and are exercising regularly. Molly claims that working out “definitely has improved confidence.” With a firm grasp on this recognition, they make the decision to stick to such a regime, and they do.

“I guess I feel better about myself, or, I mean, you hear all of these statistics, like you know, 2/3 of people are overweight ... and heart disease, and high cholesterol, and you’re always hearing these things, you just feel like ... I’m not in that category.” ~ Grace

“Knowing that I’ve worked out and doing the best that I can to take care of myself makes me feel ... comfortable in my life and in my work.” ~ Emily

“I feel like it’s sort of a reinforcing circle that usually I find feeling better about things, I’m more likely to be working out, which helps me to feel better about my life and myself.” ~ Isabelle

In fact, several others mentioned the notion of the reinforcing circle of working out leading to confidence and confidence leading to more working out. Again, confidence is something that most people would like to have, but these women are completely self-aware and self-analyzing as they control their confidence.

Some exemplified this confidence, and some even bordered on vanity, especially those who tended to be more rigid with themselves. After discussing being proud of her discipline to get to the gym five times a week, Felicity admits: “I have to be careful – sometimes I think I feel superior to people who don’t make a point to kind of take care of themselves in that way.” She also acknowledges that her clothing size is what a lot of people consider “ideal,” something in which she takes pride, noting that it’s a result of a lot of work. On the other hand, Grace admits: “I don’t want to sound full of myself or something [laughs], but I can – sometimes I can tell that I’m, like more fit than other people.”

In all cases, these women have developed a relationship with themselves, and they're all working to better this relationship. They maintain constant check over their bodies, their emotions, and their responsibilities. They want the best for themselves in terms of long-term health and overall confidence. They give themselves a strict schedule but typically allow a few 'cheat' days here and there. The attention that is paid to the relationship that these women have with themselves sets them apart from the rest of the population, and control provides the fuel for that relationship.

### **III. Recommendation to EAS:**

Women who prioritize fitness as an essential part of their week and routine would serve as an excellent target market for the EAS brand. These women not only put in a lot of hours at the gym, but they are often lifting weights and educated about protein intake. Only two or three individuals in this study had actually used nutritional protein products as part of their workout routine. However, most of them have connection points when it comes to eating before or after a workout, and many of them have a snack of protein before or after a workout, fully understanding the principles of EAS products.

One set-back is that many of them argue that all necessary nutrients can be found in foods, which is why they don't take a multi-vitamin or any supplements. If EAS positions its products as supplements, they will not win this audience over. These women also read nutrition labels quite religiously, and they're typically looking at calorie-count. Those who don't track such things typically did at one point and now 'just know' the calorie-amount for their favorite foods.

Of course, the research above indicates that these women don't work out for the same reasons as men. With different goals, they maintain different routines and different

attitudes. In order to successfully communicate with these women, it would be essential to tap into their controlled confidence, to play a role in helping them maintain control over their workouts, their bodies, and their confidence.





## CHAPTER 5

### The Student Athlete: Dependent Competitor

Secondary research, as outlined in chapters 2 and 3, clearly indicated that competitive individuals are more likely to use nutritional protein products, so it would be logical for the EAS brand to reach out to individuals that exemplify a particularly competitive nature. This makes sense in that competitors would want an edge, and slight improvement could make the difference in competition. Secondary research also revealed that this phenomenon applied more to males than females. It's generally understood and assumed that athletes are competitive, especially at more serious levels. Therefore, male student athletes at the collegiate level have been identified as a potentially valuable target market for the EAS brand.

This chapter will explore the student athlete market. First, the research method for this particular study will be explained in detail including recruitment, setting, etc. Next, the research results will be discussed. This section will begin with an overview of findings from the account planner's perspective, which will provide a summary of the findings. Following that, the results will be outlined in some detail with more in-depth insight and quotations to support the findings. Everything will be discussed from the competitive nature of student athletes to the specific usage and routines they have with protein products. Finally, conclusions will be drawn, providing a recommendation for EAS's next step regarding this group.

### **I. Research Method:**

This study's goal was to better understand the student athlete in terms of fitness and nutrition habits and motivations. Realizing that student athletes are likely competitive, this research study examined the role competition played in everyday

decisions about fitness and nutrition for student athletes. Since timing and budget restraints would not allow this study to include a large sample of athletes from a variety of sports, it only focused on one sport. The chosen sport was NCAA Division 1 football because it is a team sport for men at a highly competitive level, meeting the study's criteria. Qualitative research would be most suitable since finding details, insights, and personal stories are the goals of the study. In this case, focus groups would be the appropriate method because they often obtain a lot of information and detail, much like in-depth interviews and can even be thought of as group interviews. The group energy and interactions can only be obtained through focus groups, and these will be particularly relevant and revealing for studying the phenomenon of competition.

Participants were recruited from only one university for several reasons. First, having participants from the same football team would enrich the group dynamic. Second, a personal connection allowed a snowball sample at the University of Georgia, making that the choice university. In the hopes of finding enough participants for two focus groups, a recruitment email was forwarded around to the team, which led to seven willing participants. Because this was not enough for two separate focus groups, the study was opened up to people who were on the football team but no longer are for whatever reason. This change in criteria led to five more participants, which was enough for a second focus group. Therefore, one group consisted of former football players and the other of current football players. The same moderator's guide, which can be found in Appendix B, was used for both. Both groups took place on February 17, 2010 in Athens, GA. Because the group of former players (group 1) came together at the last minute, this focus group took place in a restaurant in downtown Athens and was structured more

informally. The focus group with current football players (group 2) took place in a hotel conference room in downtown Athens, structured much more like a typical focus group. Each group lasted close to two hours, and all participants received \$40 for their time.

## **II. The Results:**

Both focus groups were recorded, one group being voice-only due to the setting and the other being video, and then transcribed. All writing exercises from the focus groups were converted to Word documents, and then all documents were analyzed through Atlas software. Every paragraph was carefully read, analyzed, and coded. There were over eighty codes, some with over forty occurrences and some with only one or two. Below, the major themes and commonalities will be discussed. Overall, this group would serve as a very valuable and highly profitable target market for the EAS brand, though reaching them may prove difficult due to their organizational structure, which will be discussed below.

### *A. Account Planner's Overview*

As seen in chapter 4, a brief key insight will summarize the key findings of this study, and it will be followed by a fictional profile of a student football player. These tools provide a brief overview of research, which is often a lot of data. These summaries will be followed by more detailed explanation of the findings.

