

# Nabisco Premium Saltines

*The Snack That Takes You Back*

Strategic Project

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# Brand Overview:

Premium Saltines is one of the many brands that make up Nabisco. In 1898 the New York Biscuit Company merged over 100 bakeries in the National Biscuit Company, and eventually called it Nabisco. Nabisco is now the name for the cookie and crackers business in the United States run by Kraft. Premium Saltines were the first branded saltine cracker, released in 1876, and ultimately taken over by Nabisco. They registered the word “Saltine” as a trademark. Nabisco, however, lost its trademark when the term began to be used generically to refer to the type of cracker. Saltine was put into the Merriam Webster dictionary in 1907, defined as “a thin crisp cracker usually sprinkled with salt.” They are often used as a light snack with cheese or peanut butter. They are also crumbled into stews, soups, dips and salads. They are typically sold in boxes wrapped in sleeves made of plastic or wax paper. Saltines are known for being the home remedy for an upset stomach and often, pregnant women are advised to eat them.

The current user of Nabisco Premium Saltines crackers is Caucasian, married, and has graduated high school. This individual is 65 years or older who has or had an occupation in management, business or financial operations. The user has a household income of \$75,000-\$149,999 and has owned a home in the West for over 5 years. Also, the average consumer subscribes to Better Homes & Gardens, AARP The Magazine, and Martha Stewart Living.





**Previous Advertising:**

The slogan Premium used throughout the 1930's, during The Great Depression was "Polly wants a cracker," which was run on cracker boxes and in advertisements. The crackers became very popular for recipes during this time period because they were inexpensive. Many people used them as a "filler" to expand certain foods such as meatloaf. The advertising during the 1950's and 1960's was centered around the fact that after the war men were back to work and life was exciting and busy again. The print advertising focused on freshness, staying crisp, and using them to eat with soup or a quick meal when your in a hurry.



## “Hurry-up lunch for a hungry hubby!”—1950



### “Hot meal in a hurry”—1963



“The reclosable moisture-proof Stack Pack keeps Premium Saltines crisp to the very last cracker” –1964



“Eat crisp” –1967

When Nabisco celebrated their 200th anniversary in 1992 they decided to produce over 25 million commemorative packages for the three brands Oreo, Premium Saltines, and Honey Maid Grahams. Each package was modeled after the original packaging and contains historical overviews of the product. The CEO of Nabisco hoped that this packaging will “bring back some food memories.” With the new packaging, the company released an offer on the boxes giving away kitchen products with the original Premium logo on them.



# Current Advertising:

The new Nabisco campaign for Premium Saltines focuses on its power to liven up a bowl of soup. This is the first time that the brand has advertised on television since 1986 to the American public. The campaign started in Canada last fall and has just arrived in the United States with a major alteration in music. The Canadian commercial was modified to have a tune better known to Americans. The new campaign plays off of the idea that consumers are turning to brands and products they know and trust. Not only is this brand a budget-friendly “filler” food, but it is also comforting and nurturing. The Nabisco Premium Saltines’ new campaign narrowed in on a prime opportunity to reinforce the connection between Premium Saltines and soup. To add to the campaign’s execution, coupons for a dollar off are offered with the purchase of a can of soup and Premium saltines.





# Key Competitors:

Through secondary research we found that Nabisco Premium Saltine crackers are the number 6 top cracker brand out of the total cracker market. Private Label Saltine's hold the spot of number 10. No other saltine cracker brands are ranked in the top sales spot. When comparing the sales of the top 10 brands of saltine crackers Nabisco Premium's are the highest selling cracker of the whole market. Private Label saltines hold the second spot in dollar sales. Keebler Zesta Saltines holds the number 3 spot and Sunshine Krispy follows in number 4. The combined sales of Keebler Zesta and Sunshine Kripsy do not total one third of the sales of Private Label Saltines. With the statistical information on Saltine Cracker brand sales we made Private Label Saltines our main competitor. Although Zesta and Krispy hold a share in the market, Private Labels are our biggest competition.

