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**Final Report**

Seafood Branding & Message Testing  
With FDACS Division of Marketing, Bureau of Seafood  
and Aquaculture Marketing

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## Background

The UF/IFAS Public Issues Education Center in Agriculture and Natural Resources (PIE Center) was contacted in November, 2011 by Dan Sleep, marketing supervisor within the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Division of Marketing and Development, and requested to compose a bid for conducting an evaluation phone survey of the Gulf Safe campaign. PIE Center connected FDACS with Florida Survey Research Center (FSRC) who conducted the phone survey and prepared report of their findings. In a joint meeting, held in February 2012 with FDACS, PIE Center and FSRC, the PIE Center was asked to put together a proposal. The proposal was to assess targeted consumer perceptions and conduct message testing of potential message strategies related to retooling FDACS' Gulf Safe campaign. The research should enable FDACS to focus more directly on a specific target audience consistent with the campaign objective of enhancing the purchase and consumption of Florida seafood.

## Methods

The target audiences for FDACS' new seafood campaign are urban seafood consumers. Therefore, focus groups were conducted in five different locations corresponding to the top five Designated Market Areas (DMAs) in Florida. These five areas are Tampa/St. Pete; Miami/Ft. Lauderdale; Orlando/Daytona Beach/Melbourne; West Palm Beach/Ft. Pierce; and Jacksonville. A total of ten focus groups were conducted with two in each of the top five DMAs. The specific areas chosen for this study were Tampa, Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, West Palm Beach, and Jacksonville. The PIE Center recommends, for academic rigor, conducting two focus groups in one location. Based on the results of the Gulf Safe evaluation survey, the PIE Center recommends conducting focus groups with an identified target audience in urban media markets that FDACS is considering for media buys. The objective would be to assess this target audience's perceptions with respect to the campaign and to test the market for other potential campaigns and elements before the campaign is re-launched. This campaign is interested in increasing the consumption and purchase of Florida Gulf seafood and to reassure the public of its safety.

The Florida Survey Research Center (FSRC) recruited participants for the focus group and developed screening questions to ensure that members of the target audience were chosen to participate in the focus groups. The PIE Center developed the moderator's guide and handled logistical issues, including moderating all ten focus groups.

The demographics of the participants are as follows:

- In Jacksonville there were a total of 16 people who attended the two focus groups. There were 9 males and 7 females. Ten participants were White, 5 were African-American, 2 were Other, with 4 people reporting their ethnicity as Hispanic. One person described their income as being under \$45,000 a year and 14 people described their income as being above \$45,000 a year.
- In Orlando there were a total of 17 people who attended the two focus groups. There were 7 males and 9 females. Nine participants were White, 6 were African-American, 2 were Other, with one person reporting their ethnicity as Hispanic. Fifteen people described their income as being above \$45,000 a year.

- In Tampa there were a total of 16 people who attended the two focus groups. There were 6 males and 10 females. Fourteen participants were White and 2 were African-American. Two people described their income as being under \$45,000 a year and 14 people described their income as being above \$45,000 a year.
- In West Palm Beach there were a total of 14 people who attended the two focus groups. There were 6 males and 8 females. Thirteen participants were White and one was Other, with 2 people reporting their ethnicity as Hispanic. All fourteen participants described their income as being above \$45,000 a year.
- In Ft. Lauderdale there were a total of 17 people who attended the two focus groups. There were 7 males and 10 females. Nine participants were White, 4 were African-American, 3 were Other, with one person reporting their ethnicity as Hispanic. Five people described their income as being under \$45,000 a year and 11 people described their income as being above \$45,000 a year.

Participants in the focus groups were asked about their seafood purchasing behaviors and their responses to different seafood marketing concepts and logos. The focus groups were audio recorded, transcribed and content analyzed. Constant comparative analysis was used to identify themes across all focus groups. Two coders, with limited information on the project and who had not attended the focus groups, were used to analyze the data, and peer debriefing took place after analysis to ensure agreement on the emergent themes and to establish reliability and validity of the results.

## Results

All statements are stand-alone quotes and do not represent speaking back and forth. The focus group site location is mentioned for each quote. Quotes were chosen due to their illustration of the thematic area.

## General Discussion

First the participants were asked a series of questions about their general seafood preferences, what is important to them when purchasing seafood, and why they choose to eat seafood at all.

### Why do you prefer some seafood over others?

Participants were asked why they prefer some seafood types over others. Their responses yielded the following themes. Participants mentioned that they prefer some seafood over others due to *health considerations* and *tactile preferences* such as taste, smell and texture. They also take into consideration the amount of *preparation* time is needed to cook the seafood.

### Health considerations

The health considerations that participants reported included both health benefits and health concerns. Participants mostly mentioned general understandings of overall nutritional or health benefits to consuming seafood, while a few specifically mentioned Omega fatty acids. However, a few respondents mentioned choosing to avoid seafood due to worries about negative health outcomes, particularly due to mercury content.

- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “I believe, just from what I’ve heard or how I’ve been told my whole life...that seafood; fish, predominantly, is healthy for you.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, “Well, yes, especially the salmon, they say is very healthy, with the fatty acids it has that are good for your joints and bones and that kind of stuff. I see seafood as something light to eat that’s healthy, that I’m not going to get real full and feel bad after I ate a whole meal. And that I also know, down the road, that I can either work off or is going to be productive for my general, overall health.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale stated that it is “Health benefits” that drive seafood preference.
- A participant from Tampa said that it is “strictly flavor and nutrition” that influences seafood preference.
- A participant from West Palm Beach said “I’m always told to stay away from the big fish because of the mercury.”

### *Tactile preferences*

The theme of tactile preferences also emerged as a result of the discussions during the focus groups. Specifically, participants discussed that they choose certain seafood over others depending on the seafood’s taste, smell, and texture. Specifically, people prefer eating seafood that is tasty to them, that does not smell too fishy, and that has a pleasant texture to them. The following are quotes taken from the focus groups that illustrate these different areas.

- One participant from Orlando said that “texture of the fish is probably the biggest one, then taste” when it comes to why some seafood is preferred over others.
- A participant from West Palm Beach said that “I think that would be down to taste, perhaps.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said that smell was important by saying “If it smells like a fish, I don’t really like it.”
- Another participant from F. Lauderdale said “If it smells or tastes fishy, that is a turnoff.”
- A participant from Orlando also cares about smell and said “I don't like the fishy smell.”
- A participant from Tampa thought texture was important in seafood preference by saying “and texture, too.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach also thought that “the texture” is important.
- A participant from West Palm Beach said that “I don’t like the flaky fish.”

### Preparation

Participants also discussed that they choose some seafood over others depending on how the seafood can be prepared and how much work that preparation involves.

- A participant from Tampa said, “I like shrimp and scallops because you can mix it with like, rice or pasta and it is not just by itself. It is always...I like to have it with something.”
- Another participant from Tampa said, “Shrimp, you can have it in a salad, it is easy to prepare if you are cooking quickly. You can grill it, all that.”
- A participant from Orlando said “For me, without the shell. So, shrimp, scallops, oysters...anything without the shell. I don’t like taking the shell off.”
- Another participant from Orlando said, “I don’t do a lot of shellfish because it looks like too much work.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Also, sometimes, like salmon is easy to prepare. You don’t really have to do anything, so it’s quick and easy.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, “Seafood, as a whole, is pretty easy to prepare. It doesn’t take as long as thick meats or heavier meats.”

### What considerations do you take into account when purchasing seafood?

When purchasing seafood, participants mentioned that they consider the *origin of the seafood*.

### Origin of seafood

Where the seafood originated from was a major consideration that participants mentioned when they are purchasing seafood. Overall, they are skeptical about foreign seafood, have a preference for local seafood, and are uneasy about purchasing farm raised seafood. In particular, the participants express concern over the origin of the seafood when it comes to the conditions of the environment in which the seafood lived.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I avoid foreign [seafood].”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “Yeah, again my main concern is safety and a lot of the stores...the reason I don’t shop at a lot of grocery stores is because most of it’s from overseas, very rarely will you see Mayport seafood in the grocery store. And that’s a concern and then I’m not keen on farm raised, too, because of safety.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “Oh, I will also only buy from the American side of the...I tend to steer clear of international fish of any kind, food of any kind.”

- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “I only buy USA seafood.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “There’s lots of farm raised seafoods: shrimp, catfish, and there’s the newer stuff: tilapia, striped bass. When she mentioned mercury content, you do hear a lot of that and that would scare you because you’re hearing it when they farm raise different things in other countries...and then they test the stuff and find high levels of mercury in it or they find a high level of an antibiotic or a high level of something...that in the United States, you wouldn’t be allowed to have that stuff. That kind of scares you.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “Um, well I had a taste for some oysters recently, fresh oysters fixed at home. And I just didn’t buy them because I am unsure of whether the food is clean or not.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “Also, like where there is...especially with salmon, is it farm raised? Is it wild? Because a lot of the farm raised have, I think, higher mercury levels and aren’t quite as good for you. More fatty, I believe, as well.”

### Why do you eat seafood?

When asked about overall reasons as to why they eat seafood, participants mentioned that they enjoy the *taste* of seafood, appreciate the *health benefits* that consuming it provides, enjoy incorporating *variety* into their diet, and appreciate that seafood is *easy to prepare and convenient*.

### Taste

Respondents enjoy the way that seafood tastes and this is a major reason why they consume seafood.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Love the taste [of seafood]. Love it.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I just love the taste of it.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “[I eat seafood] because it’s tasty.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said that the reason for eating seafood is because “it tastes good.”

### Health benefits

Participants are also aware of the health benefits that are related to consuming seafood.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “It’s very easily digested when you eat it late. Digests faster than any other meat I can think of.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “It is a lot lighter than red meat.”

- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I heard it gives you a better...this is not why I eat it, but it could be a consideration...it gives you a little better glow in your skin, I heard.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “ [You are] supposed to get a bunch of protein, it’s supposed to help your memory, but I haven’t noted any improvement.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “It’s good for you.”

### Variety

Participants appreciate that consuming seafood adds variety to their diet outside of red meat and poultry.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “It’s a good alternative to red meat and the poultry all the time.”
- When describing reasons for eating seafood, a participant from West Palm Beach said, “Health reasons. People that can’t eat red meat all of the time and they get tired of chicken.”
- A participant from Ft Lauderdale said that “variety, variety” was a reason to eat seafood.

### Easy to prepare and convenient

Participants feel that seafood cooks quicker and is easier to prepare than other dishes.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “It cooks fast. Cooks easily, very easy.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “It’s hard to cook it wrong, do you know what I mean?”
- A participant from Tampa asserted that seafood is “quick to prepare, easy. Easy to prepare.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Yeah, it takes less time to cook fish than it does a chicken.”