*Key Insight:*        *Student athletes (football players) depend on the competitive environment to motivate them to want to be the best and on their coaches and trainers to tell them how to do that.*

*Target Profile:*    *Tyson plays football at a Division I university. He gets up at 6 a.m. and heads to his assigned lifting time. Since it's the*

*beginning of the week, the coaches weigh him and scold him for adding weight when he needs to lose some. Charlie, another lineman who is in line for weigh-ins, snickers and reminds him of the 2 cheeseburgers he ate the previous day.*

*Tyson goes through his workout, the trainer taking him through each exercise and providing goals for how much to lift at each station. The trainer commends him for adding weight to his bench press. After an hour of weights, they go outside for 30 minutes of sprint drills. When everyone's done, Tyson decides to stay and do some extra cardio. He finishes up, grabs a protein shake, and heads to class.*

*After class and afternoon tutors, he heads home and grills a couple of chicken breasts for dinner, which he eats with a large helping of broccoli. He kicks his roommate's butt at a video game, changes his Facebook status to let everyone know about this victory, and goes to bed.*

### *B. Competitive Energy*

“Competitive energy ... it’s what gets you up in the morning” (Gerard). There is no doubt that the student athletes who participated in these focus groups are highly competitive individuals. Their competitive nature doesn’t simply stay on the field and instead infiltrates every aspect of their lives. They even became competitive about the writing exercises during the focus groups to see who could write more in one minute. It is a key element to their relationship with one another and their attitude towards fitness and nutrition. In fact, every single participant emphatically claimed his competitive nature:

*Table 3*

| <i>Participant:</i> | <i>Competitive Claim:</i>  |
|---------------------|--|
| Ross                | “You’re competing against the guys on your team that play your position, you’re competing against the guys you have to go against everyday on your team, and then you’re competing against the guy that plays at Auburn that you’re going to have to go against, but you’re also competing against the guy at Auburn that plays the same position as you because that kind of sets you up for awards and such ... I think you’re competing |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
|        | against everyone.”   |
| Gerard | “I think I’m the most competitive person in the world ... honestly, if I lose at a video game, like against my roommate, I won’t talk to him for the rest of the night.”   |
| Wilson | “I’m definitely competitive. Basically my entire life, whether it was on the playground playing tag ... even school, like competing with a friend on who can do better on a test, and it doesn’t end when you quit playing football.”  |
| Paul   | “I’d say I try to work out with somebody to keep the competition going because if you have someone you’re competing with, you’re pushing towards a goal ... just someone to keep you in check, someone to push you.”   |
| BJ     | “Yes, definitely [competitive] ... you work so hard and you put so much time and effort and energy in, you know, day after day after day – you want to come out on top even more.”   |
| Daniel | “I don’t like people telling me ‘I’m too big to do this and do that’ – I’ve tried to be on every special team I can. You know, younger, smaller guys does these and whatnot – I just ... I’m just competitive by nature and I hate losing. I hate losing more than I like winning!                 |
| Alex   | “I’d rather go out and play the worst game of my life and win ... rather than play the best game of my life and lose.”   |
| Bret   | “Probably the most would be competing against ourselves during this time right now more than anything until ... I guess, the week of the first game because we all trying to increase our playing time, all trying to start, all trying to get on some special team.”                              |
| Tyler  | “I don’t like losing at anything really. I mean whether it’s like – you know, in football or in the classroom or something. I don’t want to lose to somebody in a video game. I don’t like losing, it just feels better to win.”   |
| Damon  | “I think that anybody that plays any sport, no matter what level it is, is competitive ... just because you have to be to go out there everyday and do the stuff we do – mentally and physically – and if you’re not competitive, you’re not going to win. And that’s everybody’s goal is to win.” |

|      |  |
|------|--|
| Clay | “Competing is ... it goes way further outside of football and any sport. You compete in whatever you do. Classroom ... you know, weight room, whatever ... I think it’s just human nature.”  |
| Max  | “Competing against myself is the biggest thing I’m competing against ... then obviously the people on your team, like Daniel said, to get a certain position or playing time – and then like competing against other people in the league and stuff, trying to be <i>that guy</i> – get the honors and stuff.” |

As the quotations above demonstrate, these athletes are competitive in everything they do. Of course, the next question would be why is this relevant? This research indicates that their competitive nature influences their decisions, both long-term and short-term, and also motivates them to put in the effort into fitness that they do.

### *C. Bragging Rights*

These focus groups also indicated why these athletes are so competitive: they’re working to earn bragging rights. Their daily environment revolves around competition, and the winners earn a moment of recognition. Many of them strive towards these moments of recognition, such as winning a fantasy league or having their NFL team win the Super Bowl. These winnings seem to stretch across everything, including outcomes of which they have control as well as those they don’t. It should be noted that the issue of controlling the outcome goes for winning, not losing, which will be discussed later. In fact, the moment of winning is not necessarily motivating but instead the afterglow of getting to tell everyone or remind them of the victory:

“I am ‘hooray’ happy – rub it in somebody’s face if we win – especially if it’s the Patriots or you know – somebody like that team or something like that – then I’m going to let them know in case they didn’t see the game ... and if they did, I just want to remind them.” ~Daniel [on being Colts fan]

“There’s other people that you just enjoy beating because you know at the chance when they do one thing good, you’ll hear about it for a while.” ~Ross



“Oh, world champs. I get to rub it in everyone’s face!” ~Paul [on being a Saints fan]

“Bragging rights, that’s pretty much it. Glory!” ~Wilson [on winning fantasy football league]

“Say if I were to be Russ McGowan in a video game – he’s like the best, one of the best, I’d probably go around the locker room telling everyone.” ~Gerard

As demonstrated above, the theme of *rubbing a win in someone’s face* as well as *bragging rights* came up repeatedly. Again, this stretched across personal victories on the field as well as video games as well as simply cheering for professional sports teams.

While working towards or cheering for a moment of glory is motivating, it could be argued that the hatred of being in the humble position of recognizing an opponent’s victory is the true motivation. They push themselves to do better on the field, in school, or wherever; so they don’t have to recognize that someone else did better than they did. In the case of something that is out of their control, such as a NFL team’s victory, they must prove their loyalty before the outcome in order to maximize bragging rights. Metaphorically, there is a pedestal on which the winner(s) get(s) to stand. Standing on it is great, but standing in front of it, acknowledging the winner’s accomplishment is terrible and avoided at all costs. As Daniel said, “I hate losing more than I like winning.”

Others demonstrated similar attitudes:

“When I lose, I don’t like to talk about it much, and I try not to show that I’m upset that I lose, but I ... it really hurts on the inside.” ~ Ross

“Basically it boils down to if the team does well, you’ll feel good about it ... even if you had a bad, bad game.” ~Paul

“A lot of these haters, you know, like to hate on them Colts ... and they like to make me feel bad – so we got people who jump on bandwagons (looks directly at Alex) during times [everyone else laughing] ... just to make me feel bad ... my roommate!” ~Daniel

In Paul's example above, it shows that a personal victory is irrelevant if it means that the team loses a game. If you don't contribute to the win, it doesn't matter. The only thing that actually matters is not losing.

#### *D. Team Functions as One*

When asked which victory was sweeter, a personal victory or a team victory, both groups shouted 'team' in unison. They cited the celebrations that followed a big team victory as reason for this. When I asked them why, several shouted "DT!" and "downtown!" They discussed the positive energy and constant praise for both victories at home games and at away games. This, of course, is obvious in that any individual or team working towards winning games would be excited to actually win them. However, this is another example of how the motivation comes from something outside of the self. The desire to win or to not lose comes from understanding what will happen after the game – the discussion of a great play or analysis of a bad one, praise and celebration or not. All of these factors come from peers, coaches, fans, and opponents; and they all come in the aftermath of the game or practice. Being proud of oneself isn't enough to motivate these athletes. An interaction with Alex exemplifies this concept:

*Alex:* In that sense, I really don't think it's a personal victory – because I'd rather go out and play the worst game of my life and win ... rather than go out and play the bet game of my life and lose.

*Moderator:* Why is that?