Top Ten Cracker Brands  
(for the 52 weeks ending September 6, 2009)  
Total Category Sales - \$4,043 million (including brands not shown)

Brand name	Dollar sales (in millions)	Unit sales (in millions)
Sunshine Cheez-It	\$335.7	121.3
Nabisco Ritz	\$312.3	109.8
Nabisco Wheat Thins	\$284.1	100.8
Nabisco Triscuit	\$233.0	83.2
Pepperidge Farm Goldfish	\$231.5	103.7
Nabisco Premium Saltine	\$208.3	79.3
Keebler Club	\$138.4	48.5
Private Label	\$133.6	69.6
Nabisco Honey Maid Graham	\$116.9	33.9
Private Label Saltine	\$106.3	77.9

Source: *Snack Food and Wholesale Bakery*, November 2008, p. 26  
Data obtained from Information Resources Inc. (excludes Wal-Mart)

Top 10 Brands of Saltine Cracker Brands  
(for the 52 weeks ending August 9, 2009)

Cracker Brands	Dollar Sales
Nabisco Premium	\$223,798,800
Keebler Zesta	\$47,366,210
Sunshine Krispy	\$15,935,050
Vista Saltine	\$2,597,809
Gamesa Saladitas	\$2,457,177
Bud's Best	\$1,390,063
Dux	\$1,255,762
Lance	\$363,146
Late July Organic	\$347,181
Private Label	\$106,672,000

Source: *Sosland Publishing's Corporate Profiles: State of the Industry*, October 2009, p. 22

# Keebler Zesta

## Brand History:

Keebler, founded in 1853, is the second largest cracker and cookie manufacturer after Nabisco. Keebler was an independent company until 1974 when it was bought by United Biscuit Company. With United Biscuit owned Keebler and they developed and marketed Zesta Saltines they were criticized because many believed that this took attention away from its core expertise in cookies and crackers. They were also criticized for attempting to compete with Nabisco's sturdy brands instead of building its market share in products areas where Nabisco was weaker. In 1995, the last year of United Biscuit's control, Keebler documented \$93 million in losses. In 1996 two individuals worked to try to revive Keebler and they radically changed the organizational structure of the brand and placing an emphasis on research and development. In 1996 they built a technical center designed to replicate a functional bakery. This new technical center would enable the brand to develop products for niches where Nabisco was less dominant. New product developments ended up playing the pivotal role in the turnaround of the brand. The use of Ernie Keebler and the elves was brought back for the new advertising as the main centerpiece of the campaigns. Under this new ownership Keebler decided to steer their brand from the premium brand company into the value brand category. One of Keebler's strengths became their ability to distribute cookies and crackers to supermarkets. By 1998 the profitability of the company did a complete turnaround.



## Current Consumer:

The current user of Keebler Zesta Saltines is Caucasian, married, and has graduated high school. This consumer is 65 years or older with a household income of under \$20,000. The average has owned a house in the Midwest for 5 or more years. The average consumer subscribes to the same magazines as users of Nabisco Premium Saltine crackers.



In their earlier advertising Keebler chose to focus on the point that their saltines were crispier and flakier in texture than Premium. The Ad below from 1963 highlights how their new box has a “crisp lock top.” Throughout the 1960’s they differentiated themselves by saying their saltines stay crisp longer and referred to it as “The War Against Air.” The ad in 1967 claimed that their special weapon was that their saltines stay fresh twice as long as the other brands because instead of using 4 sleeves of crackers inside the box they use an “Eight Inner Pack System” and a “crisp lock top.” This prevents all of the crackers from being exposed to the air when you open a column of saltines. Keebler also states that the number of saltines in each of the 8 sleeves contains the average amount of saltines that a family of 4 eats during a meal.



# Sunshine Krispy

## Brand History:

Sunshine Krispy Saltines is a brand owned by Sunshine Biscuits, which used to be an independent bakery that was created in the late 1800's. They are most famous for producing Cheeze-It snack crackers. In 1996 it merged with Keebler company and is currently under the umbrella of Keebler brands.



