A Guide for Consumer Insights
and Innovation Managers
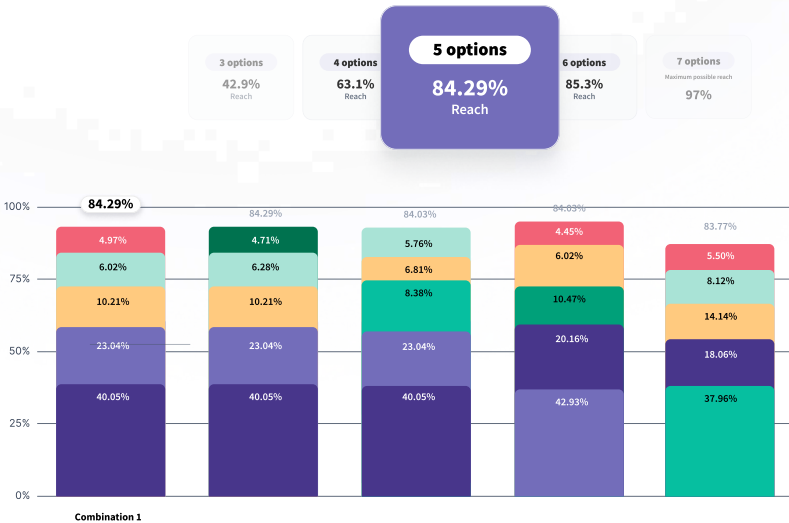
Maximizing Reach with TURF

sight·x

The Effortless All-In-One Consumer Research Platform

Table of Contents

Introduction

In an age of diverse consumer preferences, and constrained budgets, reaching your target audience efficiently can be challenging yet crucial. Consumer insights managers are increasingly expected to deliver strategic guidance that impacts product development, marketing, and portfolio management, and that has the potential to maximize return on investment.

That's where TURF analysis (Total Unduplicated Reach and Frequency) can play a major role in product innovation. This guide unpacks the full value of TURF analysis, not just as a tactical tool, but as a strategic framework for decision-making.
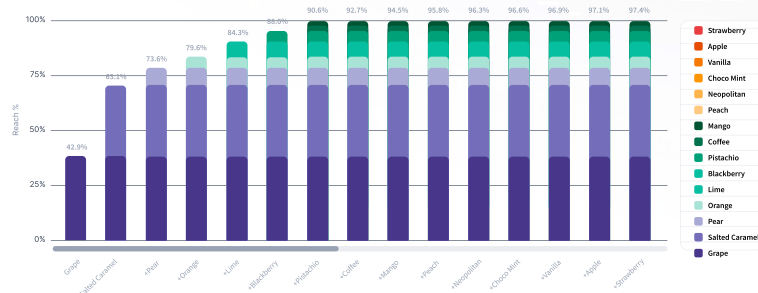
Understanding TURF

Learn how TURF maximizes reach by identifying the optimal mix of products, messages, or channels.

TURF EXPLAINED IN A FEW WORDS

TURF analysis is a statistical technique that helps identify the optimal combination of products, messages, or media placements to maximize unique reach within a target audience. Unlike raw reach metrics, TURF accounts for audience overlap, ensuring you're not counting the same person multiple times, and helps prevent wasted spend through redundancy.

In other words, TURF isn't just about reach, it's about *efficient* reach. For organizations juggling many potential combinations (e.g., SKUs, messages, ads), TURF ensures you're selecting the mix that reaches the most people with the least redundancy.

CORE CONCEPTS: UNDERSTANDING REACH, FREQUENCY, AND UNDUPLICATION

Before diving into the math, consumer insights professionals need a firm grasp of these three interlocking concepts:

- **Reach:** The number of unique individuals exposed to a message or product.

- **Frequency:** The number of times these individuals are exposed.

- **Unduplicated Reach:** The distinct count of individuals reached across multiple options, discounting any overlap.

Why TURF Matters

See how TURF prevents overlap and expands reach for more effective insights.

AMID INFINITE CHOICES AND FINITE BUDGETS, REACH MATTERS.

It's not enough to know which single message, flavor, or product variation is most popular overall, you need to know which combination will maximize your audience while minimizing overlap.

Take advertising, for example. Imagine you're testing five ad messages. If you simply select the top three performers, you might end up with messages that all resonate with the same audience segment, leaving a large portion of your market untouched. TURF analysis goes a step further: it helps you choose the three ads that not only perform well but also extend your reach to the broadest and most diverse set of consumers.

The same logic applies to product development. If you're launching a new beverage line, TURF helps you identify the mix of flavors that will appeal to the widest base of customers without wasting resources on overlapping preferences. Instead of three "top" flavors that all attract the same 20% of buyers, you might discover a set that collectively covers 60% of the market.