*Alex:* It's because, I mean, what? Are you just going to be happy by yourself? I mean, you work to win with the rest of your team – what? Is everybody else going to be down? And you going to be happy because you played a good game ... I mean, it's not like it's an individual sport. I guess it just feels like it's going to take everybody to win. Just because you had a good game don't mean that everything's all fine and dandy.

Because of this attitude, which was shared across participants, they really work and function as on unit. For instance, they are well aware of one another's abilities, stats, and even body weight. Of course they monitor themselves, but they also keep careful check on one another because everyone's physical abilities may matter to the outcome. Paul discusses a body ideal for his position and explains "they want you, I mean, the biggest you can possibly play and be quick. Because Joe – they want him at 300 lbs ... but Sam, he can play at 340 lbs and still move." For both Joe and Sam, he knows how much they weigh as well as their goals associated with weight as dictated by the coaches. Daniel uses a teammate as an example to discuss strength:

"Tyson – I don't want to be negative or anything – he can squat, he can squat the whole weight room, you know, can bench like ... he can bench a lot – but he can't do a pull-up."

Daniel is aware of Tyson's abilities with squatting and benching as well as the fact that he can't do a pull-up. As he explained this, other participants gave signs or mumbles of affirmation, suggesting that it was information they already knew. In one focus group, a group discussion broke out about how much Bret sweats and how his choice of workout pants affects his sweating. While Bret's teammates were gently teasing him, they clearly knew a lot about his workouts right down to what he wears. There were sixteen total quotations coded for knowledge of teammates' bodies, showing that this is a common theme. They know each other's workout routine, weight class, body weight, ability on the field, goals from the coaches, and personal goals.

In fact, they're all monitoring one another in terms of goals, weights, ability, and improvement. Tyler is well over 6 feet tall and muscular, though on the leaner side relative to other participants. He explained that: "once I came here, I wanted to, you

know – my goal was to gain some weight.” The group’s immediate reaction was to laugh, noting that Tyler hasn’t gained weight and remains *skinny* by football standards.

Similarly, in a discussion about what goals match with specific workouts, the topic of losing weight comes up, and Daniel smirks, “Bret knows about that,” to which everyone laughs, showing that everyone’s aware that Bret’s trying to lose weight. As these examples show, they’re all aware of not only ability and stats of their teammates, but also specific goals their teammates have. Tyler’s weight gain and Bret’s weight loss become a team effort in a sense. The friendly teasing seems to help with motivation and, in a way, make the reaching the goal become competitive. Tyler laughed with everyone at Bret’s need to lose weight, and Bret laughed with everyone at Tyler’s goal to gain weight.

Reaching these goals would remove them from the humiliation spotlight, which is how their teammates provide motivation.

#### *E. Protein Products: Routine*

The focus groups revealed a protein product routine true of almost all players as well as a rigid guideline for supplement usage. The football team has three distinct lifting times, and everyone is assigned to one of them, depending on their class schedules. In each group, they are divided into: linemen, biggest skill, and skill, i.e. there are three separate workouts in each group based on position. Generally, they are lifting for around an hour and then doing some specific cardio for close to an hour. Of course, this varies depending on time of year and whether or not they are in season. The team provides *Muscle Milk* in the weight room, and almost all team members will have a *Muscle Milk* after working out and before showering. The only exceptions are the guys who have been

assigned to lose weight, and those trying to gain weight may be given two protein shakes. Other brands such as Gatorade protein shakes have rotated into the weight room, but the team generally takes whatever is provided.

A few make the effort to take additional supplements, and it seems that it is common to take additional supplements for a period of time, especially when trying to gain weight and typically during the summer before the season begins. However, they are not allowed to simply choose a supplement and take it. They must take the product to their coaches and trainers, who will test it to be sure it meets NCAA standards. Several participants explained a situation that makes them all hesitate about additional supplements:

“They would advise against it just because like the guy from Kentucky – the defensive lineman, who was a 1<sup>st</sup> day draft pick, he went and got something from GNC the guy from GNC told him it was good, it was fine, the NCAA had approved it ... and he just started taking it without getting it tested by the trainers, and it had an illegal substance in it – and the NCAA took a year of eligibility, which was his last year – so that messed up his whole career.” ~Damon

While that story is quite famous among this group, many still purchase additional supplements though they always get them tested by the trainers to be sure they're within the NCAA rules. The bottom line is that it is complicated and difficult to obtain additional supplements, but this group regularly consumes what coaches and trainers provide.

#### *F. Protein Products: Recovery & Weight Gain*

Most agreed that the short-term purpose of the shakes was to recovery from a workout. The definition of recovery varied, but the general consensus was that the shakes should be consumed after a workout, within 30 minutes:

“For the most part, I mean, it’s just something to help speed up recovery, you know, replace everything that I lost.” ~Paul

“Some of them are like recovery shakes. They kind of recover ... that’s like the meal you’re supposed to get within the hour of completing your workout. That kind of takes that place.” ~Ross

“It’s just for your muscle recovery, and just I guess – that’s what they say protein is in muscle curd ... but Glutamine works a lot better than protein with recovery ... the feeling at least.” ~Gerard

Long-term, the participants associated protein products with weight gain and bulking up, which was often a goal. Coaches and trainers would tell them to use these products heavily when they were trying to either gain weight or bulk up. This was an especially popular goal during the spring and summer seasons, where they’re all aiming to get in the best possible shape for the upcoming season.

“I used Creatine one summer, and that was really the only summer that I got big into the supplements and that was the summer that I got bigger than I wanted to.” ~ Ross

“The protein products – Cytodyne, that’s what I use when I gain weight.” ~Clay

“I think Muscle Milk and protein products are associated with weight gain because you see all the little guys that want to gain weight and take out like ... 2 or 3 boxes of protein stuff ...” ~Daniel

“Anything that has an ample amount of protein in it is going to have like 250+ calories in it ... I mean that’s a whole meal.” ~BJ

Those trying to lose weight consciously “don’t drink them” (Bret, who is trying to lose weight). These associations with recovery and weight gain seem to come from the coaches and trainers. From a marketing perspective, arguing against them would be very difficult, so instead they should be utilized.

### *G. Protein Products: Default to Authority*

A common theme throughout the focus groups was a default to authority when it comes to fitness and nutrition. The coaches and trainers play a pivotal role in the fitness and nutrition of the players. The players are all weighed at least once a week, some more if they're struggling with weight. Many are often measured for muscle gain. Along with constant monitoring, the coaches and trainers provide goals specific to the individual, which could include weight loss, weight gain, getting stronger, or getting more flexible.

When asked about their goals:

“Your coach or whatnot will want you at a certain weight. They'll sit you down beginning before workouts even start and they'll evaluate how fast you move with certain weight.” ~Clay

“If you're trying to get small, we have a nutritionist lady that come in and you'll sit down and she'll tell you what you need to eat and whatnot.” ~Bret

“I think everybody's goal is to get stronger. That's the reason we go in there and we lift and we do everything the coaches ask us to, you know, that's the mail goal – to get stronger and try to hit your peak.” ~Daniel

“I feel like they try to preach to us about what to eat ... like with sheets on our lockers about nutritional things – it's all like mapped out, like exact, like 'you need this many grams.’” ~Max

Goals are coming from outside of the self as well. It's all about the team, not personal goals. When discussing how they react to a bad practice, the most pro-active thing they can do is anticipate what the coach will say and how they need to improve. It still revolves around the goals someone else is setting. The expertise is also readily available to help them with these goals. For instance, a nutritionist is kept on staff to help with consultation for weight loss or weight gain. Tyler explains sitting with her and being told to replace his morning toast with a bagel and other small substitutes he could make to

gain weight. The trainers provide tailor-made workouts when necessary to help with bulking up or building strength.