## Current Consumer:

The current consumer of Sunshine Krispy Saltines is Caucasian, married, and has graduated high school. This user is 65 years or older who has or had an occupation in a professional or related occupation. The user has a household income greater than the user of Keebler Zesta Saltines but smaller than Nabisco Premium Saltines. The consumer has owned a house for over 5 years in the Midwest. The average consumer subscribes to the same magazines as users of Nabisco Premium Saltine crackers.

## Past Advertising:

The way Krispy tried to set itself apart was by stating that they had by far the best tasting, flakiest saltine that could make everything else taste better such as soup. Initially their slogan was, "...all through the meal!" because they claimed that Krispy Saltines make all foods taste better; it is the "all purpose cracker." Like Premium Saltines they also used a tin container during the seventies as their packaging.



"Right down the menu...These flaky Krispy Crackers make other foods taste better"  
-1936



"Sunshine Krispy Crackers Make What You Grow Taste Better!"  
-1943





## Private-Label Brands

The private-label saltines hold a larger market share than the other two competitors in the saltine category. Saltines are one of 5 products found to have the largest price gap percentage between the name brands and private labels. Saltines are also the most-purchased private-label item. One important thing we found is that store brand packages are so unappealing that it seems to be a factor that is hurting their sales. A study found that Target's Market Pantry packaging was so unappealing that 64 percent of shoppers said that they would not consider it regardless of the price. However, only 23 percent felt that way about Albertson's saltines packaging and 10 percent about the Great Value or Kroger packages. Their buyers seem to be mostly cost-cutters who are strictly making their decision based on price. Since this segment of the market has the second largest share after Premium we chose to focus our advertising to compete with them. What sets Premium apart from them is their emotional appeal and sense of nostalgia.

### Some Brands:



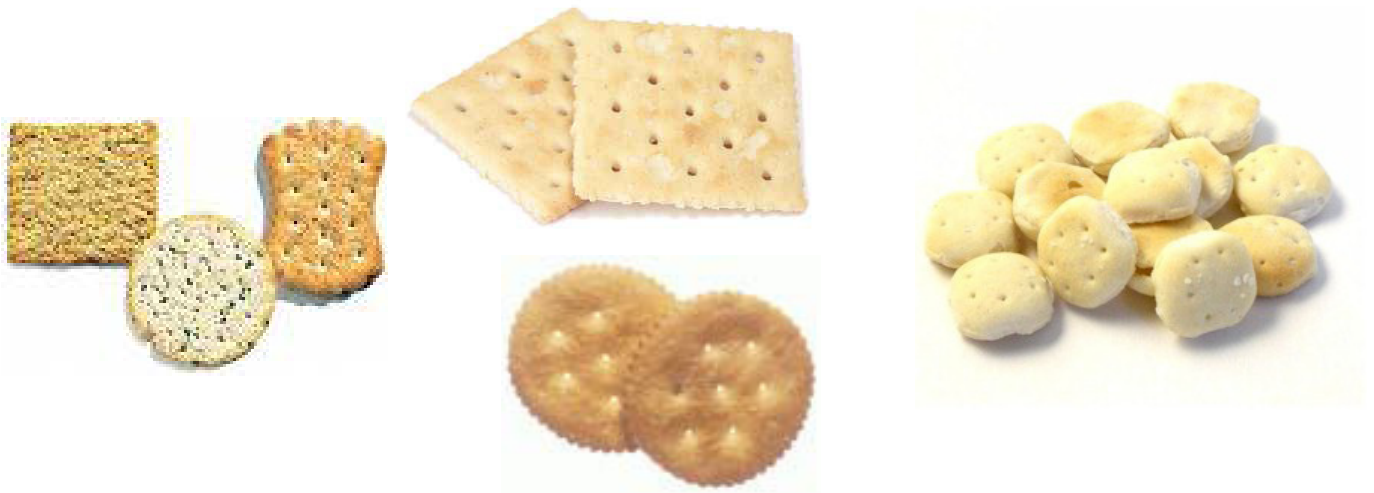


# Market Situation:

Nabisco is the number one player in the cookie and cracker industry. In the late 1990's it was determined that Nabisco had a 34 percent share of the market while Keebler had 28 percent. This means that Nabisco sells every third cookie or cracker bought in the U.S.