## Grocery Seafood Purchasing

### What attributes do you look for in grocery stores when purchasing seafood?

Participants were asked to discuss what they consider important characteristics of the grocery stores where they purchase seafood. They discussed caring about the *seafood quality*, how the products are *displayed*, and having *access to a seafood counter worker*.

### Seafood quality

Participants consider the quality of the seafood when purchasing at grocery stores and use the way the seafood looks and smells to inform them whether it is fresh or not.

- A participant from Orlando said, “I look at the display and you can see what looks fresher and what is kind of skinning over. And if you look at the fresh fish...I look at the eyes. Because I guess I am used to shooting. There are clear eyes and foggy...but, I will always smell it. I always ask to smell the fish. But, sometimes you can see it clean and sometimes you can see a little bit that is not moving, it is getting a little funky looking, a little tinge-y.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said that seafood purchasing is more likely to occur “if their fish looks really fresh. The appearance of it, the showcase.”
- A participant from West Palm beach mentioned a concern that “the stuff’s not sitting there, not sitting there for like a long time or something.”

### *Display*

The seafood display counters were also important to participants. They mentioned that the way the seafood is displayed at the counter either encourages or discourages them from purchasing.

- One participant from Jacksonville state that “if the store smells, if it smells like fish by the fish counter, then I wouldn’t want it.”
- A participant from Orlando avoids purchasing seafood if at the display “bugs are flying around it.”
- Another participant from Orlando said, “I always look at how it looks in the cooler, too. I don’t like them to be touching. I’m not...like if the salmon is touching the mahi, it’s kind of like there’s got to be a divider or something there and enough ice that it looks like it was just fresh there.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said that what is important is “the presentation. As opposed to something that’s already been prepackaged and wrapped...”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “Oh, yeah. Where is it in the store? That’s the first question. Is it in the fresh counter or the frozen counter? Some of the higher end stores have a nice fish counter.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “What does the counter smell like? If you can smell it, you know, fifty feet away, not happening.”

### *Access to seafood counter worker*

Participants also appreciate having access to a seafood counter workers because they feel that they can develop a trusting relationship with these workers and get inside information about the quality of the seafood.

- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “The thing about the guy...at my Publix, the sushi guy knows me now. He makes me try his sushi every time I go in there. He knows me from church and everything. So, yeah. That is a good point. The guy, yeah, he sells it.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said about a local seafood counter worker, “Yeah, I trust the guy. He knows me, he’s seen me. I go to the same store whether I’m buying fish or not. I walk through...walk by, so when I do want fish, I ask him, “Hey, what do you got? What’s fresh? What’s good?” He’ll call me over, too, sometimes, especially with those king crab claws and those clusters. You know, I would rather have them when they haven’t been frozen yet. So, if he gets some of those in, and he calls me, and he knows I like them...that have never been frozen. Or, even if the frozen ones come in, but for some reason, he’s got a sale on them, and there is nothing wrong with them except he’s got too many or something, for some reason like that.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, “What I enjoy is a really good, educational...a person who is behind the counter is interacting with me and selling me their product and backing it up instead of it just being there for me to grab. So, that experience like you mentioned at the Whole Foods, you know, I enjoy that experience and they have been pretty dependable as far as what they say when I go there. For instance, they say, “The Key West shrimp are never frozen and they come in, if you want them really fresh, we get a delivery on Thursday. If you come here Friday, you will be getting it the next day and it is never frozen.” So, you have that interaction; whereas the other stores, you don’t seem to have that conversation. “

### How does your seafood purchasing vary throughout the year?

Participants were also asked to describe how their seafood purchasing at grocery stores differed throughout the year. They mentioned the *time of year* influences their purchasing behavior and that they purchase more seafood during *special occasions*.

#### *Time of year*

Participants discussed how the time of year changes their seafood purchasing behavior at grocery stores. Specifically, they tend to buy what is in season and buy more seafood during the summer time when grilling is more common.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “It’s probably the season, now that I think about it, since you asked the question that way. But some fish, you can only get at certain times. The fish that is not local water, right? Like the Chilean sea bass is seasonal, because it’s only there, you know, periodically. And I imagine the wild salmon...when the salmon are running, maybe you can get it, most of the time not...lots of times, not. So, that might be a date impact I was not even cognizant of, it’s just there when you are looking...I want that.”
- A participant from Orlando said that seafood purchasing is more common in the “summer time.”

- A participant from Tampa said, “I buy much more in the summer. It’s lighter, I don’t know, I don’t feel like eating...personally, I just don’t eat as heavy of food in the summer as I do in the winter.”
- Another participant from Tampa said that more seafood is eaten during summer when people are “cooking on the grill more.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “So the dolphin are a summertime fish and wahoo is coming in the winter months and, you know? So, you tend to go with what nature is saying is happening seasonally.”

### *Special occasions*

Participants mentioned purchasing more seafood during special occasions, particularly around the holiday season.

- A participant from Orlando said, “My family has a tradition of doing a seafood casserole at Christmas, so we always know that we’re going to buy shrimp, scallops and all sorts of stuff for that at Christmas time. Other than that, it’s kind of varied throughout the year.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Now, I will pick up seafood like at the holidays, you know, to have on hand for people.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said that seafood consumption increases “I think, with special occasions.”

### *Do you feel there are barriers to buying Gulf seafood from grocery stores?*

Participants mentioned that they do feel there are some barriers to purchasing seafood from the Gulf. These were mostly due to the *oil spill* and *availability* of Gulf seafood in grocery stores.

### *Oil spill*

One of the barriers to purchasing Gulf seafood in grocery stores was memory of the recent oil spill. This caused participants to be wary about the safety of the seafood coming from the gulf.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “The oil spill is probably still in the back of everybody’s mind. I don’t care how long it’s been.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Yeah, I mean, you can’t believe what the media has told you about the oil incident. There has been a lot of, probably cover-up or a lot that has been hidden, and you know, it’s...you got to use good judgment. A lot of that seafood, like grouper, used to be rather cheap. Now it is hard to find anywhere and the prices are skyrocketing. I’d rather be safe than sorry, I guess. Just stay away from that kind of fish right now.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I haven’t really thought about it much. I probably, if I had a preference, I would not buy it over...say, something that was on another Coast. Probably. because of the spill, because I’ve

heard things about them finding, you know...fish with problems in the Gulf and having sores on them and other problems like that. So, if I had a preference between one or the other, I would not buy Gulf fish.”

- A participant from Tampa said, “I think the oil spill kept me away from Gulf seafood for a little while...just to see, you know, what happened.”

### Availability

Participants also mentioned that they are not always able to find Gulf seafood in grocery stores, and that this is a barrier to them purchasing it.

- A participant from Orlando said that a barrier is “availability, if it’s there.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “It’s not always available.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said that a barrier is “the availability. If it’s not available.”

### Do you feel there are incentives to buying Gulf seafood from grocery stores?

Participants were also asked to talk about any incentives they felt they had when it came to purchasing Gulf seafood in grocery stores. Participants mentioned that they felt that the fact that the seafood was *local* encourages them to purchase Gulf seafood from grocery stores.

### Local

Participants have a positive attitude about local seafood and knowing that the seafood is local encourages them to purchase it in order to support the local economy and local fishermen.

- One participant from Tampa said, “You know, I do just like buying local stuff when you can.”
- A different participant from Tampa said that it is important to “support the local economy.”
- Another participant in Tampa thought it’s important to “support the local fishermen.”
- Another participant in Tampa said, “I mean, that is what I think about local...is supporting the fishermen here.”

### Restaurant Seafood Purchasing

Participants were then asked to describe and discuss their restaurant seafood purchasing behavior. They discussed characteristics of restaurants that they look for, barrier and incentive to purchasing Gulf seafood in restaurants, and how their purchasing behavior is different when at a restaurant than at a grocery store.

### What attributes do you look for in restaurants when purchasing seafood?

When asked about the attributes that they look for when choosing a seafood restaurant to go to, participants mentioned that the *type of dish prepared* is important, especially that there is a *variety* of food choices at the restaurant. Participants mentioned that it was important to them what type of dish was prepared at restaurants they go to for seafood purchasing. It was important the dish be pleasing and have variety. They also discussed their preferences for the different *types of restaurants* they go to.

#### *Type of dish prepared*

Participants mentioned choosing restaurants based on the type of dishes they prepared using seafood.

- One participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Usually, if I’m going to order any kind of fish, I go to a Thai restaurant. I love their snapper, cooked in coconut. That’s usually where I go. So it must, I mean it’s fresh, it’s got to be. And I know when it’s fresh because it tastes...there’s a different taste, you know, when it’s fresh.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “See, I’m the opposite. Like I won’t experiment with my seafood in restaurants because, unless I get like a recommendation, I won’t. I’ll just stick to what I enjoy and I trust. And, usually, like in restaurants, I stick with mahi. I would be happy with a nice piece of mahi or shrimp. Or like sushi if it’s a nice sushi place, but I don’t like stray too far from...maybe tilapia...delicious grouper sometimes, but it’s been a while since I ordered like that.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I tend to order what I like.”

#### *Variety*

Participants mentioned looking for restaurants that serve seafood in a variety of different ways.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I like more combinations, like different things together” when it comes to seafood dishes.
- A participant from Tampa said that it’s important “how it is prepared, but they usually describe that, if it is broiled or if you ask, you can get it blackened, you can get it baked or several different ways...”
- One participant from West Palm Beach said, “You go in there and you say to the wait person, ‘What is the freshest and what tastes the best?’ And you can have it prepared any way you want. They will do whatever you want with it. Which is the way fish should be.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach, when describing a favorite local seafood restaurant said, “The menu changes every day because of what is available coming out of the ocean that day or the day before.”

#### *Type of restaurant*

Participants also choose restaurants based on their past experiences and trust in the restaurant’s quality.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said about trusted restaurants, “That’s true with any restaurant. There’s a level of trust that you’re getting what they’re promoting...and if you just go back a couple of years, there was a whole problem with the grouper. I mean, these restaurants were selling grouper for eleven...(crosstalk interrupts)...they can’t afford that.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “You know that...if you know that [a local restaurant] is consistent, then if you go there, you know you are going to get a good product. There is other places that you go and it might be good one day and not the other, so I think it is maybe less about the seafood and more about the restaurant.”
- Another participant from Tampa said that what is important are the “past experiences of the restaurant. If you have had good experiences with seafood there, you most likely would order it again.”
- A different participant from Tampa said, “Or the chains that you have built some level of trust, like Bonefish. You know you are going to get a nice piece of seafood at Bonefish, those types of places.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “See, I have been to Red Lobster before and I have always had a decent experience. But, I prefer Bonefish, because the fish is always done exceptionally well there. And you just know you are going to get good fish there, consistently, prepared right. It just tastes...whatever they do, they just taste better. And you are paying more. But, I will pay more knowing that I am going to get...knowing that I feel and knowing that I am going to get a guaranteed great piece of fish. Where Red Lobster, like you said, you can have an experience. I have not had one, but I’m like...it is volume, like you said.”
- Another participant from Orlando said, “I will pay extra [for good seafood] and I will trust their choice in where they are getting their food from, as opposed to a...and I am probably unfairly picking on Red Lobster, but I mean, Long John Silver’s, let’s pick that one, too...as opposed to a hourly person who has probably been trained to do their job and probably trained well, but it is not a chef. Do you understand what I am saying? That is preparing and creating a dish...”