In fact, having such readily available expertise seems to have led to a tendency to default to expertise in all areas regarding fitness and nutrition. When discussing protein products, the participants typically default to what the trainers provide or tell them to do. BJ summarizes it by saying, “I guess all 3 of us really said it – whatever they gave us is what I took. I never really supplemented more than that.” Of course, the NCAA rules make it difficult to use additional supplements, and the fact that Muscle Milk is provided in the weight room fridge adds a convenience factor. However, the reliance on coaches, trainers, and teammates cannot be denied. From a marketing perspective, the coaches and trainers are the avenues to the players. They whole-heartedly trust that whatever is provided for them meets the criteria that they need.

The participants demonstrated a detailed knowledge of protein products, noting specific brands and specific ingredients that could or should be present. They discussed the varieties available – some for bulking up, some for building strength, etc. All of them have taken Muscle Milk as part of a routine at some point, and most of them have also used additional supplements for a given period of time. The examples below demonstrate their comfort in discussing product usage and ingredients:

“You’re supposed to drink like a gallon of water a day or something if you’re on Creatine.” ~Wilson

“I guess that’s like 20g ... 20g, I mean and that’s Creatine and Fosfygen – it’s got glutamine in it.” ~ Gerard

“Cytodne (name not confirmed) – that’s what I use when I gain weight and I mean, basically, after a workout, you know, you have that lactic acid in you – and you try to ... I mean, once you sit down and rest and whatnot, all that goes away. I think the protein help, you know, keep some in – help build muscle.” ~Clay



Even if what they know about protein products isn't true, they speak with confidence about these products in a discussion. However, when asked if they felt comfortable walking into a GNC or other store and purchasing these products (NCAA rules aside), none of them did. This speaks to the perceived complexity of the product category as well as this group's tendency to default to expertise when it comes to nutrition. This exchange in Group 2 exemplifies this attitude:

*Moderator:* Do you feel comfortable – like do you feel like you know enough where you could just go to the shelf and pick one? Or would you go talk to somebody?

*Alex:* I would talk to somebody. [murmurs of agreement]

*Max:* Unless you've been on it ... then you can kind of consult your trainer or the guy at the store about it – and then go check with the training staff and see if it's ok and see what it has in it.

*Daniel:* I couldn't go into a store – I couldn't tell you like ...

*Damon:* There's so much stuff out there ...

*Alex:* Yeah.

Juxtaposing this attitude of asking someone for help when it comes to protein products against the product knowledge that this group already possesses shows that (1) it's a complicated product category and (2) this group expects to hear from an authority before they try something new.

### **III. Recommendation to EAS**

The participants in this study showed both the competitive nature as well as the high dependence of football players. To be playing in such a high-level league, they are all skilled football players, and they are also highly competitive. Perhaps at this level, 3<sup>rd</sup>

party expertise is absolutely essential for success. Interestingly enough though, these participants demonstrated a high knowledge of what it takes to be nutritious, lose weight, gain weight, build muscle, and incorporate protein products into your routine. However, they default to an expert in all categories, perhaps because they can. They also rely heavily on their teammates to not only push them towards their goals but also to (1) make the celebrating worthwhile when they win and (2) make the repercussions of losing at anything remain undesirable enough to be motivating.

This insight of course could be maximized through EAS's marketing efforts. The coaches and trainers are not only a logical avenue for delivering the EAS products into the weight rooms, but also for delivering the message. Reaching a handful of coaches and trainers would reach hundreds of heavy users, making this group of student athletes a highly desirable target market.



## CHAPTER 6

### Successful Weight Loss: Healthy Determination

The secondary research provided in the second and third chapters indicated that people trying to lose weight might serve as a good target market for the EAS brand. The weight loss trend in the U.S. is hard to ignore with a growing awareness and abundance of healthy food options as well as the sprouting of gyms throughout the country. EAS being involved in the fitness and nutrition industries makes the association between EAS and weight loss a possibility. Protein has proven to be a key ingredient to weight loss as seen with the *Atkins* diet as well as subsequent diets and lifestyles. EAS currently has a *Myoplex Lite* option that may prove useful to the weight loss industry, but they may also need to consider developing new products and/or repackaging current products if they were to penetrate this market. A qualitative study was conducted to determine if EAS should consider the weight loss industry.

### **I. Research Method:**

While it may be useful to talk to people who are trying to lose weight, secondary research indicated that most people who lose weight actually regain it back. Since the EAS brand would want to help people successfully lose weight, it would make more sense to research people who have successfully lost weight. Understanding their tactics for both weight loss and maintenance may provide ideas about how EAS may fit into this journey for other individuals attempting weight loss. Therefore, a qualitative study was conducted with people who have successfully lost weight in order to uncover their weight loss secrets and how protein products may or may not fit into a successful weight loss regime.

The term, ‘successful weight loss,’ was operationalized as people who lost at least 20 lbs in the course of 1 year and had kept it off for at least 6 months. There were no other restricting factors such as age or gender. Originally, recruitment was to occur at Weight Watcher meetings because those who have successfully lost weight with Weight Watchers become ‘lifetime’ members and still attend meetings, which could have potentially provided a large number of eligible participants in one place. However, there were a few flaws with this recruitment method. First, had I used only this method, I would have only heard about how Weight Watchers members lose weight, and if protein products don’t fit into that particular diet, then it may be assumed they don’t fit into any diet, which may not be valid data. Second, lifetime members only need to attend meetings monthly rather than weekly, so it became difficult to find them in the given time period of this study.

In fact, timing was another challenge of this particular study. After a few weeks of unsuccessful recruitment, it became necessary to reach out to friends and family for contacts, employing a snowball sample recruitment method. It took some time before interest peaked, but an overwhelming response eventually arrived. Unfortunately, because recruitment consumed so much time, it was necessary to interview the first ten respondents, which was the minimum proposed, turning away any surplus. Though they technically had lost 20 lbs and kept it off for 6 months, some of the respondents interviewed were still on their weight loss journey, which was not ideal for this study. Had recruitment been approached differently from the start, there may have been more time to screen interested candidates and to interview more people to collect more information, strengthening the research. Nonetheless, ten individuals were interviewed

about their weight loss, weight maintenance, and protein usage, and opinions on protein products in February 2010.

Interviews occurred in a number of ways. Some took place in public places like coffee shops or restaurants with two exceptions. One was a personal contact, so it occurred in his living room. Another interview was conducted over the phone as it took place in Washington D.C., and a snowstorm prevented travel for several days. Discretion was used for interviews conducted in public spaces to ensure the interviewee's comfort and honesty. It did seem that interviewees were all comfortable and honest, and most of them being a friend of a friend may have contributed to their comfort. They all lasted close to one hour, some going over. Ages ranged from mid-20s to mid-60s. There were two males interviewed and eight females, another factor that may have been controlled had there been more time for recruitment. All interviewees will remain completely anonymous. All interviewees received \$25 compensation for their time. Their names were changed to another name, starting with the letter of the alphabet that corresponds with the order in which they were interviewed, starting with the letter "O" as not to confuse these participants with the participants from the study of women dedicated to fitness, discussed in a previous chapter. For example, the first interviewee will be called Olivia; the second, Peter; the third, Quinton; and so on.

