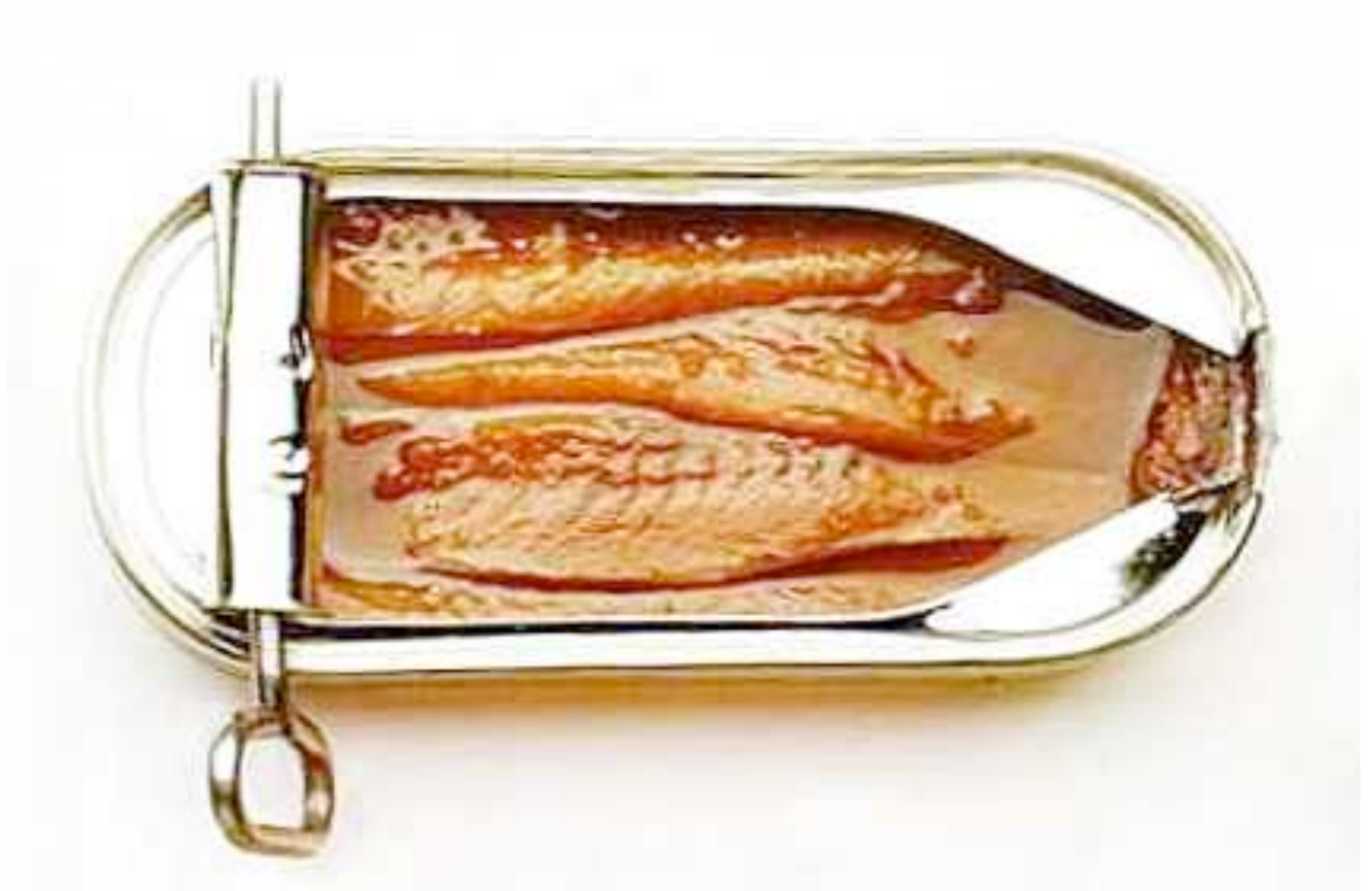


Breaking Out of the Can: Shelf Stable Seafood





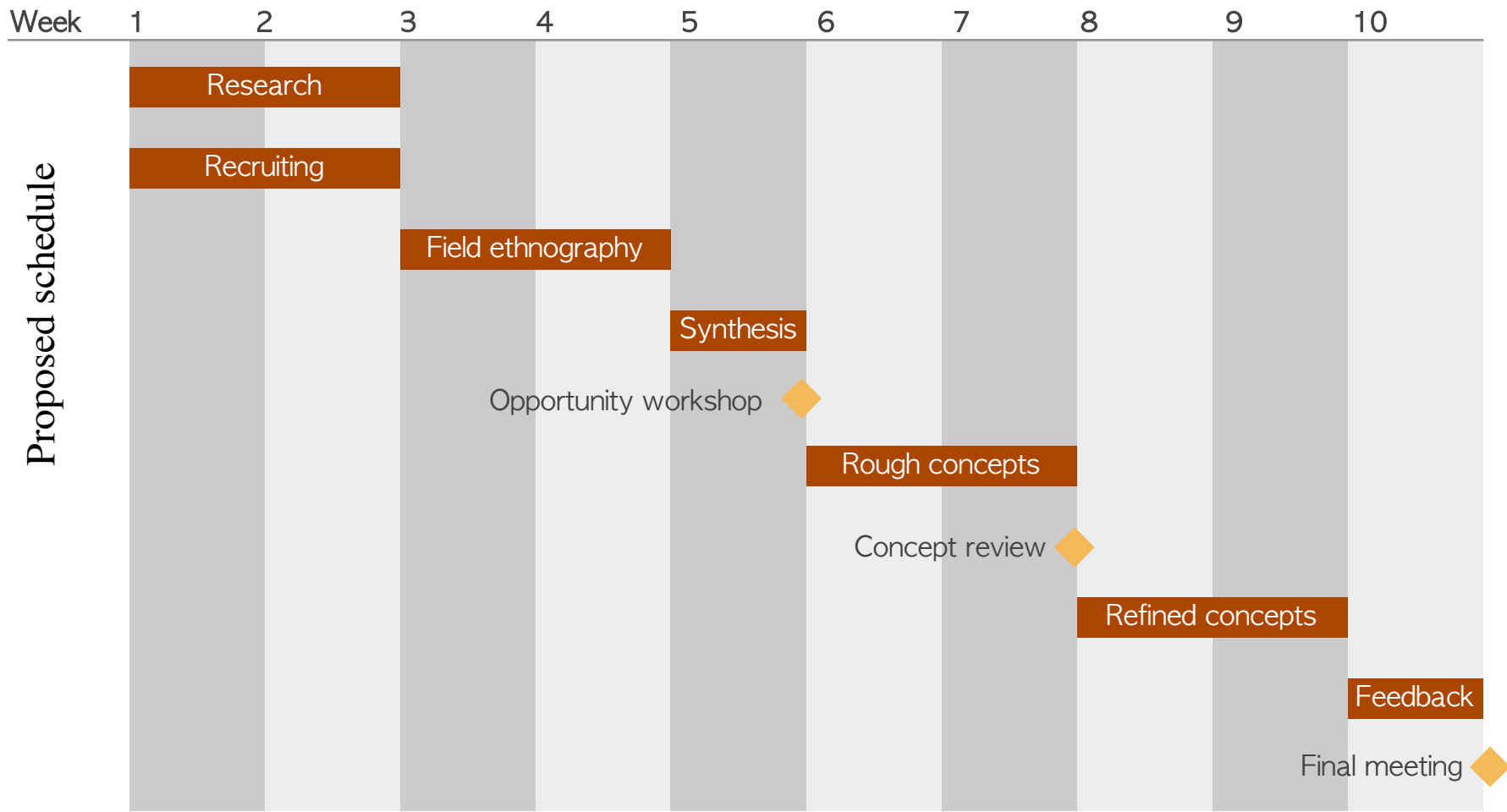
Introduction

While canned tuna is a staple in most households, other forms of shelf stable seafood are much less commonly accepted. Although current food processing technology supports the preservation of quality shrimp, crab, and other seafood in a variety of packaging options such as jars and pouches, low consumer acceptance of these forms of food indicates there is a strong psychological barrier to the purchase and consumption of such foods.