In 1992 the U.S. Chamber of Commerce noted that cookie and cracker manufacturing was the fastest growing part of the bakery industry. The reason for this is the projected increase in sales because of recent introduction of low-fat, low-calorie, low-cholesterol variations of cookies and crackers. A number of companies introduced products to suit a changing market of health-conscious consumers. As reported in Advertising Age, Nabisco management insists, "The company is placing substantial corporate emphasis behind product categories that health-wise consumers are increasingly demanding."

Currently there is a slight decline in Nabisco's cookie and cracker business. Nabisco still holds the largest share of the business; however, private labels have begun to cut heavily into Nabisco's market share. Because of this, it is said that Nabisco is working hard to undercut private-label competition. They are making an effort to gain market space in discount outlets and convenience stores. There are a number of upscale private lines available, including Sam's Choice, a line being sold at Wal-Mart stores, and Master Choice, sold at A & P stores. One of the front-runners, and a leader of the upscale private label pack, is President's Choice.



## Retail Walk:

We chose to do a retail-walk to different types of stores in order to see where Premium Saltines have the largest presence. In Target there was only one row of them at the bottom of the aisle and they did not carry any of the variations such as low sodium. However, in the P&C grocery stores they have a large section including all of the variations. Lastly, we were overwhelmed by the presence they held in Wal-Mart; Premium saltines made up a section that stretched to almost one third of the length of the aisle. Wal-Mart had many rows of every variation, they were located on the end-caps of aisles, and it were very visible to all shoppers. This is an example of how Nabisco is making an effort to gain space in discount outlets.

## Premium Saltines Variations:

- Premium Original Saltine Crackers 16oz, 21b, 4oz, 8oz
- Premium Crackers Saltine Crackers Fat Free Saltines
- Premium Crackers Saltine Crackers Low Sodium
- Premium Crackers Saltine Crackers Unsalted Tops
- Premium Crackers Saltine Crackers Multi Grain
- Premium Crackers Minis Original Saltine
- Premium Crackers - Soup & Oyster



# National Trends:

An important national trend right now is the economic crisis. With household income reductions, there is less money to spend on food and groceries. About 3/4 of all shoppers report that they have a higher concern about saving money on groceries because of the fears associated with the economy. Saltines are often associated with economic “panic” because it is a staple product often associated with food stamps.

The initial rise in popularity of saltines can be traced back to the time during and after the great depression. People used saltines as “filler” in foods such as meatloaf to stretch out the amount of food, or they could be put in meals such as soup to make them more filling.

Saltine is an example of a mainstay brand faring well in the weak economy because of the strong connection it has built with its consumers based on trust and heritage. The idea of reliability of a product is comforting during hard times; therefore drawing people to brands they know and trust. In the last couple of years there has been a “resurgence” of Premium Saltines because of idea of being budget friendly.



# Qualitative Research:

## Focus Group:

We conducted a focus group of 6 Syracuse students varying in year and gender. One major thing we learned from this focus group were that saltines are thought of as a cracker that is always paired with something such as soup or peanut butter, but rarely ever thought as a desirable snack on its own. We also found that none of the individuals associated a brand with the word “saltine” and they had no idea that it was a Nabisco product. They were however very familiar with the classic packaging of Premium Saltines and associated this imagery with the cracker. When we asked the focus group to associate saltine crackers with a memory, all had something similar things to say in terms of remembering being sick when they were younger or associating it with their mother’s care while they were sick. We asked the group to list words that they associated with the word “saltine.” The answers they provided included: sick, soup, dry, grandmother, mom, classic, boring, necessity and various other similar words. One of the members of the group was a checkout boy at a grocery store at home and he discussed out he associates saltines with the food that is considered a “staple.” He discussed how it was one of the products that he associated with the use of food stamps.