## **II. The Results:**

All interviews were digitally recorded (voice-only) and transcribed, and because of timing, all transcriptions were outsourced for this study. Every paragraph of every interview was analyzed and coded through Atlas. There were seventy-one codes in total, some with only a few occurrences and others with over forty occurrences among the ten

interviews. Below, the results will be explained in detail. Overall, this would not be a good group for the EAS brand to target. This group's interests do not align with the brand. For EAS to pursue this group, they would need to not only create new products but also create a new brand image, which would likely alienate some of their current market. It would be wise for EAS to focus on other investments, including target markets that better align with the brand.

*A. Account Planner's Overview:*

As seen with chapter 4, an account planner's overview will be provided for this group, and it will be followed by more detailed findings. The research provided well over a hundred pages of transcriptions, so this section will summarize the key findings. People who have successfully lost weight are very pro-vegetable and pro-fruit in terms of their diet. Their go-to snacks include raw fruits and vegetables, and they make a conscious effort to eat a significant amount of both each day. In fact, many of them have gone so far as to say that they are entirely against processed foods and avoid them at all costs. They shop the perimeter of the grocery store to avoid the "junk food" (Tammy) in the middle. In fact, their frame of mind aligns more specifically with the natural food movement, something that was listed in the 'Threats' section of the SWOT Analysis in chapter 2. They typically don't deprive themselves of anything, especially if they're only maintaining at this point, but their portions are very small and their focus tends to stay with fruits and vegetables. The changes they've made in their life are permanent, and they're absolutely determined to keep it that way.

*Key Insight: People who have maintained weight loss have a strong impression of their heaviest weight as 'rock bottom,' which*



*evokes iron-willed determination to fully embrace a healthy lifestyle.*

*Target Profile: Sarah lost 35 lbs last year through Weight Watchers. She's married and holds a full-time job. Her husband was very supportive of her weight loss though he doesn't eat quite as healthily as she does now. That doesn't matter, there is nothing that will stop her from keeping this weight off.*

*Every morning she has oatmeal, and then a piece of fruit mid-morning. Lunch is typically a sandwich or salad from home. Dinner varies, but always involves a lot of veggies.*

*Today, she does a quick workout and goes to the grocery store. When she gets home, she unpacks groceries into the fridge, noticing her 'fat picture' taped to the fridge, which reminds her she'll never look like that again. She spends the next half hour cutting up veggies, so she always has a go-to snack. Then she puts a pot of Lentil soup on the stove to be sure she has lunch for the upcoming week.*

*She makes chicken kabobs for dinner, which she and her husband enjoy together.*

## *B. Determination*

While it seems logical that anyone who successfully loses at least 20 lbs would be determined to do so, the determination that the individuals portrayed cannot be understated. Most of them reached some type of rock bottom, typically described in terms as any addict would, which was immediate followed by an 'Aha!' moment. This moment was coded as the *Kick-start*, and this code appeared twenty-six times in the ten interviews. Examples below:

*"I had to take my boyfriend to the ER, and they thought I was in labor. One lady asked when we walked in – she said 'labor and delivery?' I was so mad because I was not pregnant." ~Tammy*

*"On the flight home [from a cruise], you know, getting a digital camera out and looking at some of the pictures and going, 'Oh my God! I mean it's ... it's time!'" ~Rachel*

“I saw pictures of myself, and to this day, we have the picture on the refrigerator to remind me of where I don’t need to be again.” ~Vicky

The determination lasted throughout the entire weight loss process for all interviewees. They would have moments – a meal or a day – of weakness where they indulged, but they always came right back to their weight loss program. Many of the Weight Watcher’s advocates cited the meetings as a source of inspiration each week. Many keep ‘before pictures’ on the fridge as Vicky did. Regardless, even in their maintenance, they are determined to stay where they are.

“I was good. I was good. I did exactly what I was supposed to do. I was not gonna stray one little bit, no sir. And it paid off.” ~Suzanne

“I look at pictures now of myself, and I’m like ‘no way in Hell will I ever go back there.’” ~Olivia

“I can’t feel that way, I can’t ... [whispers] I don’t wanna die fat. You know, I just, I can’t. I can’t. I’ll never, never ... it’s pictures that keep me motivated.”  
~Tammy

Most got rid of their bigger clothes as soon as they were in a smaller size and took other tactics to ensure that this new lifestyle was permanent. Gaining the weight back was not an option, and they stayed determined on this point and willingly work to assure that that remains true.

### *C. Embrace as a Lifestyle*

Another key attitude that this group shares is that they changed their lifestyle as opposed to dieting. They ate more healthily and started or intensified exercise regimens in most cases. Most of them shunned the word ‘diet’ if it came up in the interview and scoffed at diets such as *Slim Fast* or *Atkins*. Part of this attitude seems to come directly

from Weight Watchers, which calls itself a ‘program,’ not a ‘diet.’ Many of the participants who used the Weight Watchers program whole-heartedly adopt this mentality, and the non-Weight Watchers interviewees seem to prefer the idea of choosing a healthier lifestyle over a diet.

“This a lifestyle that they teach you. And, having done it a year, I have not denied myself anything ... the issue is for me, I must write it down and I must keep up with it.” ~Ursula

“Weight Watchers doesn’t tell you what to eat. They tell you how much to eat.”  
~Suzanne

Perhaps what these interviewees went through to lose weight technically is a diet, which is defined as a ‘controlled intake of food.’ However, their mentality is what’s important. The connotation of a *diet* is much more short-term than *lifestyle*. Embracing a lifestyle implies that it is a permanent change, which may have led to some of the success these individuals have achieved. In fact, they still get to have their favorite foods as both quotes above suggest. Also, as discussed in the next section, their bodies have learned to crave healthy foods. This would likely not be true of a *Slim Fast* diet or an *Atkins* diet. Craving the food that your body actually needs makes it much easier to maintain this new lifestyle, making the likelihood of success that much greater.

#### *D. Natural is Better*

In all discussion about food, fruits and vegetables continued to come up. When asked about go-to snacks, fruits and vegetables were the answer. When asked what concrete changes were made, vegetables were typically the substitute for chips or a starch side at dinner. This was an undeniable theme in the research, yielding forty-seven

occurrences among ten interviews, suggesting that each interviewee brought it up around 4-5 times on average.