### Do you feel there are any barriers to purchasing Gulf seafood at restaurants?

When asked whether they felt there were any barriers to purchasing Gulf seafood when at a restaurant, participants mentioned that they sometimes are worried about the *quality* of Gulf seafood, particularly its freshness and safety.

### Quality

Participants sometimes feel that the freshness of Gulf seafood deters them from purchasing it in restaurants.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said about the oil spill, “We don’t know what the effect is on the environment and the fish that is there. I mean, that is the only barrier I have.”

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I would say, whenever the oil spill first happened, I am sure people were skeptical, but then they started doing all their studies and research and showing that it was okay. But that was within the same year. I don’t know how long it has been.”
- A participant from Tampa said that a barrier from purchasing Gulf seafood at restaurants is “knowing it is not fresh.”
- Another participant from Tampa said, “I just think the reputation. I tend to...I look at reviews of restaurants before I go there. I like Urbanspoon and Yelp. If there is anything at all on there that says that... I mean, one review...you have got to take with a grain of salt, but if there is a trend of a few that say that the seafood is not fresh or that people didn’t like it, that would be a barrier.”

### Do you feel there are any incentives to purchasing Gulf seafood at restaurants?

When asked whether there are any incentives to purchasing Gulf seafood at restaurants, respondents mentioned that Gulf seafood provides them with *tactile preferences*, such as freshness and good taste. They also are incentivized to purchase Gulf seafood in restaurants since it is *local* and nearby.

#### *Tactile Preferences*

Participants are incentivized to purchase Gulf seafood in restaurants because it tastes good and is fresh.

- One participant from Tampa said, “I don’t want to eat any other type of grouper than Florida grouper. You know, I don’t want no other than Florida.”
- Another participant from Tampa said, “I live in Florida, [the seafood] is fresh. It tastes good.”
- A different participant from Tampa said, “You know what you are going to get if you order a piece of fresh, Gulf grouper.”

#### *Local*

Participants felt that another incentive was the fact that Gulf seafood is local and supports local economic activity.

- A participant from Tampa said, “Incentive? Promote the local economy, I guess.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Buy local if they tell us that it’s from the Gulf, but again, going back to what I said, if they’re preparing the Gulf seafood in a way I’m not interested in and the imported stuff in the way I want, I’ll get the one I want, anyway. But it would probably be nice to know. I mean, it would be nice if the restaurants let you know that they’re supporting the local economy, or at least the Florida economy.”

- A participant from Orlando said, “I think that it’s like...you’re in a restaurant and something said it was from the Gulf and then something else might have said, might say it’s from like New England or something, I might have a tendency more to go for the Gulf because I would think it’s fresher because it’s closer.”

### Are there differences in your seafood purchasing behavior in restaurants than in grocery stores?

Participants were asked how their seafood purchasing behavior is different when they are at a restaurant than when they are purchasing seafood in a grocery store. They mentioned that they tend to order food in restaurants that are *exotic and hard to prepare at home* and that they go to restaurants when they want to experience the *convenience of being served*.

#### Exotic and hard to prepare at home

Participants prefer going to restaurants over grocery stores when the restaurant is able to prepare dishes that are either exotic to them or are particularly difficult to prepare on one’s own at home.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I think it’s also something that if you wouldn’t make it at home. Like the salmon I had last night was salmon with mango salsa. If it was just salmon on the grill, I probably wouldn’t have ordered it. Because it said salmon with mango salsa, I said, ‘Oh, that sounds different.’ Or like crab cakes, I’m not going to make crab cakes at home. I order something like that out.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “One thing about the restaurants they usually can make, like she’s saying, a more exotic...I can cook fish, but mine is like garlic and lemon in a basic...what I like. But, when you go to a restaurant, sometimes you want to try something different.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “I care more about my job and so I am handling the food correctly, I am coming up with creative dishes that use seafood...that I will pay and do that more than I will do the fast food.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “I tend to pick something that I can’t prepare at home, that’s like more complicated or, I don’t know.”
- Another participant from West Palm beach said, “Yeah, exotic. Something special. And if you are somewhere where you can get, maybe not here, if you are in another...like down in the Keys, you can get things that are a little different, a little fresher, or you go out on a fishing boat and you catch your own, bring it to the restaurant and they prepare it. It’s different because you’re not preparing it at home. “

#### Convenience of being served

Participants also prefer going to restaurants over grocery stores due to the convenience of being served rather than having to prepare the dish themselves.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “You know what I like? If I go to a restaurant and they overcook or undercook it, guess what? I can get it done again.”

- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “The labor and the service, you are either doing it yourself and slaving over a hot stove, or somebody is doing it for you.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Yes, I guess it is nice to have someone to cook it for you.”

## Information Gathering

### From where do you prefer to get your information about seafood?

Participants were asked about where they prefer to get information about seafood. Responses included *media sources*, the *internet*, through *word of mouth*, and at the *purchase location* where one buys seafood.

#### *Media sources*

Participants mentioned that mainstream media sources, such as news, TV, and newspapers are all ways in which they prefer to get information about seafood.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said that information is gathered from “both mainstream and non-mainstream news sources.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I would also add everyday newspaper. You can always read a good article about something.”
- A different participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “The Dirty Dining Reports, Channel 10.”
- A different participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “The Travel Channel and the Food Channel. They give you a lot of information.”
- A participant from Tampa said information is gathered from “commercials, advertisements.”

#### *Internet*

Participants also mentioned the internet as a preferred way of receiving information.

- A participant from Tampa said, “I get a lot of my information from the internet, I guess. Yeah.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “Internet. I usually search the internet.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “You know we all love the internet.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Google! Google it!”

### Word of mouth

Word of mouth from friends, family and other trusted individuals is another way that participants get information about seafood.

- A participant from Orlando said that “word of mouth, friends” was a way to gather information about seafood.
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I think family and friends [are a source of information about seafood].”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “I want the guy behind the counter to tell me then because I trust him, because he’s going to see me after I eat it, you see? So, he knows. He’s not going to give me something bad that I’m going to come...because he’s going to see me. It’s that simple.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, “I depend on word-of-mouth. Like friends that will recommend either a certain grocer or restaurants. If they’ve had a good experience, that type of thing.”

### Purchase location

Several participants mentioned that they would like to be able to receive information about their seafood from the place where they purchase it, whether a grocery store or restaurant because it is more convenient that way.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I would like to, at the place I am purchasing it at...I want to have the information of what I am purchasing. It will be easier for selection and my choices if I have the information right there and then.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “That is what I was saying, either at the grocery store, supermarket, or restaurant...that it would be posted and said where they are purchasing it from.”
- A participant from Jacksonville would like to get information “right there where you buy it. That is why I go to Fishermen’s Dock because I know if I ask them, I know I will get a straight answer as to where it is from or when they brought it in the store and that kind of thing. So, if there were more places that...you know, anyplace that sells it, it would be nice if they had that information available right there where they sell it.”

### What type of information do you look for?

Participants were asked to describe the type of information they would like to have or look for about the seafood they purchase, whether at restaurants or in grocery stores. They mentioned wanting to know about the *quality of the seafood*, *nutritional information*, the *origin of the seafood*, and *information for their personal use* such as ways to prepare the seafood and knowledge on choosing high quality seafood products.

### *Quality of seafood*

Participants discussed wanting to know about the quality of the seafood, particularly how fresh it is or whether there are any safety concerns about the seafood.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale expressed wanting to know “when it was purchased. How long has it been sitting around?”
- A participant from Orlando said, “That is real important to me, I don’t want something that is ten days old and sitting on ice for ten days.”
- Another participant from Orlando said, “I want to know how fresh it is. The label that tells me how old it is, when it was caught, wherever the destination is.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale expressed wanting to know about “any emergencies; if there was a crisis with a certain kind of fish. Another oil spill might be a good...you know, or something that they told you that something has been banned or endangered or something. ‘Watch out for the illegal sale of this...’”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “You know how they say, like too much mercury in it or x-percent of mercury in it.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach expressed wanting to know whether seafood is “Safe. Yeah, any environmental issues or safety.”

### *Nutritional information*

Participants also would like to have easy access to nutritional information about seafood to help inform their decisions.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale expressed wanting to know “where the fish is from. I guess the nutritional value of the different types of fish and what you get from it: protein, omega 3, and so on.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I would want to know how much fat in a serving.”
- A participant from Orlando wanted to know “the calories. How much cholesterol.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “I mean, I am not sure what kind of information that you are talking about, but like sometimes it is nice when you are looking for nutritional facts about things and it is right by what you are buying.”

### *Origin of seafood*

Origin of the seafood was also important to participants, especially where the seafood comes from and whether it was farm raised.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale expressed wanting to know “the place where the fish are brought into.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I would like to know where it is from.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “I want to know how fresh it is. The label that tells me how old it is, when it was caught, wherever the destination is.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “Was it wild or farm raised?”

### *Information for personal use*

Participants would also like to have access to information for their own personal use, such as recipes for preparing seafood in different ways and learning what seafood is in season and how to choose high quality seafood at a grocery store or restaurant.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “This is a big one. How to determine where the fish is from, what to look for, how to educate yourself on the buying of, and selecting of fish. Then you’re not just taking the merchant’s word for it. How to develop a palette to determine...”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “Maybe different recipes on what is the best way to prepare it if you have not made it before.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “I would, I think I have seen this somewhere, but I am not sure if the local supermarkets here have it, but they generally have like a little rack where they have a brochure and it is one spread out and you can actually take some. It talks about what fish are in season at certain times...what is freshest when, like a little calendar. You know, things like that that help you guide what you want to buy.”

### **Describe a commercial you have seen recently about seafood.**

Next, participants were asked to describe a commercial or message they had recently seen about seafood. Their responses yielded a variety of descriptions. The two most common commercials that were mentioned was commercials for the *BP oil spill* and *Red Lobster*.