## Observations on Campus:

Our group observed people who purchased saltine crackers in The S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications (within the Food.com area) for half an hour. Within that time period, sixteen people purchased saltine crackers. Nine people were professors and seven people were students. Of those sixteen people, eleven people purchased saltine crackers with their soup. Eight of the eleven people chose to pair the saltine crackers with tomato soup, and three paired the crackers with Italian wedding soup throughout that time, two people only purchased saltine crackers. This supports that consumers enjoy eating saltine crackers with a soup of their choice. It would be good to partner saltine crackers with soup and to advertise eating them with soup. We would like to observe saltine purchases again, focusing on gender as well. It would be interesting to see how many males versus females purchase saltines, and of those consumers how many pair saltines with soup.



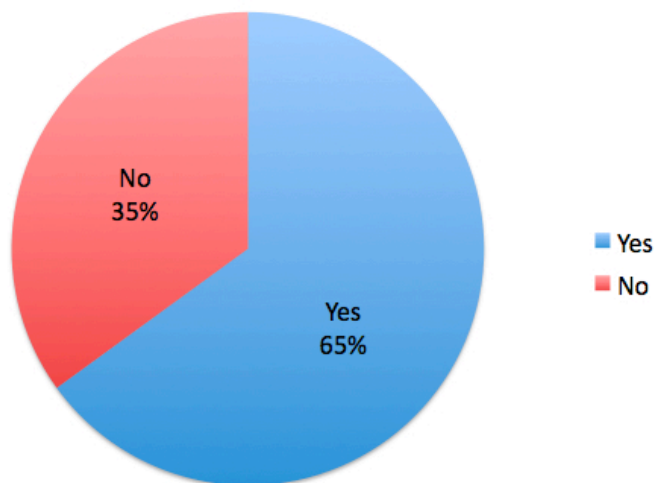
# Quantitative Research:

## Survey:

We conducted a survey on Survey Monkey to find out exactly why the consumer purchases the brand they do. Our main focus was finding out how loyal consumers in our generation are to a brand they have grown up using. We conducted a survey with 7 questions. The survey asked if the subject always had saltines in their pantry growing up; if they are more likely to buy store brand saltines (Target brand, Wegmans brand) or name brand saltines (Premium, Zesta); why their purchasing habits are this way; if they tend to buy brands of food that they had in their home growing up; and lastly an open ended question asking what emotions or memories they associate with the brand Nabisco Premium Saltines. A sample of 100 responses was analyzed and 22% of the sample was male and 78% female. 24% of the sample was freshman, 51% sophomore, 19% junior, and 6% seniors.

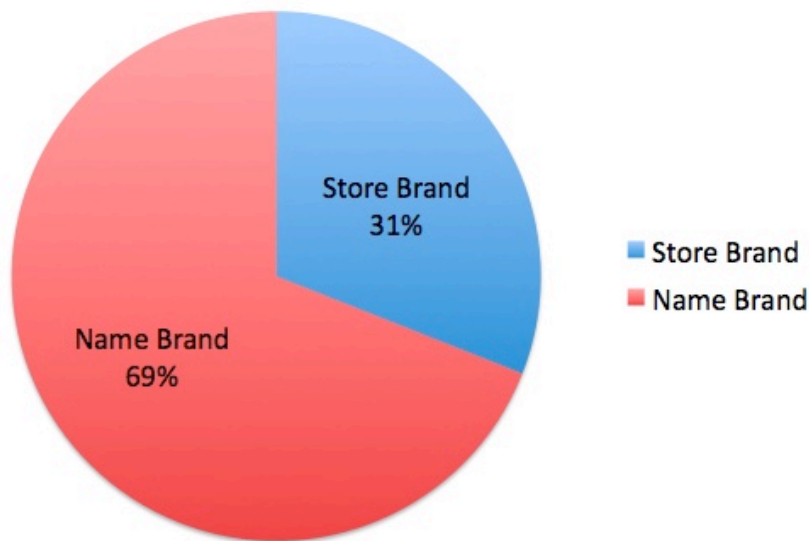
## Our Results:

Did you always have saltines in your pantry growing up?

