

Zara Walters

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SUMMARY

Consumer insights leader with eight years of experience translating consumer behavior, brand health, cultural trends, and **custom research** into decisions for beverage and consumer products businesses. Designs qualitative and quantitative **learning plans** around **strategic marketing questions**, selecting methods that clarify decisions, trade offs, and evidence needs. Integrates Nielsen and Circana datasets, **behavioral data**, tracking programs, and primary research into practical recommendations for positioning, communications, targeting, and portfolio growth. Partners with marketing, sales, channel, customer, leadership, and research supplier teams across concurrent studies. Leads projects independently from hypothesis development through executive synthesis, connecting immediate marketing actions with longer range strategy. Brings an enterprise perspective and thoughtful communication style that can help consumer led organizations turn complex evidence into clear growth choices.

EXPERIENCE

Senior Consumer Insights Manager

January 2024 to Present

Northstar Refreshments

Milwaukee, WI

Leads **consumer learning** across a diversified **beverage portfolio**, connecting research agendas with brand growth, positioning, communications, targeting, innovation, and enterprise planning. Owns supplier partnerships, concurrent study delivery, executive synthesis, and foresight work that gives marketing leaders a coherent view of demand and opportunity.

- Directed beverage learning agendas linking brand growth questions with positioning and innovation decisions.
- Selected qualitative, quantitative, tracking, or behavioral methods after clarifying required decisions.
- Integrated **Nielsen**, **Circana**, tracking, and primary research into actionable demand insights.
- Guided **campaign development** from concept exploration through evaluation, shaping creative and media implications.
- Built quarterly **foresight** briefs connecting cultural signals with beverage occasions and planning priorities.
- Managed suppliers, budgets, timelines, and executive readouts across concurrent research studies.

Consumer Insights Manager

July 2021 to December 2023

Harbor & Field Consumer Brands

Grand Rapids, MI

Owned learning plans for established and emerging consumer brands, translating ambiguous marketing questions into sequenced research programs. Connected segmentation, interviews, behavioral evidence, tracking, syndicated datasets, and stakeholder dialogue into recommendations that supported brand, sales, channel, and annual planning decisions.

- Owned **learning plans** that converted ambiguous marketing questions into testable research hypotheses.
- Combined segmentation, interviews, behavioral **evidence**, and tracking to refine consumer targets.
- Analyzed **Nielsen** and Circana datasets to separate category effects from brand opportunities.
- Led campaign and message research, giving brand teams evidence for near term execution.
- Presented integrated findings to **marketing**, **sales**, and channel stakeholders through decision focused narratives.
- Established research briefs and supplier reviews that improved methodology selection and recommendations.

Consumer Research Analyst

June 2019 to June 2021

Prairie House Foods

Des Moines, IA

Managed primary research for packaged food and beverage initiatives, supporting concept, usage, attitude, focus group, and survey programs. Prepared syndicated market analysis, maintained brand health reporting, coordinated suppliers, and synthesized evidence for packaging, messaging, audience, and commercialization decisions.

- Managed concept, usage, attitude, focus group, and survey research for food initiatives.
- Connected awareness, consideration, and usage shifts with feedback and syndicated evidence.
- Prepared **Nielsen** and Circana analyses across category, segment, channel, and consumer views.
- Developed questionnaires, discussion guides, sampling plans, and analysis frameworks with suppliers.
- Synthesized qualitative themes and quantitative findings for packaging and messaging decisions.
- Coordinated fieldwork, reporting, data quality, and stakeholder alignment across concurrent studies.

Consumer Research Associate

June 2018 to May 2019

Brightline Research Partners

Minneapolis, MN

Supported client research programs for consumer products and beverage accounts in a supplier environment. Prepared fieldwork materials, survey tables, coded qualitative feedback, data quality reviews, charts, and integrated presentations that connected evidence with positioning, communications, and targeting questions.

- Supported beverage research programs through fieldwork materials, data checks, and structured analysis.
- Built survey tables and coded feedback around needs, attitudes, occasions, and concepts.

- Reviewed respondent data and vendor deliverables before analysis, documenting exceptions clearly.
- Prepared charts and interpretations connecting evidence with positioning and targeting questions.
- Coordinated moderators, sample providers, analysts, and clients against firm deadlines.
- Integrated qualitative observations, quantitative results, and syndicated context into client presentations.

PROJECTS

Beverage Portfolio Foresight Program 📅 2025

Created a recurring foresight program that connected cultural shifts, marketplace signals, beverage occasions, and emerging consumer needs with annual brand learning priorities.

Integrated Brand Health Dashboard 📅 2023

Unified tracking results, Nielsen and Circana evidence, behavioral data, and primary research into a decision focused view of brand and category movement.

LEADERSHIP & AWARDS

- Recognized by marketing leadership for translating complex consumer evidence into clear brand decisions.
- Received peer recognition for building reusable research briefs and improving supplier collaboration.
- Selected to lead quarterly foresight discussions connecting culture, markets, and beverage growth opportunities.

EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration in Marketing and Consumer Strategy2021

Marquette University GPA: 4.0Milwaukee, WI

Coursework: Consumer research, marketing strategy, behavioral economics, brand management

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology2018

University of Minnesota Twin Cities GPA: 4.0Minneapolis, MN

Coursework: Research methods, social psychology, statistics, consumer behavior

CERTIFICATIONS

- Insights Association Professional Researcher Certification 📅 2024
- Google Analytics Certification 📅 2023

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Research Methods:** Qualitative research, Quantitative research, Focus groups
- **Syndicated Data:** Nielsen, Circana, Brand health tracking
- **Primary Research:** Custom research, Surveys, Interviews
- **Consumer Analytics:** Behavioral data, Segmentation, Usage and attitude
- **Brand Strategy:** Brand positioning, Consumer targeting, Portfolio strategy
- **Campaign Research:** Concept testing, Message testing, Communication development
- **Foresight Analysis:** Trend analysis, Cultural analysis, Market analysis
- **Research Planning:** Learning plans, Hypothesis development, Sampling plans
- **Research Delivery:** Discussion guides, Questionnaires, Fieldwork coordination
- **Stakeholder Communication:** Executive storytelling, Presentation development, Written communication

SKILLS

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|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| • Consumer Insights | • Learning Plans | • Nielsen | • Consumer Targeting |
| • Consumer Research | • Brand Health Tracking | • Circana | • Foresight |
| • Qualitative Research | • Behavioral Data | • Brand Positioning | • Trend Analysis |
| • Quantitative Research | • Custom Research | • Campaign Development | |

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Insights Association member, engaged with consumer research practice and professional learning.
- Marketing Research Association participant, connected with research standards and industry perspectives.

LANGUAGES

- English (Native)
- Spanish (Intermediate)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Work Status : Authorized to work in United States. No sponsorship required.

REFERENCES

AVAILABLE ON REQUEST