#### *BP oil spill*

Regarding the BP Oil Spill commercial, participants liked the focus the commercial gives on the cleanup efforts and the Gulf seafood industry being safe and bouncing back. However, respondents did discuss that the commercial reminded them of the oil spill disaster and at times brings back sad or negative feelings about the way that the area has been impacted.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Yeah, I recall the BP commercial where it said it’s good to eat our food, like things are going back to normal.”

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I have seen...I’ll bet when I say this, you guys have seen this, it goes right by and you don’t pay attention...BP is running those ads now about the Gulf...(crosstalk) how they had a record year this past season, and the Mississippi/Alabama guy saying, “We’ve got fish coming out our ears.” So, the Gulf is resurgent and they are talking about it having better years than they’ve ever had. Now whether that’s true or not...(crosstalk) I thought it was the Gulf Tourism Board.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “You see a lot on BP and the Gulf and about them talking about the Gulf coming back.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said about the BP oil spill commercials “Oh, I just thought it was informational because otherwise I would have still had that in my head that there is a problem over there.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “I like [the BP oil spill commercial] because it is promoting people coming to the area. You know? To help boost the economy.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “In response to your actual question, with the ads, I think really, more than anything, with the BP ads specifically, it’s kind a like, hey, man, I’m really happy for what’s going on out there. Hopefully this is what’s actually going on and these folks are getting back to normal, business as usual. That’s more...you kind of want to get a positive, uplifting message from them, even though it’s as commercial as can be...”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “When I see the ad, it gives me a positive feeling of the area that it happened, they are opening up the business...it gives me a better feeling of the seafood that might be coming. When I see it, right away, that is what I see. Because everything that they show is cleanliness. As soon as you see that, that is the first thing that you see in the ads. They show the water behind the lady that is speaking, that is very clean.”
- A participant from Tampa said about the BP oil spill commercial, “I just think it is a really tiny bandaid for a bigger problem.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “It made me remember again what a horrible disaster it was.”

### *Red Lobster*

The Red Lobster commercial was another one that people remembered, particularly for their catch phrase “sea food differently.” Participants liked the catchy phrase and the images of seafood in the commercial. However, they did not like the discrepancy between the way that the food is advertised and how it looks when one orders it in a restaurant.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “The only one I can ever remember paying any attention to is the Red Lobster one.”

- A participant from Jacksonville remembered the commercial about “Lobsterfest at Red Lobster.”
- A participant from Jacksonville remember Red Lobster’s slogan “we sea food differently, Red Lobster.”
- Another participant from Jacksonville commented that the slogan is “kind of catchy and different.”
- A participant from Tampa said that the Red Lobster commercials “are very appealing advertisements. I think for people that aren’t even seafood eaters, it might be pretty appealing as opposed to some of the other advertisements that you see, they are not nearly as appealing.”
- Another participant from Tampa commented about the images on the Red Lobster commercials by saying, “It just looks fresh. I don’t know, it just looks very tasty and fresh.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “Commercials can be very misleading, sometimes. Sure, it looks so fresh and delicious, but when you get to the restaurant, it is nothing like you see on TV. It is totally different.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “Well, Red Lobster seafood never looks like Red Lobster commercials seafood, and I would not eat at Red Lobster if I could help it. It’s one of those things where somebody takes you there and there you are, so you have to eat it.”

### Logo Testing : Fresh from Florida

In the next stage of the focus group, participants were asked to describe their reactions to two different logos. The first was a logo with the words “Fresh from Florida” and an icon on a sun shining over water. The second logo had the words “Fresh from Florida Gulf Seafood” and had an icon of a sun shining over water and a fish jumping out of the water. Participants were asked what comes to their mind when they hear and see the logo and what they like and dislike about the logo (see Appendix A for images of both logos). They were also asked to think of what types of products they believe could be sold using the logo, whether the logo would be likely to influence their seafood purchasing behavior, and what steps they would take to improve the image.

#### What comes to mind with “Fresh from Florida?”

First, participants were asked to describe what initially comes to mind when they hear and see the logo “Fresh from Florida. Participants mentioned that they think of *produce*, particularly oranges, and the *outdoors*.

#### *Produce*

Participants mentioned that they thought of produce when seeing and hearing this logo. Oranges especially came to many participants’ minds.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Yeah, oranges is usually what comes to mind.”

- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “No matter what they grow here, you always focus on the one thing that you already know for years, Florida oranges.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “Orange juice was the first thing I thought of.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “The only other thing is when you say, “Fresh from Florida,” I actually know they’ve got Florida produce and that kind of makes me think of other kinds of things besides seafood.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Yeah produce, like melons, corn, there’s a couple other things I know they grow in Florida.”

### Outdoors

Participants also thought that the logo reminded them of the outdoors in general, especially the beach.

- A participant from West Palm Beach said the logo brought to mind “forest, ocean, the land meeting the ocean, all under the sunshine.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said the logo brought to mind “sun, water and land.”
- For another participant from Ft. Lauderdale, the logo brought to mind “sunlight, beach.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “I see sunshine, I see water, I see water, I see positivity.”

### What do you like about this logo?

Participants were asked to describe what they like about the logo, and they mentioned that they enjoyed the way that the logo is positively *promoting Florida* and that the logo has *simplicity* in its imaging and wording so it is easy to understand and follow.

### Promoting Florida

Participants liked that the logo promotes Florida in a positive way.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale felt the logo was “trying to promote Florida, it comes out. You catch that.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “It’s representing the sunshine, I would say, as far as the Sunshine State type thing.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale liked that the logo was “Sunny. Because sunny is Florida.” Simplicity

### Simplicity

Participants also appreciated that the log was simple.

- A participant from West Palm Beach felt that the logo “is easy to read. It is not convoluted. I mean it says, ‘Fresh from Florida’ and the logo itself is simple.”
- A participant from Orland said, “It’s simple. It’s not like annoying or loud.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I like the colors. I think it is simple, but straight to the point.”

### What do you dislike about this logo?

When asked what they do not like about the “Fresh from Florida,” participants mentioned that they did not like the overall *vagueness* of the logo since they felt it does not pertain to any one specific product. They also do not like the word “from” within the “Fresh from Florida” wording.

### Vagueness

Participants did not like that the logo appeared to be vague, with one mention of what it was trying to promote.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Well, right now, as it is, it could be any number of products. You can’t tell anything other than it was fresh from Florida.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “No, I didn’t really have much to say, but I just agree with that it’s very general. There’s nothing that targets seafood in here.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “It looks a little generic, to me.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, “It could be on a bathing suit tag that was made in Florida, you know? It’s really, really, very generic.”

### Word “from”

Participants also felt that the word “from” was unnecessary and made the logo sound wordier than it needed to be.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “But, if it were me, I would just say ‘Florida Fresh’ and not have the word ‘from’ in the middle.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “It is hard to read, ‘from.’ It blends.”
- Another participant from Orlando said, “Yes, that is what I didn’t like about it, that, ‘from.’ It is just weird.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “I don’t like the ‘from.’”

### What could be sold using this logo?

Participants felt that both a variety of *produce* products, particularly oranges and fruit, along with *seafood* could be sold using this logo.

### *Produce*

Participants thought that produce could be easily sold using this logo, especially oranges or other fruits.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “Definitely oranges and orange juice.”
- Another participant from Jacksonville said, “You could do plants. Any type of plants you would sell from one state to the other.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “Anything agriculture.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Any kind of fruit.”

### *Seafood*

Participants also thought that seafood could be sold using this logo.

- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “I think seafood.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, “It could be a seafood logo.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said the logo brings to mind “seafood.”

### **Would this logo affect your seafood purchasing behavior?**

Participants were then asked whether they felt that the “Fresh from Florida” logo would likely affect their seafood purchasing behavior. Responses were both positive and negative, with some feeling that it would encourage their purchasing behavior and others feeling that it would not make much of a difference.

### *Yes*

Some participants felt this logo would encourage them to purchase local food that is produced in the state.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “It would, because I would prefer to buy things local if I could, as opposed to something that’s shipped. And, I would think that it would be less expensive than something that they’ve shipped in from somewhere else. It would be fresher, because it would be from here.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “I think if it was seafood or produce or anything, if I saw it, I think I would have more of a tendency to think it was fresh, local...hasn’t been on a truck for two days.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I would be supporting Florida if I want...like, okay, I am going to choose Florida. If I don’t know, they are about the same prices, I am going to go to Florida, probably.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Yeah, it feels good I think, to support things that are being produced and manufactured...grown, in your own state.”

## No

Some participants felt the logo would not likely change their purchasing behavior.

- A participant from Orlando said the logo, “Just doesn’t do anything for me.”
- Another participant from Orlando said, “Not at all.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “I don’t think it would affect my purchasing.”
- Another participant from Tampa said, “No, it wouldn’t affect mine.”

## What would you do to improve this logo?

Participants were asked what they would do to improve the image more to their liking. Participants specifically mentioned that they would *add new images* to the logo.

### Add new image

Many participants felt that incorporating a fish into the logo would improve it. Some felt that incorporating other images that bring to mind fishing, such as a boat, as well as the state of Florida through an image of the state, would also improve the image.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Actually, those are icons of Florida: water, sun and water. If this was to promote specifically seafood, there might be a little fish jumping out of the water.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale suggested “add a fish to it.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “To me, if you are going to attribute it to fish, it should have some kind of fish thing on it. A little dolphin or whatever...I don’t know. You know what I mean? That could be, I mean somebody could say, ‘Is that orange juice, or what?’”
- A participant from Orlando said, “Yeah, a fish...like jumping out of the water.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “But, I think a fish in the picture would be appropriate, definitely. Then we would be like, ‘Yeah fish, fresh from Florida.’”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale suggested adding “maybe a boat.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I think you should just do away with the green. Get the land out of there and make it all blue and potentially have like a silhouette of a fishing boat or something.”

- A participant from Orlando said, “Everybody knows the shape of Florida. No one not knows that. Why isn’t that here? And then you have, ‘Fresh from Florida,’ you are going, yeah, because it is Florida.”
- Another participant from Orlando said, “Unless you put, you know...put a really small Florida inside the sun and that way you will know. Oh, there you go.”

### Logo Testing: Fresh from Florida Gulf Seafood

The second logo had the words “Fresh from Florida Gulf Seafood” and had an icon of a sun shining over water and a fish jumping out of the water (see Appendix A). Participants were asked the same questions as for the first logo testing. They were asked what comes to their mind when they hear and see the logo and what they like and dislike about the logo. They were also asked to think of what types of products they believe could be sold using the logo, whether the logo would be likely to influence their seafood purchasing behavior, and what steps they would take to improve the image.

#### What comes to mind with “Fresh from Florida Gulf Seafood?”

First, participants were asked to describe what first comes to their mind when they hear and see the logo “Fresh from Florida Gulf Seafood.” Participants mentioned that they think of the recent *oil spill* and that they also think of *seafood*.