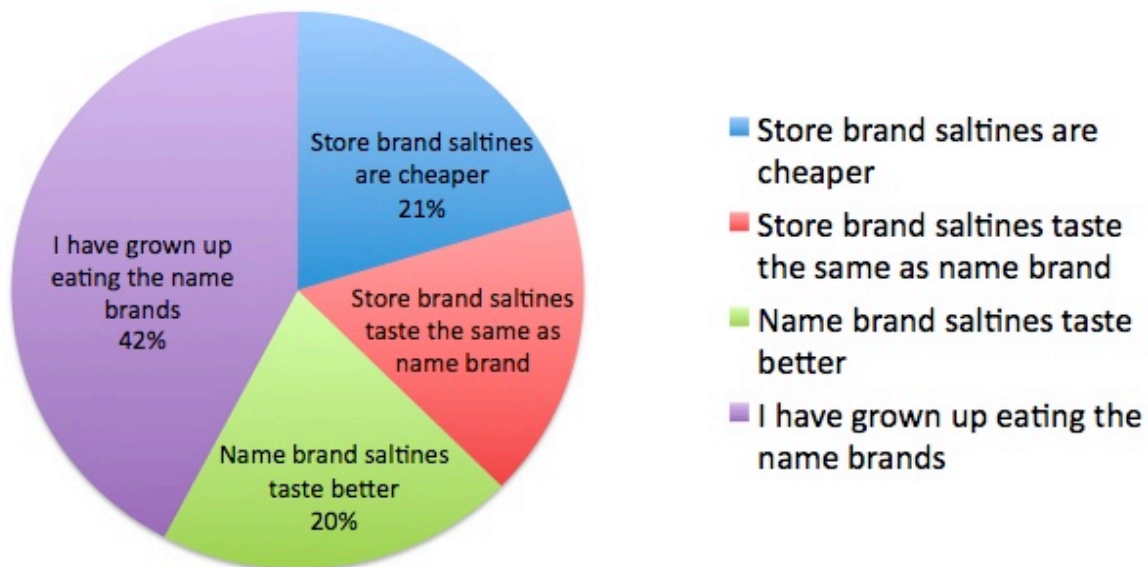




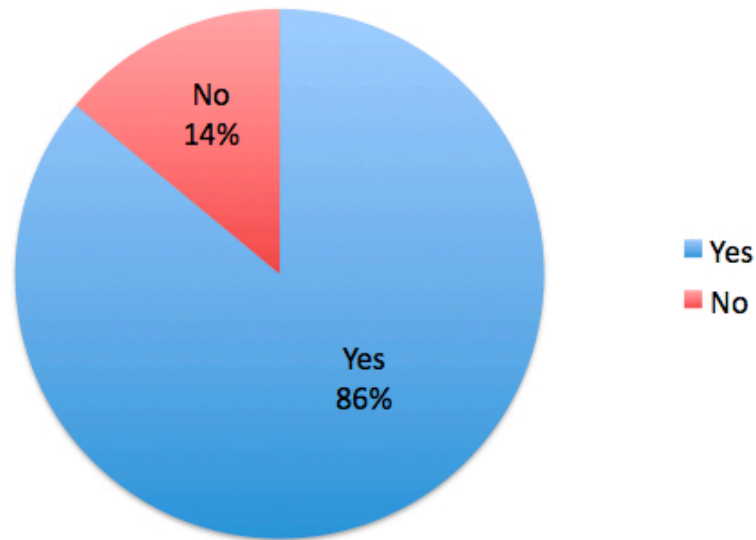
Would you be more likely to buy store brand saltines  
(Target brand, Wegmans brand) or name brand saltines  
(Premium, Zesta)?