Table 4

| <i>EATING HABITS</i><br><i>Trend towards Fruits &amp; Veggies</i> |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Interviewee</i>  | <i>Before:</i>  | <i>After</i>  |
| Olivia  | “I ate what I wanted, I drank whatever I wanted. I never counted anything – and I just kind of packed on the pounds.”   | “I eat a lot of fruit and a lot of vegetables, so, like I always have like apples and oranges and pears and grapes ... and so that’s what I snack on, and I cut up celery and carrots and ... I’ll either eat it with salsa or just like a puree.   |
| Peter   | “I crave French fries and fried foods ... so I would go, you know, a week and end up binging on something like that, like way too big a portion, like gigantic. And then the weekends – where I’m drinking, you know, 20 beers or something like that.” | “At lunches, just cut out the chips. If I go to Subway, I’ll get apples instead or something. I try to do 7-8 servings of vegetables and fruits a day.”   |
| Quinton   | “I once ate a large, like the extra large, Dominator pizza in one sitting and a 2-liter of Pepsi and didn’t even bat an eye.”   | “I eat a lot of raw fruits and vegetables ... I mean, that’s pretty helpful, just you know, carrots for a snack everyday or something like that – applies, oranges, bananas, other fruits ...”  |
| Rachel  | “One of my favorite dishes – it was quick and easy – I would dump some tortilla chips in a bowl, dump some refried beans on top of that, and grate some cheese – God knows how much – throw it in the microwave, and I mean, that was my dinner.”       | “I would make myself eat vegetables. Not the recommended serving – but ... some kind of green vegetable. I like fruit, so that was never a problem, but another great thing for me – my body now craves, I want – and it sounds insane – but I want like a big bowl of Brussels sprouts and you know, a huge salad with spinach and greens ...” |
| Suzanne   | “On Sunday, we always had fried chicken and potato salad. Every Sunday. On Friday nights, we always went to the hamburger   | “And when you think about the cows – what do they eat? They eat the grass. They eat the grains. So then, we eat the cow to get the protein,   |

|        |  |   |
|--------|--|---|
|        | stand and got hamburgers and hot dogs and brought ‘em home.”   | and we could actually just go to the greens and get the protein.”   |
| Tammy  | “When I was really young, my daddy would go to Hardee’s for me and get me 2 biscuits, and I would eat both of ‘em. Being that young, it was a mental thing, like I’m not getting anything else to eat that day ... I knew I was; I just had to get full right then.” | “Instead of before, it was like ‘Okay, let’s go down the little cake aisle or the chip aisle,’ you know, now it’s like I love the produce, I love to see what kind of vegetables that I can try that would be different, you know?” |
| Ursula | “I wanted something to nibble on. Let me tell you what – it was like bing! Kettle Chips in neon lights! ... I had a whole bag of yum potato chips.”  | “I’ve learned to cook more with vegetables. I’ve learned to season them better.”  |
| Vicky  | “I never paid attention to what I ate really beyond like the random flash of thought before I ate something terrible – like, ‘oh, this is terrible, I shouldn’t eat this.’”  | “A lot of the time, I’ll just have all-vegetable meals. I had an all vegetable meal tonight and realize that’ll fill me up.”  |
| Wendy  | “And stopping at Dunkin Donuts in the morning because I didn’t eat breakfast ... and so, I’d get a bagel sandwich and that’s like 500-600 calories everyday.”  | “At this point, it’s just try not to eat processed foods, eating just healthy stuff, which is very pricey, but fresh fruits and vegetables like zucchini, yellow squash, and onions and asparagus ...”                              |
| Yvonne | “I would have to get dessert no matter how much I’d eaten at the meal. It was like I was a crack addict. If I didn’t get it, I was so mad ... I just think mentally I felt entitled to it.”  | “I have a new appreciation for vegetables ... now I love fruit. I guess I just didn’t like anything healthy. I was anti-healthy, and I don’t know why, but I really was.”   |

As the table above suggests, participants have placed great emphasis on vegetables and fruit in their weight loss. It is a conscious change they’ve made. None of them did any type of all-vegetable crash diet, and in fact, none of them did a crash diet at all. Seven of the ten interviewees used the Weight Watchers program to lose weight, so it might be argued that Weight Watchers is the reason that they eat so many fruits and vegetables. Weight Watchers operates on a point-system, allotting a certain number of points per day and assigning point values to all foods, so they do encourage eating a lot of

fruits and vegetables by keeping their point-values at zero to one point per serving. However, Weight Watchers doesn't restrict anything as long as you stay within your points for the day. In fact, sugar-free *Jello* is also zero points as is zero-calorie *Reddi-wip* whipped cream. These are not items that they crave or eat daily like they do with fruits and vegetables. The remaining three interviewees; Peter, Quinton, and Yvonne; didn't diet but instead used common sense – eating less and exercising more. To them, increasing fruit and vegetable intake was logical when it came to losing and maintaining weight.

In addition to eating more fruits and vegetables, many discussed avoiding processed foods whenever possible. They don't all strictly follow this rule all the time, but most of them agree that processed foods are worse for you in terms of health. Here, again, their beliefs align with the natural food movement discussed in the Threats section of the SWOT Analysis. Some interviewees explicitly discussed this belief:

“I stay away from most of the processed stuff. I think processed stuff is not only bad for you because it's nothing but chemicals, I just think it's high in calories and really, calories are what it's all about.” ~Ursula

“I eat too many of those Weight Watcher meals, which is not good because processed foods are not good for you.” ~Wendy

“Any sort of processed food is just not the way to go in any sort of diet, I don't think - I think fruits and vegetables all the way.” ~Olivia

“I did learn from the Hallelujah diet class that a lot of that stuff does have toxins and it's processed ... and anything that's processed, it's not as healthy for you as the natural.” ~Suzanne

Many others shared this belief, however, it should be noted that many of them are quite hypocritical about it. For example, Olivia, quoted above, also claims “I'm not a huge food connoisseur, like I don't care – I can eat everything fake, I don't have like a refined

pallet ... I try to eat a lot of things that are very, very low in calories.” Throughout her interview, she discusses using a lot of Splenda as well as spray butter. It would be difficult to argue that these two items are not processed. Similarly, Suzanne, also quoted above, claims to have an obsession with zero-calorie *Reddi-wip* whipped cream, which she puts on everything dessert-wise. This is also a highly processed food item, so it could be argued that there are exceptions to avoiding processed foods as long as the item is extremely low in or deficient of calories.

### *E. Protein Products*

For these interviewees who have successfully lost weight, they are violently against protein products for the most part. For many, their attitudes towards processed foods seemed to extend to their attitude towards protein products, which they deem to be highly processed:

“I’ve never really believed in the protein shakes. I’ve never tried them, so I really don’t have a leg to stand on when I give an opinion on it, but I don’t know. Skeptical is the word because it’s man-made, I think, and I’d rather find something that was more natural, a natural protein.” ~Ursula

“I don’t like the ingredients in those protein shakes and stuff. I think it’s a lot of toxins in this processed stuff ... I’m like the lady that said ‘I can’t put my finger on it, but if I could, I’d have to wash it’ [laughs].” ~Suzanne

Others make the argument that these products are simply too high in calories to serve an effective purpose in weight loss. They suggest that a protein bar or shake would have to be a meal replacement rather than any kind of snack. Interestingly enough, this group is not welcoming of meal replacement diet programs:

“I’ve looked at, some of those meal supplements, I’ve been interested in them, but their points value is so high and they don’t fill me up.” ~Vicky

“It seems to me there’s a lot of process in there, and you would have to substitute a meal for one of those, so maybe – I do eat granola bars in the morning, so it wouldn’t be unheard of for me to eat one of those, but I just don’t really see them fitting in anywhere.” ~Quinton

“I did lose some weight when I was on the Body for Life, which is more than just the protein meal replacements, there were other things we were supposed to do – and we did lose weight for a while, but then I got sick of the shakes, and once I stopped using them, I mean, I gained all of my weight back.” ~Rachel

Protein bars and shakes are compared to Slim Fast bars and other diet programs, which don’t work long-term according to this group. Peter was the only exception to this attitude – he was somewhat neutral towards protein shakes and uses them once or twice a week when he works out. Interestingly enough, he adds protein powder a natural fruit smoothie, which is what he calls a “protein shake,” showing the preference of natural foods that this group holds.