#### Oil Spill

Some participants felt that the logo brought to mind the Deep Horizon oil spill.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Yeah, I wouldn’t think about it. But as soon as you see the word, it puts oil with it, disaster with it.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “Yeah, this advertisement specifically addresses the oil spill. And it is going to bring that directly to mind immediately, because it is pushing the Gulf seafood.”

#### Seafood

Other participants felt that the logo brings to mind seafood.

- A participant from Jacksonville said the logo brought to mind “seafood from the Gulf.”
- A participant from Orlando said the logo brought to mind “definitely seafood.”
- Another participant from Orlando said, “Yeah, Gulf seafood. Fresh Gulf seafood.”

#### What do you like about this logo?

When asked about what they like about the logo, participants described enjoying the *fish icon* and the way that the logo is *straightforward* and clear in its promotion of seafood.

#### Fish icon

Many participants enjoyed the fish image in the “Fresh from Florida Gulf Seafood” logo.

- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “But I like, I mean, the fish in it. It makes all of the difference in the world.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I like the fish, I don’t necessarily like this fish, but I like a fish.”
- Another participant from Jacksonville said, “I don’t like the color, but I like how they changed the logo with the fish.”

### **Straightforward**

Participants appreciated the straightforward and clear nature of the logo.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I like that it is straightforward.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “It’s very direct. You know exactly what they’re talking about. That’s the one good thing about it.”

### **What do you dislike about this logo?**

When asked what they dislike about the logo, participants mention that they do not like the *wording* of the logo’s phrase and that they feel that the logo is visually and verbally *busy*.

### **Wording**

Some participants felt that the wording was not the best and that in particular, the word “Gulf” deterred them.

- A participant from Ft Lauderdale said, “If it was just, ‘Fresh from Florida’ and ‘Seafood’ it probably wouldn’t bother me, but as soon as you put the word, ‘Gulf’ in there, it brings a negative connotation.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I would say right now that the ‘Gulf’ on there probably wouldn’t be a good idea.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “If it says, ‘Gulf,’ I am not going to buy it.”

### **Busy**

Other participants felt that the logo was too visually and verbally busy.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “ It’s too busy.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “There is a lot to this logo, though. Now the words actually seem more distracting than the logo now...the size.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “There is a lot of words on here. And there is a lot to read if you’re just looking at it.”

- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, “The other thing is your dealing with three different fonts, too.”
- A different participant from West Palm Beach said, “So, basically, it is too busy then. Because I would think if you had the thing of Florida, then I would put Florida on there, you know?”

### What could be sold using this logo?

Next, participants were asked what they felt could be sold using the logo “Fresh from Florida Gulf Seafood.” Participants overall felt that *seafood* was the primary product that could be sold with this logo.

### Seafood

Participants felt confident that seafood could be sold using this logo.

- A participant from Orlando said, “Any type of seafood. Any type of seafood.”
- A participant from Tampa said “grouper” could be sold with the logo.
- Another participant from Tampa suggested “Gulf seafood.”
- A different participant from Tampa suggested “any seafood, any Gulf seafood.”
- A participant from Tampa suggested “shrimp.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach thought that “seafood” in general could be sold with the logo.
- Another participant from West Palm Beach thought that “Gulf seafood” could be sold with the logo.

### Would this logo affect your seafood purchasing behavior?

Participants were asked whether seeing this logo would influence or affect their seafood purchasing behavior. A few participants thought that it might encourage them to purchase local seafood, while others thought that the logo was unlikely to affect their seafood purchasing.

### Yes

Some participants felt that this logo would encourage them to purchase more seafood.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I might say I am going to support my local fishermen and buy the one from Florida.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “If I saw this on my local fish monger’s counter, I would look at what they’re offering and probably try to go for that over something that’s farm raised or coming from another state.”

- Another participant from Orlando said, “I think I would prefer this to the ‘Made in China’ logo. Although the price is going to be off a bit.”

### No

Other participants felt that the logo would not affect their seafood purchasing behavior.

- A participant from Tampa said, “It probably wouldn’t.”
- Another participant from Tampa said, “It wouldn’t.”

### What would you do to improve this logo?

Participants were then asked what things they would do to improve the image. They discussed *changing the wording* of the logo, particularly through removing the word “Gulf” and the word “from” and *improving the fish image* by making it a local fish.

### Change wording

Many participants felt that changing the wording could improve the logo. Specifically, they felt that removing the words “Gulf” and “from” would make the logo easier to read.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Take off the word, ‘Gulf.’”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale suggested it would be improved “if you get rid of the ‘Gulf...’”
- A different participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “It is hearing ‘Gulf’ entwined with ‘Florida Seafood’ that turns us off.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I agree with remove the Gulf, because like you said, most people won’t think about it, but when they see the word Gulf, those old memories come back. ‘Didn’t we have the oil spill there?’”
- A participant from Orlando said, “I don’t really think you need the Gulf seafood wording down there.
- A participant from Tampa said, “Change the ‘from.’ I agree with you, I don’t like the ‘from.’”
- Another participant from Tampa suggested, “What about just ‘Fresh Florida Seafood?’”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Take the ‘from’ out.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, “Yeah, I was going to say...what do we need ‘from’ for?”

### Improve fish image

Participants also would like to see a fish that is from Florida.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Put a fish from Florida.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “Definitely a local fish. Yeah.”
- Another participant from Tampa said, “Or realistic, a realistic looking fish.”
- A different participant from Tampa said, “Yeah, with a recognizable Florida fish, yeah. He looks kind of limp too, he doesn’t look very hardy.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach suggested the addition of a “swordfish.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, “I like sailfish, marlin or swordfish.”

### Concept 1

**I choose Florida Gulf seafood at home because my family and friends love the taste and variety. Plus, being in Florida, I know it’s fresh and easy to find locally (see Appendix B).**

The next section of the focus group asked participants to respond to four different concepts related to consuming Florida Gulf Seafood (Appendices B,C, D, & E). The concepts consisted of a sentence or two describing the concept along with visual images that supported the sentences. Participants were asked to state what they liked, disliked, or would change about the concepts.

#### What do you like about Concept 1?

For concept 1, some participants liked the *images* used to portray the concept.

#### Images

Some participants felt that the images used in Concept 1 were appealing and enjoyable.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I definitely like the image of the family.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “The images are all great.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “Yeah, but you know...visually this picture of the coastline and the sky, that is most appealing picture on the page.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “It looks appetizing. It looks delicious.”

- A participant from Orlando said, “You get the idea from the lighthouse and the Gulf that it is right there, and it is going to be fresh because that is where it came from.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “It kind of incorporated everything...you see the fresh seafood, you get the feel for Florida and for sitting down and eating a meal with your family as well.”

### What do you dislike about Concept 1?

For concept 1, other participants did not like the *images* used. Others did not like the *wording* choices of the concept.

#### Images

Some participants felt that the images were not specific to Florida and that the food was not obviously seafood.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “There isn’t a single picture on here that reminds me of Florida, to be honest with you.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “You know, it is funny, this bottom picture of seafood, it actually looks like it is taken from like San Francisco or Seattle. I remember seeing cheeks, I remember seeing that...you have got like Alaskan king crab legs in it.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “It’s like they’re eating salad. Maybe pasta, I don’t know. It doesn’t reflect people eating seafood, to me.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “They don’t even look like they’re eating fish. I think they’re eating broccoli and macaroni and cheese. It’s not, I mean, it must be some kind of pasta or something.”

#### Wording

Some participants thought the phrase “plus being in Florida” was too wordy.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I don’t like the phrase, ‘plus being in Florida.’ I don’t know. There’s something about that just rubs you wrong.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “Yeah, ‘Plus being in Florida...’ That whole thing needs to be reworked.”

### What would you change about Concept 1?

Participants were then asked to describe what they would change about Concept 1. They mentioned that they would like to see pictures of *Florida seafood* and *fishermen*. They would also like to *shorten the wording* of the concept.

#### Florida seafood

Participants wanted to see more seafood that is specific to Florida in Concept 1.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Yeah, a picture of a guy holding up Florida lobster.”

- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said the concept would be improved with the addition of “grouper, shrimp, I mean, I don’t know... Scallops...”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale suggested, “Yeah, Apalachicola oysters, you know?”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Well, we are known for our oysters. I would like to see a nice plate of raw oysters.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach suggested the addition of “Probably a prepared dish of local seafood, number one. What is local here.”

### *Fishermen*

Participants thought that adding images of fishermen would improve the concept.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “There is no doubt I would have a least one photo in here with a proud fisherman holding up his catch.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I would like to see a fisherman, like on a boat in the middle of the ocean...”
- A participant from Orlando suggested adding a “fisherman bringing the fish in.”

### *Shorten the wording*

When asked what could be improved, some participants thought that the wording used in the concept could be shortened for more clarity.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “It needs to be a concise statement.”
- Another participant from Jacksonville said, “And maybe in one sentence, because you put all those commas in there and that makes you pause and it takes longer to process, and that whole plus thing is sort of...it throws you into the ditch.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “How I would shorten this first thing, I would just say, ‘I choose Florida seafood at home because it’s fresh and easy to find locally.’”

### **Concept 2**

**I indulge in delicious, fresh, Florida Gulf seafood as part of a healthy lifestyle (see Appendix C).**

### What do you like about Concept 2?

Participants mentioned that they like Concept 2's focus on *healthy images* and specifically the use of *limes* in the pictures.

#### Healthy Images

Participants liked that Concept 2 focused on healthy images, including both physical activity and healthy eating.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, "And, while I agree that the woman doing yoga on the beach is connected, to me...just looking at those two pictures, I'm sure they were chosen for this reason, but they look really healthy. You know, you look at them going, 'Wow, that grilled shrimp with pineapple...that can't be too many calories.' Maybe a little cholesterol..But they look really...but seeing those pictures, that's really kind of all you need. You know, not only does it look appetizing, but it looks healthy."
- A participant from Tampa said, "It looks really healthy, though."
- Another participant from Tampa said, "The fact that what they are showing is grilled, to me, says healthy lifestyle. Grilled fish and fish on the skewer with a pineapple or whatever that is; I don't need the people, I just need the seafood."
- A participant from Orlando said, "The healthy lifestyle kind of plays in there, right?"

#### Limes

Participants mentioned that they enjoyed having limes shown alongside the seafood, particularly because they were attractive and representative of Florida.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, "I like the lime, that gives me a fresh feeling. That's good."
- A participant from Orlando said, "You've got the limes that are growing in Florida."
- A participant from Tampa said, "It looks pretty with the limes...little bit of garnish."
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, "It's got the limes in there which is the Florida citrusy stuff."

### What do you dislike about Concept 2?

Participants were asked to state what they didn't like about Concept 2. They mentioned not liking the *wording*, and the *exercising images*.