Why do you buy name brand or store brand? (choose all that apply)



## Do you tend to buy brands of food that you had in your home growing up?



### Open Ended Responses:

The most popular responses to the question asking for memories and feelings associated to the Nabisco Premium Saltines brand were associating it with soup, The Saltine Challenge, and an overwhelming amount of responses mentioned sickness and a mother's care. Some of our favorite responses are:

- o "Nabisco Premium Saltines are the Saltines that I had at home growing up. They are what I think of when I think Saltines. They are basically a generalized trademark."
- o "Childhood contest with my brother seeing who could eat more without a glass of water."
- o "Eating chicken noodle soup when I was home sick as a kid, with my grandmother watching The Price Is Right with me."

# Research Findings:

From our research we decided that college age students are definitely not the audience we are trying to target. Although they do have an emotional connection to the brand, they are less likely to be the purchasers. Mothers, however, are most likely going to be purchasing them for their households and therefore are the audience we decided to target. Premium is superior as a brand because they are comforting, reliable, and nurturing. This is very important to mothers and especially mothers attempting to cut costs because of the economic recession.

From the survey we learned that although our target is not college-age students they are very likely to buy the brands that they grew up with. This means that we need to start targeting mothers with young children to begin building brand loyalty with families. We also learned that most people in our generation associate Premium Saltines with the comfort of a mothers care. This is something we chose to capitalize on.



# SWOT Analysis:

## Internal Strengths

- Classic
- Nurturing
- High awareness
- Recognizable packaging
- Available at many locations
- Good reputation
- Low calorie snack
- The original saltine

## Internal Weaknesses

- Low awareness of variations in flavors/types
- Most expensive saltine
- Rarely associated with Nabisco
- Lack of advertising

## External Opportunities

- A very versatile cracker: can be paired with other foods such as soup and can be used in many recipes
- Advertising would be recognizable because of the lack in the past
- Economic crisis, less eating out and a need for "filler" foods
- People are looking to cut costs in the supermarket

## External Threats

- Many competitors that are offered at a lower price
- All the brands of saltines are very similar in taste and appearance
- Low-carb diet trends in society
- Constant releases of new crackers into the market with more of a taste

# Creative Plan:

## Positioning Statement:

For mothers with children living at home, Nabisco Premium Saltines is the only brand of saltine crackers that is both a satisfying snack and provides a sense of comfort because of its connection to the nurturing qualities of mothers, and the brand credibility of this classic staple food.

## Objective:

We want to remind mothers that in rough economic times they can find comfort in trusting in the Premium Brand name. We are advertising to maintain the brand loyalty for Premium Saltines and bring out the emotional ties and comfort that accompany the brand.





## Target Audience:

We are talking to Laurie, a 44 year-old mother from Reno, Nevada. She has three kids: Andrew who is 4, Kyle who is 6, and Jess who is 9. She is a stay at home mom who is married to her high school sweetheart Scott who works for the Nevada Power Company. He works long hours at the power plant and barely sees his family. After high school Scott went to school at a local university and Laurie never went on to college. Laurie drives a mini van and spends her day cleaning up after the boys and their golden retriever Mickey. She drives the boys around to practice and school. Laurie feels as if she is always on the go. She is on a tight budget and thinks buying school lunches is a waste of money. She always packs the kid's lunches. Every night she cooks for the family and they sit at the kitchen table together. When buying her groceries she always buys the same brands and same products, not because she is thinking about it but because she is just used to doing it.

## What Does The Target Currently Believe:

Laurie is not a picky shopper but she is a creature of habit. She has always bought Premium Saltines for her family and will always automatically go to this brand. She grew up always having a box of Premium Saltines in her kitchen pantry and has continued this with her family.