### **III. Recommendation to EAS:**

Based on the findings from this study, pursuing people losing weight would not be a good investment for the EAS brand. The study indicates that people who *successfully* lose weight seem to be on board with the natural food movement, emphasizing fruit and vegetable intake. As discussed in the SWOT Analysis in chapter 2, this movement does not align with the EAS brand as it stands. A brand makeover would be necessary to associate EAS products as natural, and that would be a huge investment. Needless to say, it may turn off other more valuable targets such as student athletes, who currently associate these products with necessary and healthy weight *gain*. Of course, people trying to lose weight may be interested in a quick fix through meal replacements, much like the Slim Fast program. However, from an ethical standpoint, this pursuit would



not be recommended. The EAS brand has many avenues it could potentially explore, and helping people to lose weight should not be one of them.

## CHAPTER 7

### Conclusion & Final Recommendation

Three studies were conducted in an attempt to uncover an opportunity for the EAS brand, and if multiple opportunities arose from these studies, to prioritize them. Two of the studies yielded opportunities, and one did not. As chapter 6 describes, it would not be ethical or economically wise for the EAS brand to target people trying to lose weight. As seen with chapter 4, active health-conscious women would make a great target market for EAS, as would student athletes as seen with chapter 5.

*Account Planner's Recommendation:*

From the perspective of an account planner, below is a priority list for EAS to pursue based on the research conducted through these studies followed by a brief explanation:

*Table 5*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><i>1. Student Athletes</i></p>              | <p>Student athletes are highly valuable for a number of reasons. First, they already use products similar to that of EAS and generally have a positive attitude towards protein products. Second, once EAS taps into one team or conference or league, it would provide a constant revenue stream. Also, no repackaging would be necessary to appeal to this group. They have the potential to produce a high profit with minimal effort. The challenges with this group would be reaching the coaches and trainers, who would have to be the avenue to the players.</p>  |
| <p><i>2. Active Health-Conscious Women</i></p> | <p>Another opportunity lies with women who are both active and health-conscious. This is definitely an up-tapped market for the nutritional protein product category, but this research indicates that they may be open to it. However, it cannot be denied that EAS would need to make both a high investment and also much marketing effort in order to reach this group. Products would likely need to be repackaged, and a marketing message unique to these women would need to be developed and carried out. The risk and expense associated with this group is the reason they would be considered a second priority after the student athletes.</p> |

There has been much overlap with research, indicating that people, especially people who work out, think about their health in similar ways. For instance, weight and body size is something to be controlled and maintained. For all of these groups, it is something that they actively work to change and/or maintain. They monitor themselves and they work to control their health. This is a level with which the EAS brand could relate, so it could be used in future branding efforts.



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## Appendix A:

### Active Health-Conscious Women: Discussion Guide

As you know, my name is Katie, and I am conducting research on women's fitness activities to learn more about how women think about their own and others' fitness and exercise and lifestyle more generally. I'll start by asking you about your general exercise routine.

- Tell me about your work out routine. Is it limited to the gym?  
*frequency, machines used, classes taken, variety*
  - When did you start this?
  - Would you say you are pretty consistent or do you stray from your routine from time to time?
  - What were you doing before you started this routine?
  - Have you always worked out or is this something new for you?
  - Why did you start? What motivated you?
- Tell me about your fitness goals? What are you trying to achieve and why?
- Do you have weekly goals for what you do at they gym or in your workout more generally? Daily? Monthly?  
*certain amount of cardio? weights?*
- Tell me about how you schedule your time and fit working out into your schedule.
  - In terms of fitness, what does a 'good week' look like?
  - What about a 'bad week'?

Do you generally work out alone or with someone else? Why?

Tell me about your health. How satisfied are you with your overall health.

Childhood – I want to talk a little bit about what your life was like as a child in terms of fitness.

- Now, going back a bit – what about your childhood. Tell me about what you did in your free time?
- Outside of school, what kinds of things were you encouraged to do (by adult role models)? Tell me about your high school extra curricular activities.
- Looking back to when you were younger, how did your parents (or adult role models) feel about fitness? How did they act? How did you know your parents' thoughts on fitness? Did they work out or exercise regularly or at all?
- Did they ever communicate to you their expectations for your fitness?
- Tell me about your family's routine for meals. What was mealtime like in your house growing up?  
*e.g. did you sit down to dinner every night?*
- What was a typical dinner in your house growing up? What did you all eat?
- What about snacks and sodas? Were they allowed? Encouraged?
- When you were in high school, what did you eat for lunch? Do you remember what you ate for lunch in elementary and middle school?

- When did you join your first gym on your own?

### Nutrition

- Tell me about your daily eating habits What do you generally eat?
  - How many meals do you eat a day?
  - Do you snack at all during the day? How often? On what?
  - Do you tend to buy snacks from the vending machine or store or are you one of those people who keeps snacks on hand, in your purse, desk, ect.?

Describe your attitude toward your diet? How would you describe how you approach food and your diet?

- How do you plan your meals?
  - ‘Good day’ vs. ‘bad day’
- What kind of foods do you typically eat for breakfast?
- Lunch?
- If you’re working away from home, do you pack a lunch?
- And what about dinner?
- Do you cook at home frequently?
- In terms of your diet, how do you splurge?
- Do you take vitamins? Which ones? Why?
- Do you take any supplements other than vitamins? What do you take? When did you start taking supplements?
- What do you hope to achieve with the supplements you take? In other words, why do you take them?
- If no: Do you know anyone who takes supplements? What do they take? Do you know why they take them?  
Have you ever considered taking supplements? For what purpose?
- What do you think of additional supplements to balance your diet?
  - E.g. something that could give you an energy boost to work out?
- Would you say you’re ‘nutrition-conscious’ now?

### Network

- In terms of your health goals, tell me about your support system.  
*Roommate, boyfriend, husband, friends*  
*Do they work out like you?*
- Are you living with anyone? How do they feel about fitness?
- Tell me about the people you work out with.  
*Do you come with a friend? Work out next to strangers?*
- Do you frequent any work out classes?
  - If so, would you say you have ‘work out buddies’ in the class?
  - What about the teacher? How much do you feel you *need* him/her to push you?
- Is there anyone who is a negative influence on your health goals?
- Has there ever been a time when you’ve felt “cheated” out of a workout?

### Motivation – Day-to-Day

- Walk me through your typical workout prep routine. Do you have to mentally prepare for the gym? How do you get psyched up to go?  
*Reward system? Think of what you ate? Think of your ‘in-shape self’?*
- If you really don’t want to go, what do you do?
- When you’re really busy (work, school, kids), what do you do about working out?
- In a given day that you plan to work out, what obstacle could come up that would stop you?  
*e.g. Working late? Childcare? Injury in the family?*

### The Work Out

- Once you’ve gotten yourself mentally prepared to go to the gym, walk me through your process.
  - What you bring
  - What you wear
  - Hair up/down
- How do you feel before a work out?  
*the moment you walk into the gym, tying your shoes*
- Take me through what’s going on in your head as you begin your work out
- What kinds of things do you think about while you’re working out?
- What inspires you while you’re working out?
- What annoys you while you’re working out?
- How do you feel after a work out?