#### Wording

Participants did not like the word "indulge" that was used in Concept 2.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, "Plus the word indulge doesn't thrill me. Indulgence is not usually part of your health regimen, you know?"

- Another participant from Jacksonville said, “It’s a word you just don’t hear in common conversational speech, so, I think that might be a hang up, too.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “‘Indulge’ makes it sound expensive.”
- Another participant from Orlando said, “Indulge...isn’t that like a connotation of like it’s bad for you? Like, I indulge in chocolate?”

### Exercising Images

Participants did not like the images of individuals exercising, either because they felt that the images did not connect with seafood, or that the images elicited guilt in the participants for not being more physically active themselves.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “I feel a disconnect. I get the health part of it, but I feel disconnected, at least with the runner on the bottom.”
- Another participant from Jacksonville said, “I like the picture of the woman (inaudible) on the beach. There’s no connection to the seafood with the runner.”
- A different participant from Jacksonville said, “I hate that guy because he reminds me I haven’t been to the gym in a month.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “That makes me feel negative, just looking at her.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “I probably don’t need the exercising guy. That doesn’t sell me seafood.”
- Another participant from Orlando said, “Yeah, but are you getting me to buy seafood or a treadmill?”
- A participant from Tampa said, “A double jointed gal on the beach doesn’t represent seafood to me.”

### What would you change about Concept 2?

Participants were given the chance to discuss what they would change to improve Concept 2. They mentioned that they would change the word “*indulge*” to “*enjoy*,” and incorporate images of an *older couple walking* on the beach and *outdoor activities*.

### Word “*indulge*” to “*enjoy*”

Participants did not like the word “*indulge*” and thought it could be easily changed to “*enjoy*” for a more positive association.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I might change the word, ‘indulge’ because indulge is something that you kind of splurge on. It should be, you know, ‘I enjoy.’ I am not sure that indulge is the right word.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “How about change indulge to enjoy?”
- Another participant from Jacksonville said, “Why can’t we just say, ‘Enjoy delicious fresh Florida seafood...’? Not even I, just ‘Enjoy delicious, fresh Florida Gulf seafood as part of a healthy lifestyle.’”
- A participant from Orlando said, “I probably would say like ‘I enjoy.’”
- A participant from Tampa said, “How about, ‘I enjoy delicious fresh Florida Gulf seafood?’”

### *Older couple walking*

Another suggestion was to incorporate an image of an older couple walking on the beach. Participants thought this would be appealing for the retiree community in Florida.

- A participant from Orlando said, “But, you are targeting a certain demographic here, okay? You have got a lot of retirees that come here during the season, or to enjoy Florida in the winter. Was there a healthy older couple walking the beach or something?”
- A participant from Tampa said, “Can’t you have a nice older couple walking on the beach at sunset or something? Trying to get some exercise like that...or dancing.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Don’t be afraid to put elderly people.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach suggested the addition of “an elderly couple walking hand in hand on the beach.”

### *Outdoor activities*

Participants also suggested including more outdoor activities that can be done at the beach.

- A participant from Orlando suggested, “And maybe a picture of someone jogging outside rather than a...something more outdoorsy.”
- Another participant from Orlando said, “Jogging on the beach is better than the yoga lady.”
- A participant from Tampa suggested adding a picture of someone fishing by saying “Or catching...reeling in a big one, you know?”

- Another participant from Tampa said, “I don’t know if this is...if it is designed to be a separate concept, but you could also apply to this to family and say, ‘My family indulges’ and have a picture of dad and a kid fishing, like he said...or a mom and a kid or something like that. Or all three.”
- A participant from West Palm beach suggested adding “people playing volleyball on the beach or something, you know.”

### Concept 3

**I like to create new, fresh Florida Gulf seafood recipes to share with my family and friends and show off my cooking skills (see Appendix D).**

#### What do you like about Concept 3?

Participants were asked what they like about Concept 3. They mentioned appreciating the *overall imagery and atmosphere* of the concept.

#### *Overall imagery and atmosphere*

Participants appreciated the imagery and happy atmosphere in the concept’s images.

- A participant from Jacksonville said, “But they are having a good time.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “I like the presentation of it. It’s not bad.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach liked the image “because every time you see a picture of this food, it looks delicious.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “That is a good one. The focus on food is good.”

#### What do you dislike about Concept 3?

When asked to describe what they didn’t like about Concept 3, participants mentioned that they did not connect with the *overall idea* of the concept.

#### *Overall idea*

Participants did not feel a connection with the concept’s idea of showing off one’s cooking skills. Many participants felt that not everyone cooks, so that the concept would not apply to many people.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I don’t think the average person is showing off their cooking skills.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “The word ‘fresh’ doesn’t bother me, but I don’t know why you would want to show off your cooking skills.”

- A participant from Tampa said, “The biggest picture is her cooking (crosstalk) and that’s very limiting because not everybody is interested in cooking.”
- Another participant from Tampa said, “That’s not as marketable of an ad, not everybody can cook.”
- A different participant from Tampa said, “I mean, I’m not a cook, but how many people like actually create new recipes or even nowadays even have the time to think about that?”
- A participant from West Palm beach said, “Yeah, I don’t have any cooking skills, so I wouldn’t want to show them off to anybody.”

### What would you change about Concept 3?

When asked what they would change about Concept 3, participants mentioned that they would *remove the words “show off my cooking skills”* and that they would *show the seafood being grilled with family and friends*.

### Remove “show off my cooking skills”

Participants did not feel that the words “show off my cooking skills” were positive or appropriate and would remove them.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I hope you are not cooking if you don’t have any skills. You can leave off the other half of that sentence... ‘with my family and friends’ is fine, but then you don’t have to tell them you have got cooking skills.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Maybe this could be more appealing if they just took out, ‘...and show off my cooking skills.’ I mean, that is just like cocky...”
- A participant from Orlando said, “You can take that show off my cooking skills’ right off.”

### Show seafood being grilled with family and friends

Participants thought that incorporating an image of grilling seafood with family and friends would be a more positive, relatable image.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Completely eliminate the woman cooking and probably even that...I would probably just do one big picture of a barbecue with a larger group of family and friends around eating seafood. Probably showing the grill with the seafood on the grill.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Some people...like a shot where you can see them cooking on a grill and people sitting there, maybe salivating, or you know?”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “A low country boil on a picnic table on top of newspapers, that would be good.”

- A participant from Tampa suggested, “Put the shrimp on the grill.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach suggested, “I would do the grill in the pictures because when you think of Florida, you think of outdoors.”

## Concept 4

**When dining out, treating myself to fresh Florida Gulf seafood makes the meal feel more special (see Appendix E).**

### What do you like about Concept 4?

When asked about what they liked about Concept 4, participants mentioned that they liked the idea of *seafood as being a treat*.

#### *Idea of seafood as a treat*

Participants agreed and liked the idea that seafood is a treat.

- A participant from Jacksonville said that seafood “is not something you have all the time...”
- Another participant from Jacksonville said, “Exactly. They want to go to a restaurant, have all that, essentially, dirty work done for them. And have it brought to the table...same thing with crab legs, most people aren’t going to take a live crab and put it in a pot of boiling water. At least, I’m not. So, I think it is a treat to get seafood at a restaurant because all the work is done for you, they bring it to your table. They bring you the little dipping butter, you know, with it. It’s all ready. Same thing with the fish. It is filleted, there is no bones. I think it is a treat if you are at a restaurant because you don’t have to go through all the labor and all the time it would take to prepare it yourself.”

### What do you dislike about Concept 4?

When asked what they didn’t like about Concept 4, participants mentioned the use of a Maine lobster in the image.

#### *Maine lobster*

Participants expressed annoyance and dismay at the use of a Maine lobster for a Florida seafood concept.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I can’t believe you have got a Maine lobster in a Florida seafood ad.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “So, that’s not Florida lobster.”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, “Uh, that lobster is not from Florida.”

### What would you change about Concept 4?

Participants were then asked what they would change about Concept 4 to improve it. They mentioned that they would *include Florida seafood, add customers, and conduct some wording changes*.

### *Include Florida seafood*

Participants thought that Concept 4 could be improved by using images of Florida native seafood.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “You could, instead of having those two Maine lobsters, you could have a platter of all the big shellfish..”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Yeah, I would say, I am not sure what kind of fish these are, but I would make sure that they were all fish that you could actually catch out on the Gulf.”
- A different participant from Ft. Lauderdale suggested adding “grouper, snapper, yellowtail.”
- A participant from Tampa said to “show local stuff.”
- Another participant from Tampa said, “A stone crab would be nice.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Yeah, I don’t know about the fish. Make sure they’re all Florida, that are available in the Gulf.”

### *Add customers*

Participants also suggested filling the image of the restaurant with customers.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I think also the chef holding the plate of food; he is holding it in an empty restaurant. It would be nice if the tables behind him had people so it looks like everyone is here eating this.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale suggested, “And they could show some patrons who are smiling in the background... Because some patrons with some little candles, something like that...”

### *Wording changes*

Participants suggested several different wording changes, such as removing “feel more” and “treating myself.”

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I would take out the words ‘feel more’ and have, ‘...just makes the meal special.’”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale suggested the phrase, “When dining out, enjoying the fresh Florida Gulf seafood, makes the meal special.”
- A different participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Um, if you probably wanted to make it a perception and make it stand out more, you could say, ‘I prefer’ instead of saying, ‘treating myself.’ ‘When dining out, we

prefer...my family prefers or I prefer fresh Florida...' and again, take off the 'Gulf' seafood...without putting, 'makes the meal feel more special.'"

- A participant from Orlando said, "Instead of the 'feel more special,' you could put...'makes the meal more delicious'?"

### Create a Message

Participants were asked to give ideas about what would be included in a message they would create. They were also given the opportunity to come up with new slogans. They were then asked what mode of communication they would use to disseminate their new messages.

### Content in Message

Participants were asked to describe what is important to them in a message and given the chance to come up with their own unique slogans/phrases.

### Health

Many participants suggested including concepts or words related to health and safety of seafood.

- A participant from Tampa said, "Maybe you could stick the word 'safe' in there somewhere."
- Another participant from Tampa suggested, "Or the word, 'healthy' definitely promotes the fact that it is safe, because you wouldn't say it was healthy if it wasn't, you know...safe."
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, "Maybe even the benefits of eating seafood. What are the health benefits, more specifically? We just know it's healthy for us, but the specific benefits."
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, "And I think if you push the healthy, and not just what the benefits are, but you're just saying, 'Florida Gulf seafood is healthy' or 'A good part of a healthy diet,' it implies that it's safe. So, you can mention the safe, but if you push the safe too much, then it becomes like you're suspicious. So, if you just keep saying, 'Hey, it's really healthy,' well, it must be safe."