## What We Want Them To believe:

Not All brands of Saltines are the same. Although the nutrition facts are very similar, Premium's classic packaging and emotional connection to nurturing mothers allows consumers to experience nostalgia with the purchase of the brand.

## Reason To Believe:

Premium Saltines is the first saltines cracker brand and has held the majority of the market since its introduction. Consumers have a strong loyalty to the brand and all generations can associate it with memories of their past.

# Creative Idea:

The creative idea we want to advertise to our target audience is that the brand Nabisco Premium Saltines is always there. Creatively, we want to convey that the brand has been passed on from generation to generation. Mothers of households continue to nurture their children with this brand throughout the years. Through this, Premium Saltines are a part of an individual's past and present. As a brand, we want to promise to be in their future as well. Individuals have formed strong emotional ties to the brand because this brand is linked with childhood memories. The tonality of our creative executions will combine the concepts of bringing family together, the timelessness of the brand, and a mother's care. Each part of the campaign will focus on pivotal, emotional moments in an individual's life.

## Commercial:

Through a television commercial, we want to illustrate crucial moments throughout a person's life when the brand Nabisco Premium Saltines is present. Each moment will include the mother's loving relationship with her family. The commercial will open with a black and white scene of a toddler and her family playing in the snow. Following this scene, the family will go inside to enjoy a bowl of soup and Nabisco Premium Saltines to warm up. Then, the commercial will transition into color and will have a more modern look. In this next scene, the daughter that was previously playing in the snow with her mother is now a mother herself and is doing the same activity with her daughter. As the second-generation mother feeds her child, she remembers her first snowfall and the branded saltines that she ate afterwards. This commercial will bring mothers back to their childhood and help to reinforce that they should care for their children as their mother cared for them. The commercial will close with a white screen, only showing the Nabisco Premium Saltines classic packaging, along with the slogan "The snack that takes you back." There will be voice-over saying, "Nabisco Premium Saltines, the snack that takes you back." For the rest of this television campaign, each commercial will display a different notable moment that incorporates the brand. The transition from black & white to color will emphasize how classic this brand is. This campaign not only demonstrates the timelessness of the brand, but the various uses of Nabisco Premium Saltines with each "saltine moment" as well.

## Print:

Through print advertising, we will demonstrate how Nabisco Premium Saltines evokes memories and reminds individuals of their mother's care. For this medium, we would like to take snapshots of a "saltine moment" from our commercials. The print advertisement moments that are captured into one frame will be illustrated as a Polaroid photograph. We chose to use the Polaroid visual because it is another element that links to the past. The advertisement will depict a pivotal "saltine moment" in black and white. The only parts of the print advertisement that will be displayed in color are the Nabisco Premium Saltines packaging, the saltines, and the slogan "The snack that takes you back."

## Sales Promotion:

As a call to action, we will provide limited edition original tin cans (as Nabisco Premium Saltines packaging) to further bring older generations back to their childhood. These limited edition original tins will be available in the first months of the new campaign and will be displayed on an end-cap of a store aisle to draw attention. We would also like to have a premium sales promotion with a mini box of Nabisco Premium Saltines shrink-wrapped to a soup we choose to partner with. We would prefer to partner with Campbell's Soup. However, if Campbell's is not willing to do a partnership with Nabisco Premium Saltines, then we would like to partner with another leading soup brand in the market. Last, we would like to distribute free samples of Nabisco Premium Saltines in grocery stores that can be dipped in a sample of soup to further promote our premium sales promotion.

## Online Recipes:

We want to release an online cookbook on the Nabisco Premium Saltine web site suggesting several ways that mothers can use Nabisco Premium Saltines in recipes for their family. Most of these recipes will be "passed down" tying in with the fact that Nabisco Premium Saltines have been passed down from generation to generation just like family recipes. Within the cookbook, we would like to include some simple recipes so that children are able to help their mothers prepare the food. The cookbook is meant to encourage cooking with saltines as a family activity. Users will have the ability to post their own recipes, rate other recipes, and blog about their experiences.

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