However, this barrier is not absolute. Dried and jarred seafood is often sought out for high end and ethnic cooking. Seafood as part of the ingredient list, such as found in clam chowder, is often more acceptable than on its own. Other meats such as ham or meat sauce are more commonly accepted in shelf stable forms such as pouches.

These conditions of acceptance tell us there may opportunities to deepen the consumer's engagement with shelf stable seafood by leveraging current gaps in the psychological barrier. Understanding their attitudes and perceptions will inform our strategy in opening up market acceptance of the category.

This ten-week project explores and dissects consumer attitudes to shelf stable seafood, using direct observation and one-on-one interviews to break the problem of perception into components such as quality, variety, food safety, and packaging. We will obtain insight into the preconceptions, barriers, and opportunities in the current consumer mindset, and build concepts based on those insights to expand the shelf stable seafood market.



 Collaboration points/workshops
  Concept Hatchery activity



Project Structure

This project will be broken into six phases.

Phase 1: Background research

We will look at existing foods to understand the current market, with the goal of understanding what the rules and exceptions are today and collecting samples for feedback in later phases. For example:

- What forms of packaging exist for shelf stable seafood?
- How do the form, material, and graphics convey the story?
- How do other cultures engage with shelf stable seafood, whether canned, dried, smoked, or otherwise preserved?
- What are the occasions in which shelf stable seafood plays a part?
- What knowledge do we have about the effects of supermarket placement?

In addition to gathering information, this phase also generates questions about perceptions, which will be probed in the research phase.

Phase 2: Field Research

We will recruit a range of people to understand different viewpoints about food. Participants may include frequent consumers of shelf stable convenience meals, gourmards, and/or frequent consumers of seafood. We will look at a cross section of ages and cultures to probe and understand different attitudes.

Bringing our questions and samples with us, we will visit consumer kitchens and pantries to understand their perception of food categories in general, and specifically shelf stable meat and seafood. We will explore the impact of different types of packaging and materials, as well as graphics and descriptions. We will obtain insight into the preconceptions, barriers, and opportunities in the current consumer mindset.



Project Structure (continued)

Phase 3: Synthesis

Following the completion of all field research, we will review gathered notes, videos, and interviews to extract insights and common themes. What we learn will inform the creation of an opportunity map that shows the current consumer landscape and potential areas for easier entry. The conclusion of synthesis is the midpoint of the project, and we will have a collaborative meeting with your company stakeholders to review findings and opportunities before proceeding the concepts.

Phase 4: Concept Generation

Inspired by stories from real people and informed with knowledge on the possible forms, materials, and food technologies, we will enter a period of creative brainstorming to generate concepts in specific areas of the opportunity map. Concepts may include packaging, graphics, messaging, service, or other areas of identified development. We will work with you to select up to three concepts for refinement.

Phase 5: Concept Refinement

Chosen concepts are further developed and prototyped in order to facilitate discussion and communication.

Phase 6: Consumer Feedback Loop

The refined prototypes are taken back to consumers either in the field or at a research facility to obtain early directional feedback. The purpose of this feedback is not to select or rank concepts, but to identify potential pitfalls and improvements before proceeding into full concept development.



Deliverables

At the conclusion of this program, the client will have a roadmap to the market expansion of shelf stable seafood as well as actionable concepts that have gone through an initial round of consumer feedback. In addition, the following deliverables are included:

- Summary of background research
- Field research plan, goals, and interview protocol
- Summary of each research participant
- Videos and photos highlights of participant findings
- Summary of key insights and themes
- Opportunity framework
- Mid-phase report documenting all work to the end of Phase 3
- 30-50 rough concepts in sketch or written form
- 3-5 refined concepts in refined and/or prototype form
- Design recommendations for further concept work