### Appearance

- How do you think appearance plays into women working out?
- How does how you look or your appearance affect your motivation to work out?
- How do you feel about clothing size?
- What role do you think dating or attracting a partner plays in women’s motivation to be in shape?
- Thinking about women who are ‘in shape’ (by your definition), tell me if/how you think sexuality and flirtation serve as motivators.



## Appendix B

### The Student Athlete: Moderator's Guide

#### Introduction:

Welcome! First, I want to thank all of you for coming today. Help yourselves to food, and we'll get started with introductions. Many of you know each other, but for my sake, let's go around the room and introduce ourselves.

First, go ahead and take one of the cards on the table and write your first name on it, and fold it as a nametag in front of you.

Now, everyone tell me your:

- First name
- Football position
- A reason you play football.

I'm Katie ... I'm a graduate student at UNC, and I'm doing this research as part of my master's thesis.

#### Rules:

As you know, these groups will be recorded. I'll be making every effort to protect your identity as a participant in this study. You will not be identified in any publication of this study or its results. After the focus groups have been transcribed with code names, all of the tapes will be destroyed. I will use the code names during any analysis or discussion.

I just want to learn about your opinions, habits, and motivations. That said, there are a few rules:

- First, please be completely honest. I'm not looking for any specific answers; I just want your honest opinions.
- Next, let's keep this as an open conversation – there may be different opinions, and we need to let everyone express their opinions.
- Lastly, no cell phones. Please turn them off or silence them for the duration of the focus group.

#### **TOPIC: General & Competition**

##### Short Questions

###### *General*

How and when did you get into football?

Why do you play?

What's the routine like as a college athlete?

In terms of working out, what are your goals?

What is your ideal weight? Why ?

### *Competition*

Do you think you're competitive? How so?

Who do you compete against?

- The person working out next to you?
- Other people in your position?
- Other teams?

How do you measure yourself against others (if you do)?

### **TOPIC: Nutrition**

Ok, we're going to switch gears a little bit and talk about what you guys eat – what you're paying attention to in terms of nutrition.

#### Short Questions:

So [picking someone], take me through a typical day – what do you eat?

Is this typical for all of you?

Does it vary throughout the year depending on football?

What do you think about when planning or choosing meals?

Calories? Protein? Vegetable intake?

Is there anything in your diet that gives you an edge on the field?

How do you plan meals? How far in advance are you thinking about the next meal?

Do you take any kind of supplements? If so, tell me about them.

#### Short Exercise:

Ok, we've got another little exercise. I'm going to say a word or phrase, and you write any word you might associate with that word for 1 minute.

1. Phrase = working out (time for 1 minute)

Ok, what kinds of things did you guys come up with?

2. Phrase = building muscle (time for 1 minute)

2. Phrase = protein product (time for 1 minute)

Ok, everyone look at their list and choose the top 3, and we'll go around and hear everyone's.

#### Short Questions:

Do any of you use protein products? If so, what kind?

How frequently are you using these products?

Would you say it's part of your routine?

What kinds of places do you buy them?

List a few places you may use them.  
Do you like the taste?  
Do you notice a difference when you're using them?  
Why are you using these products?

### **TOPIC: Specific Protein Products**

#### Questions:

Tell me about some brands that you've tried.  
Do you have favorites? Tell me about them.  
Is there anything that specific products do for you?

#### Short Exercise:

Choose 3 brands that you're familiar with. Now, pretend that they're each a person. Think about what they might look like and how they might behave. For each of them, I want you to list 5 adjectives to describe their personality.

Go around and share (just 1 per person).

### **Goodbye & Thank You**

I want to thank everyone for their time today. Please turn in all documents and take one of the envelopes. Just to remind you, I'll be doing everything possible to keep this data confidential. Let me know if you have any questions, and enjoy the rest of your day.  
Thanks!





## Appendix C

### People Trying to Lose Weight: Discussion Guide

#### Your “before” self

- Tell me a little bit about yourself prior to the decision to lose weight.
  - o Routine
  - o Self Confidence
  - o Emotions
- How did you think about food?
- How did you think about exercise?
- Tell me about your daily/weekly eating habits?
- How did you feel (emotionally about your weight)?
- Tell me about your confidence during this time?
- What other aspects of your life did your weight affect?
- Did you try to lose weight before this instance? Tell me about that.
- How did you gain the weight or was it always there? Anything that triggered weight gain?

#### Childhood

- Tell me about your childhood – were you active? Overweight?
- What kinds of things did you like to do in your free time?
- Was your family healthy? In terms of nutrition and/or fitness?
- Tell me about mealtime at your house growing up.

#### The Decision to Change

- Tell me about the moment you decided to lose weight/join Weight Watchers.
- How long did that surge of motivation last?
- Tell me about your first meeting.
- Tell me about the first few days.
- Tell me about weighing in and seeing that scale go down. How did that feel?

#### The Weight Loss Journey

- How did you stay motivated to lose weight?
- What concrete changes did you make in your life?
- What did you learn while losing weight? About food? Working out? Yourself?
- What did you keep track of in terms of nutrition?
- Were you cooking? (and was this a change in your life?)
- Tell me about the weekly routine
- Are there any particular food items that you would attribute some of your success to? Specific snack? Or even increase in fiber or protein?
- Tell me about the moments of success – weighing yourself
- Were there any set backs? If so, how did you handle them?

### Working Out

- Were you working out before? How did this change?
- How did you change this routine – whether starting to work out or pushing yourself even more
- Tell me about what kinds of fitness activities you did and if/how that evolved as you lost weight
- Tell me about your food intake before/after working out. Do you have a routine?

### Support System

- How did the people in your life affect your weight loss?
- Is there anything else that helped keep you motivated?
  - o Pair of jeans, magazine picture, etc.
- What about other people at the meetings? What role did they play?

### Your “after” self

- Tell me a little bit about yourself after losing weight.
  - o Routine
  - o Self Confidence
  - o Emotions
- How do you think about food?
- How do you think about exercise?
- Tell me about your daily/weekly eating habits
- How did you feel (emotionally about your weight)
- Tell me about your confidence during this time?
- What other aspects of your life did your weight affect?

### Maintenance - Food

- How did your daily food intake change in a permanent way?
- What do you keep track of now? Points? Calories? Protein?
- Take me through a grocery trip – what do you buy? How do you prepare a list?
- Do you have any “go-to” snacks, meals, drinks that are new to your life since your weight loss journey?
- Do you let yourself indulge now? If so, how?
- What are your nutrition goals now?

### Protein Bars

- Tell me a little about your protein intake.
- Is this conscious? Does it vary?
- Have you ever tried protein shakes or bars?
  - o If no, what about Clif bars? Granolla bars Special K bars?
- What do you think of them?
- What do you think of the term ‘protein bar’?
- How might you use them? (snack, meal replacement, work-out aid)
- Do you think they could help you or anyone lose weight?
- If so, how could they best be used (snack, meal replacement, work-out aid)