### Family

Participants also mentioned the importance of incorporating family into seafood messaging.

- A participant from Jacksonville suggested the slogan, "Heart-healthy, local, fresh for the entire family..." Something for the entire family."
- A participant from Tampa said, "Keep your family healthy is the first focus and probably the largest purchaser of seafood. So, keeping your family healthy would be my idea of...as the first marketing."

- Another participant from Tampa said, “The one other thing I would do is, if you want to increase consumption, I think the best way to do it is to focus on families and get the kids eating it. Because those are people who are going to eat a lot of fish for a long period of time. And those are probably the people in many families that eat the least fish.”

### *Focus on Florida*

Several participants suggested incorporating images or words that emphasize that the seafood comes from Florida and not just the Gulf in general.

- A participant from Tampa said, “I would think you would have to say something that it is not only tasty, but that it promotes our economy and supports our local fishermen, you know? Because I think that is important.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Yeah, and it’s helping our economy. I think that’s important, you know?”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, “And whatever media you’re using in the campaign, any pictures or video or any kind of imagery should be obviously the Gulf Coast of Florida. It shouldn’t be ambiguous at all. If you’re going to have a picture, you might as well have that something in the background that makes it obvious.”
- A different participant from West Palm Beach said, “And focus on the Florida Gulf more so than just the Gulf itself.”

### *Phrases*

The follow quotes are individual phrases/slogans that participants came up with during the focus group sessions.

- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “I would say something like, ‘There’s nothing like seafood from the clear waters of the Florida Gulf.’”
- Another participant from West Palm Beach suggested the phrase, “To maintain a healthy lifestyle, eat Florida Gulf seafood every day.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “I am wondering if it would be too strong to say something like, you know, ‘I insist on only fresh Florida Gulf seafood as part of a healthy lifestyle at home, out...’ or however you want to wordsmith that.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “Florida’s fresh seafood is always my first choice for a healthy, delicious meal.”

- Another participant from Orlando suggested the phrase, “I love to eat healthy, fresh seafood from the Gulf.”
- A different participant from Orlando said, “I would say something for me...’Whether dining out or cooking at home, I choose fresh, Florida seafood for my healthy lifestyle.’ Something like that.”
- A different participant from Orlando suggested the phrase, “Florida Fresh, simply the best.”

### Mode of communicating new message

Participants were then asked how they would communicate the messages to other people. They mentioned through the use of *standard media outlets, tourist frequented areas, print, billboards, and in grocery stores* where seafood is purchased.

### Standard media outlets

Many participants suggested that they would disseminate seafood messaging through standard media outlets such as TV, internet, social media, and radio.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale suggested using “the television.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “I think TV, as well. I think food advertisements do well on TV.”
- A participant from Orlando suggested doing advertisements on TV “during the Superbowl.”
- A participant from Tampa suggested using “local commercials, also. TV commercials.”
- A participant from Orlando said, “Maybe like a webpage where, like a visitor’s webpage for the state of Florida or whatever. So, when they go there, they look at things to do or whatever. You can have a commercial there or whatever.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Yeah. I would say web-based ads.”
- A participant from Orlando suggested using a “seafood Facebook page. Florida seafood.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “Social media seem like the way people are going these days, though.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale thought that “radio would work.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “I would not rule out radio and put more into that. The problem with TV is everybody zaps through the commercials. So, if it’s a real short spot, like, ‘Beef, it’s what’s for dinner,’ you don’t even bother zapping through that, but if it’s this long, drawn-out commercial before it gets to the point, by the time...you zap through it. Maybe if it’s a commercial, it has to be in the very beginning, get

the point across, and then you can do all the rest. More detail. But radio...people don't zap through the radio. And it's pounding into their head while they're driving. "

### *Tourist frequented areas*

Participants suggested using areas in which tourists typically go when on vacation to Florida as a way to spread seafood messaging.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, "I would say the actual rental car places that would have it when they give out the information that shows what is near Florida."
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, "Any of the tourist info sections, when they give them the pamphlet of what is there. And on there would actually be the advertising for the seafood."
- A participant from Jacksonville suggested, "Advertisements in the airports, like when they are getting off the plane."
- A participant from Orlando said, "I probably, like she said, whatever I would do, I would kind of combine it with the fact that this is a tourist state. So, you know, 'When you come to visit Disney World, you can't leave Florida without tasting the seafood.' Something like that."
- A participant from Tampa suggested, "Putting out flyers at the hotels or something."
- Another participant from Tampa said, "Airport advertising is a good idea. If you are focusing on tourists, you know, you want to get them right when they get off the plane. 'Yeah, let's go get some Florida seafood.'"

### *Print*

Print sources, such as coupons, fliers, and newspapers were also mentioned as a way to disseminate messaging.

- A participant from Orlando suggested using "print."
- Another participant from Orlando said, "You could actually put it in a Publix flyer, I mean, as far as the buying it for home."
- A participant from Jacksonville suggested using "coupons."
- A participant from Tampa said, "The coupon flyer is a good one."
- Another participant from Tampa said, "I mean, who is not cutting coupons now?"
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, "And recipe cards, that kind of thing in a Publix."

- Another participant from West Palm Beach said, “Yeah, when Publix does the demos. They could say, ‘Use Florida Gulf Coast shrimp.’”
- A different participant from West Palm Beach suggested the use of “newspaper.”
- A participant from Tampa suggested using “groupon.”

### *Billboards*

A billboard advertisement alongside highways was another idea for promoting Florida Gulf seafood.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale suggested using “the big billboards on the road. They are always traveling and especially on the turnpike. You know, going to Orlando.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Billboards for tourists, for sure.”
- A participant from Jacksonville said, “Billboards for travelers.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “Depends on who you are targeting. If you are targeting visitors, then billboards, because I don’t see people watching as much TV if they are on vacation. They are driving around, looking around, I don’t know.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Or the turnpike, those big signs.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “I like the billboards on 95. Sometimes the traffic is monotonous and sometimes you can get yourself a lot of attention at these digital ones that are changing.”

### *Grocery stores*

Participants also mentioned that grocery stores could spread seafood messaging through videos, samples, and promotions.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Experiential marketing, have them taste it and then offer them a recipe card or something like that...an easy way to make the meal at home.”
- A participant from Tampa suggested, “In the supermarket, on a video.”
- A participant from West Palm Beach said, “Yeah, maybe through like major grocers. You know, their own flyers, would they help promote it?”

## Overarching Themes

Across all focus groups there were some overarching themes that emerged. These include *trust*, specifically a lack of trust regarding seafood quality and origin, a general *lack of knowledge of where seafood comes from*, and *price* of seafood.

### Trust

Respondents mentioned that they struggle with trusting some establishments, whether restaurants or seafood stores, when purchasing seafood. They mentioned feeling tricked or misled at grocery stores and restaurants and have concerns about regulations regarding safety of seafood. At grocery stores they mentioned not trusting the quality of the seafood, or being given seafood with misleading labels about the origin of where the seafood came from. At restaurants participants mentioned feeling that one can order a dish but be given a different type of fish.

### Grocery store

Participants mentioned a lack of trust around grocery store purchasing. Specifically, they mentioned feeling that at times grocery stores try to cover up the lack of freshness in their seafood or mislead customers by lying to them about where the seafood comes from or what type of seafood a package contains.

- A participant from Orlando said, “Here’s a thing...if they have a marinade already on it, don’t buy it. They are hiding something if they put something on it already. You know, the flavored stuff?”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Right, exactly. They have a tank in the back, they scoop it out and take it to the back, throw it in another tank and a guy is pulling out a piece of frozen fish. How do you know once it goes behind the door?”
- A participant from Orlando told a story about having felt tricked by a local grocery store: “Okay, I have a question to that, I have a comment to that...the example was shrimp...the Asian market, it is on Fifty and Pine Hills and they have seafood there, like fish and all of that stuff. But they have it in the boxes. So, we usually go there and get shrimp and the shrimp is from Ecuador. And it is really delicious shrimp. One day we went back to get the same shrimp and they didn’t put Ecuador, they put USA. So, it looks like the same, so we bought it and it wasn’t the same taste. So, we went back and we asked them, ‘Did you guys get shrimp from Ecuador?’ and they said, ‘Yes, this was the shrimp from Ecuador’ and we said, ‘No, it is USA.’ So, the guy said, ‘Hold on,’ so he went back to the box, in the back...where is it from? Ecuador, not the USA. So, it is misleading.”
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I think it’s a matter of big trust in this field, in a lot of fields, but specifically seafood. The package says one thing; it could very well be something else. And, what comes to mind immediately, is grouper and a few other fishes. You know, you’re paying top dollar for some of the things and the way some of the things are raised, and then it comes up in the news that it’s not that. You know, so you have to have faith and trust in who’s doing the inspecting, and the packaging, and the raising,

and all that stuff. So, that's why I stopped worrying about it because I'm not so sure I trust what the package says anyway."

### Restaurant

Participants also mentioned feeling misled when going to restaurants to purchase seafood dishes. Specifically, some participants mentioned that they felt that when they ordered grouper that they were provided with a different fish.

- A participant from Orlando said, "You don't know what you get, a lot of times. There has been a big problem in Florida with grouper, where people are saying it is a grouper sandwich, but it is not even a grouper fish. And I think maybe even the University of Florida has done some testing of some people around and discovered that like fifty percent of the people that are selling grouper, it wasn't even grouper. And it is not usually the restaurants fault, because a lot of that is happening on the distributor's side where they have a whole box and they deliver it to a restaurant, and it may say grouper on the outside, but it is another sort of fish that resembles grouper, but is not grouper."
- A participant from Jacksonville said, "Yeah, I might say, 'What is the fresh catch today?' or something like that. And if they tell you it is grouper, and you know it is not in season... Which I think is going on a lot, unfortunately. I think you are getting a lot of stuff in these restaurants that is not really what they say it is, sometimes."

### *Lack of knowledge of where seafood comes from*

Participants, when asked whether they order Gulf seafood in restaurants or purchase it in grocery stores often discussed how they did not know whether or not what they were purchasing came from the Gulf. They frequently mentioned that the lack of proper labeling made it hard for them to have opinions on whether or not they specifically seek out Gulf seafood over other types of seafood.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, "I'm ashamed to say I really don't know where my seafood comes from..."
- A participant from Orlando said, "It is not ever labeled."
- Another participant from Orlando said, "Yeah, you don't know really where it is coming from."
- A different participant from Orlando said, "You don't see a big sign that says, 'Fresh Gulf Seafood' anywhere. You don't even see 'Atlantic Seafood.' You really don't see a sign saying where it is from. You have to do that digging yourself."
- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, "I don't recall, when I shop for seafood, there being an overemphasis on pushing that label."

- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “You know, if they’re trying to seriously push the Gulf seafood, then they’ve got to seriously promote it. So, that someone like me might remember and say, ‘Oh, look at this package, it’s from the Gulf.’ It’s clearly labeled that way.”
- A different participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I think what they should be doing is printing like a little state of Florida...they got where it actually shows the state, like the state seal for the flags and stuff. But, that’s the only way you would be able to distinguish it off the package. Because if you look at a package, it doesn’t say it came from this state or that state; it’s just a blue package that says the name of the...whoever packaged it. And you know it’s shrimp, because you can see a clear bag and it’s got a name of a company on it, but you don’t see that it’s saying Florida, Florida Gulf on it or Louisiana Gulf, or you don’t see any of that.”

### Price

Many participants discussed how they consider price when purchasing seafood. While some try to save money as much as they can by purchasing things on sale or in bulk, others prefer spending more money for a higher quality piece of seafood. Participants were also more willing to spend money in a restaurant on high quality seafood.

- A participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “Okay. Well, I buy seafood at a grocery store; mainly Publix. And, I guess the first one would be what’s on sale, so you would follow the sign. And, then I do read the package to see where it comes from. And, as I mentioned, I mainly buy the mahi and salmon, would be the weekly staple at my house. So, location and price would be my driving factors.”
- Another participant from Ft. Lauderdale said, “I bought flounder today at GFS, it’s like a chain like a Sam’s or a Costco. Usually it’s the cost that I’m going for, because, like she said, I do a lot of shopping at Publix and Winn Dixie, too. And whatever they have on sale that week, and usually it’s always the farm raised catfish or the farm raised tilapia because they’re finding that’s getting cheaper to be able to do that. They’re getting better at it, and that’s usually what I buy. I’ll eat the oysters, the clams; whatever is on sale that week. Sometimes they have good deals on the bay scallops from the North Sea, usually that is where they are coming from. It’s price and whatever they have a deal on that week.”
- A participant from Tampa said, “I would say that, when possible, I always want to go to a fresh market and there are certain things that, at a store...price is important. So, you try to save money, but seafood tends not to be one of them. I will tend to pay more...not so concerned about the price, more concerned about the quality.”
- Another participant from Tampa said, “Cost does influence me. I have five children and so, I do have to think about the cost. And so, I tend to buy the things that...the items that are on sale. I agree, I will buy shellfish at the grocery store, but I would rather buy a good piece of fish at a market. So, the cost does affect me, influences me.”

- A participant from Orlando said, “I will pay extra [for good seafood].”
- Another participant from Orlando said, “I think, and this is probably very good marketing on the part of somebody, I will steer clear of taking my family, if we are in the mood for seafood, or anything like that...I will steer clear of places like Red Lobster or...I will tend to go ahead and pay a little more at a better, what I consider a higher end restaurant for that, just because, in my mind, I feel like Red Lobster is maybe dealing in such a high quantity...”

## Findings

### Seafood Purchasing

Overall, participants look for slightly different things when it comes to choosing a grocery store or a restaurant to purchase seafood. In grocery stores, participants like the ability to assess the quality of the seafood through observing the seafood display area and by talking to seafood counter workers. In restaurants, the type and variety of dishes that can be prepared is important, along with the quality and reputation of the restaurant. While participants thought that the oil spill and seafood availability were barriers to purchasing Gulf seafood in grocery stores, they feel that only the freshness and quality of Gulf seafood is a barrier when purchasing seafood in restaurants. Participants feel that the ability to buy local food to help the local economy is an incentive to purchase Gulf seafood whether it is in a restaurant or a grocery store.

### Information Gathering

Participants gather information and prefer to get information about seafood from a variety of places. While typical media and internet sources were mentioned, word of mouth was important to participants as was the accessibility of information at the place in which the seafood is purchased. Participants would like to have information primarily about the quality and origin of the seafood, along with nutritional information and how to prepare the seafood. Participants had a difficult time recalling commercials about seafood, but could recall commercials from BP about the Gulf oil spill and commercials made by Red Lobster.

### Logo Testing

Participants seemed to like the second logo more than the first. They appreciated the addition of the fish to make it clear that the logo was targeting seafood, and had overwhelmingly suggested the addition of a fish for the first logo. However, they think that removing the word “Gulf” from the second logo would make it less negative for those that are worried about the safety of Gulf seafood.

### Concept Testing

Overall, participants enjoyed Concept 2 the best (I indulge in delicious, fresh, Florida Gulf seafood as part of a healthy lifestyle). This concept emphasized the healthy benefits of eating Gulf seafood. Participants also liked the second sentence of Concept 1, (I choose Florida Gulf seafood at home because my family and friends love the taste and variety. *Plus, being*

*in Florida, I know it's fresh and easy to find locally*) which emphasized the fresh, local aspect of Florida Gulf seafood (see Appendix B). Most participants did not relate to Concept 3 (I like to create new, fresh Florida Gulf seafood recipes to share with my family and friends and show off my cooking skills), which emphasized showing off one's cooking skills through cooking Gulf seafood and many did not respond strongly to Concept 4 one way or another (When dining out, treating myself to fresh Florida Gulf seafood makes the meal feel more special). When asked to create their own messages or to describe what was most impactful to them in a message about seafood, participants talked about the importance of emphasizing the health and safety of Gulf seafood and felt that messages should demonstrate how Gulf seafood can be shared and enjoyed by the entire family.

## Overarching Themes

There were three overarching themes: trust, lack of knowledge of where seafood comes from, and price. Participants appear to have a general lack of trust about whom they purchase their seafood from. They worry about being served the wrong dish in a restaurant, or being misled into purchasing seafood that is not fresh or foreign in grocery stores.

Participants have skepticism for farm raised or foreign seafood but are unsure where their seafood originates from, mainly due to the lack of labeling on packages or in restaurants. Participants are also sensitive to the high prices of some seafood, but some are willing to pay higher prices for what they consider to be high quality food.

## Recommendations

Overall, findings from this study suggest several brand attributes, message and position strategies that can be used to enhance purchase of Gulf seafood and improve perceptions after the DWH oil spill.

### Brand attributes

- With respect to seafood in general, consumers value freshness, health, variety, quality, the fact that seafood is less heavy than other meats, and helping the local economy. These are all brand attributes that can be connected to Florida seafood via communications elements, and they are consistent with other studies and market research surveys in this area.
- There is some recognition of Fresh from Florida as a brand, and it does connect with seafood in consumers' minds. They have some issues with the word "from," which has come up in other research the PIE Center has conducted around the state. Perhaps a slight word change would be appropriate and help the overall brand extension effort as FDACS seeks to use the FFF brand with other Florida agricultural products. For seafood, consumers want to associate FFF with purchase in Florida, and the word "from" suggests it is going elsewhere to them.
- Trust remains a huge factor for consumers. This is a general, well-known trend in food purchase behavior, but consumers still connect trust to some extent to the oil spill and to lack of knowledge about where seafood comes from. Lacking that knowledge, they look for proxies, such as the seafood counter salesperson, the local restaurant, and brands that somehow signify "local" to them. Utilizing these proxies in communication could enhance consumers' trust perceptions of Florida seafood.

- Interestingly, consumers do not like the word “Gulf” and don’t want to be reminded of what was in the Gulf in connection to Florida seafood. Gulf has no brand value for them, possibly because the Gulf is a five state body of water, consumers on the Atlantic side don’t relate to it, and it is a reminder consumers would like to avoid. Those who still want to consume it but lack knowledge about whether to trust its safety may either avoid or look for some way in which they can eat what they want and rationalize that it is sufficiently safe. Focusing on trust and avoiding mention of Gulf in favor of Florida seafood would be a way to tie into consumers’ need to feel that what they want to eat is safe.

### Message strategy

- Consumers liked various aspects of the concept messages that were tested. Concept boards are not actual messages, so it is common that wording or image elements are picked out as not congruent with consumers’ perceptions. However, it is overall favorability and cues that consumers respond to that is important. Concept one and two clearly were favorably perceived by consumers, and ideas consumers came up with corresponded to these concepts as well.
- Consumers don’t want to be overtly told that seafood is safe or healthy. Too direct a focus on these attributes causes skepticism and distrust. They would rather be given enough information to come to that conclusion themselves. This is attitude activation, which creates more awareness of the message on consumers’ part, encourages information processing, and influences attitude and purchase intent when combined with the right brand attributes. The sections of the findings where consumers talk about the messages has a lot of rich info on how consumers process information about seafood that can be used to craft messaging using this approach.
- FDACS should consider leveraging consumers’ desire for trusted in-store information to include seafood counter markers so the seafood from Florida waters could be marked. The current campaign could be expanded to include seafood counter workers and package markers in order to educate them and encourage them to mark packages of seafood with the location of origin. Seafood counter workers could be educated about where different seafood comes from in order to inform customers through word of mouth about which seafood choices are local Florida choices. Since many participants talked about feeling it was worthwhile and important to support the local economy and local fishermen, knowing that the seafood comes from the Florida may encourage and increase purchasing and consumption. Also, since many participants discussed that they prefer to get their information about seafood through word of mouth and their general trust of seafood counter workers makes this a potential strategy to both alleviate distrust and inform the public about seafood origin.

### Positioning

- From a positioning standpoint, it seems clear that the local aspect, combined with freshness, being outdoors and health are the elements that resonate with consumers.
- A specific recommendation stemming from this would be to make sure when developing communications materials to use Florida native fish and to incorporate “Florida outdoor activities” such as fishing, walking on

the beach, or grilling outside in order to position Florida seafood as local, healthy, and fresh. This can be used to enhance the information relevance for consumers, which will help them attend to the message more easily and influence their attitude and purchase intent.

- When creating images of commercials, FDACS should consider using images of families and gatherings of friends to portray messages about eating seafood, as participants responded very positively to images of social gatherings. They also explicitly suggested adding images of family and friends to new messages.
- When creating slogans or commercials, FDACS should consider mentioning that buying seafood from Florida waters supports the local economy and local fishermen. Supporting the local economy was one of the incentives that participants mentioned drove their seafood purchasing behavior.

## Appendix A: Logos

Logo 1



Logo 2



## Appendix B: Concept 1

I choose Florida Gulf seafood at home because my family and friends love the taste and variety. Plus, being in Florida, I know it's fresh and easy to find locally.



## Appendix C: Concept 2

I indulge in delicious, fresh, Florida Gulf seafood as part of a healthy lifestyle.



### Appendix D: Concept 3

I like to create new, fresh Florida Gulf seafood recipes to share with my family and friends and show off my cooking skills.



## Appendix E: Concept 4

When dining out, treating myself to fresh Florida Gulf Seafood makes the meal feel more special.