In short, TURF matters because it surfaces the true incremental value of each option, whether that's a message, a product, or a distribution channel. By focusing on reach and unduplicated impact, it ensures your decisions don't just look good on paper but actually maximize market penetration and business results.
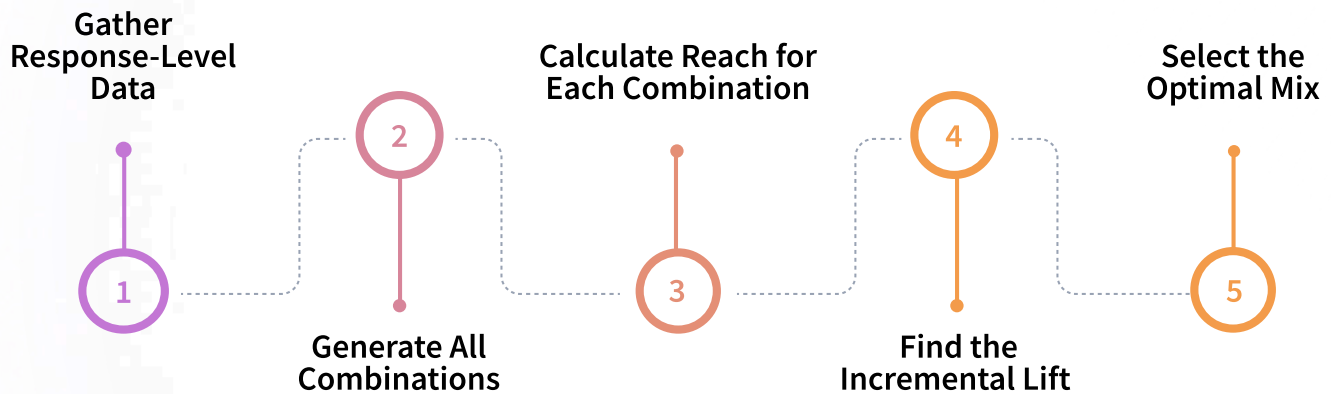
How TURF Works

Follow a clear process to apply TURF with confidence and accuracy.

Here's how to structure a TURF analysis from the ground up:

Gather
Response-Level
Data

2

Calculate Reach for
Each Combination

4

Select the
Optimal Mix

1

3

5

Generate All
Combinations

Find the
Incremental Lift

1.Gather Response-Level Data

Collect individual-level data on preferences, interest, or exposure likelihood for each product, message, or media type.

- **Best Source:** Surveys with multi-response questions (e.g., "Which of the following flavors would you consider purchasing?").

- **Optional Sources:** CRM logs, campaign tracking, clickstream data, digital exposure modeling.

2.Generate All Combinations

If you have six product flavors and want to test combinations of three, you'll generate all possible three-item combos (20 in this case). This expands exponentially with more items, so automation via platforms like SightX is critical.

3.Calculate Reach for Each Combination

For each combination:

- **Identify** how many unique individuals would be reached (at least one product or message selected).

- **Deduct** overlap where individuals choose more than one option.

4.Find the Incremental Lift

Add items to each combination iteratively and calculate the marginal gain in reach. Stop when adding a new item provides negligible additional reach or exceeds resource constraints.

5.Select the Optimal Mix

Choose the combination that gives you the highest total unduplicated reach. That's your winner.

TURF in Action

Learn from a scenario that shows TURF driving smarter product, message, and channel choices.

SCENARIO

You are testing five potential soft drink flavors and want to launch the best three to maximize appeal.

SURVEY RESULTS SHOW

- Lemon (30%)
- Lime (25%)
- Raspberry (35%)
- Peach (20%)
- Mango (40%)

COMBINATION ANALYSIS:

- **Combo A:** Lemon, Lime, Mango
  - Raw sum = 30% + 25% + 40% = 95%
  - Assuming 10% overlap per pair → Deduct 30%
  - Total unduplicated reach = 65%

- **Combo B:** Raspberry, Peach, Mango
  - Raw sum = 35% + 20% + 40% = 95%
  - With 10% overlap → Deduct 30%
  - Total unduplicated reach = 65%

Combination A **Combination B**

65%
Reach

65%
Reach

Options
- Lemon
- Lime
- Mango

Options
- Raspberry
- Peach
- Mango

Here, both deliver the same reach, but perhaps one resonates better with your strategic segments (e.g., Gen Z vs. Boomers). Insights managers can layer in segmentation filters for even deeper value.

When to Use TURF

Discover practical situations where TURF gives you an edge in market strategy.

🚀 Optimizing Product Portfolios

Use TURF to determine the mix of offerings (flavors, SKUs, sizes) that maximize appeal while avoiding internal cannibalization.

EXAMPLE

CPG brands regularly use TURF to determine which three or four flavors to keep on-shelf during a seasonal SKU refresh.

📢 Message and Creative Testing

Don't just ask "Which message do people like?" Instead, ask "Which three messages together reach the most people?"

EXAMPLE

Your brand team may be testing six creative directions, and TURF helps you select the top two or three to deploy in your omnichannel campaign.

⊞ Media Planning

Determine the right mix of platforms (TV, YouTube, TikTok, email, OOH) to maximize unique impressions and avoid costly duplication.

EXAMPLE

TURF can quantify how much unique reach TikTok adds to your media plan vs. other digital channels.

✨ Feature Prioritization for Product Development

Use TURF to guide MVP development. What three features get you to 70% appeal vs. the five that only boost it to 72%?

EXAMPLE

For a wearable fitness tracker, you may discover that step-counting + sleep-tracking + mobile sync reach 85% of your audience, while more advanced features (heart rate variability, oxygen saturation) add only marginal reach.

Competitive Gap Analysis

Compare TURF maps of your brand vs. competitors. Are there consumer segments or preference combinations they're missing that you could own?

In Conclusion

For consumer insights managers, TURF is more than an analytical method, it's a decision accelerator. Whether you're selecting the right products, prioritizing ad creative, or choosing media channels, TURF analysis ensures your choices are data-driven, reach-maximizing, and efficient.

When embedded in a platform like SightX, TURF becomes a real-time engine for optimizing every touchpoint in the consumer journey, and before your competitors do.
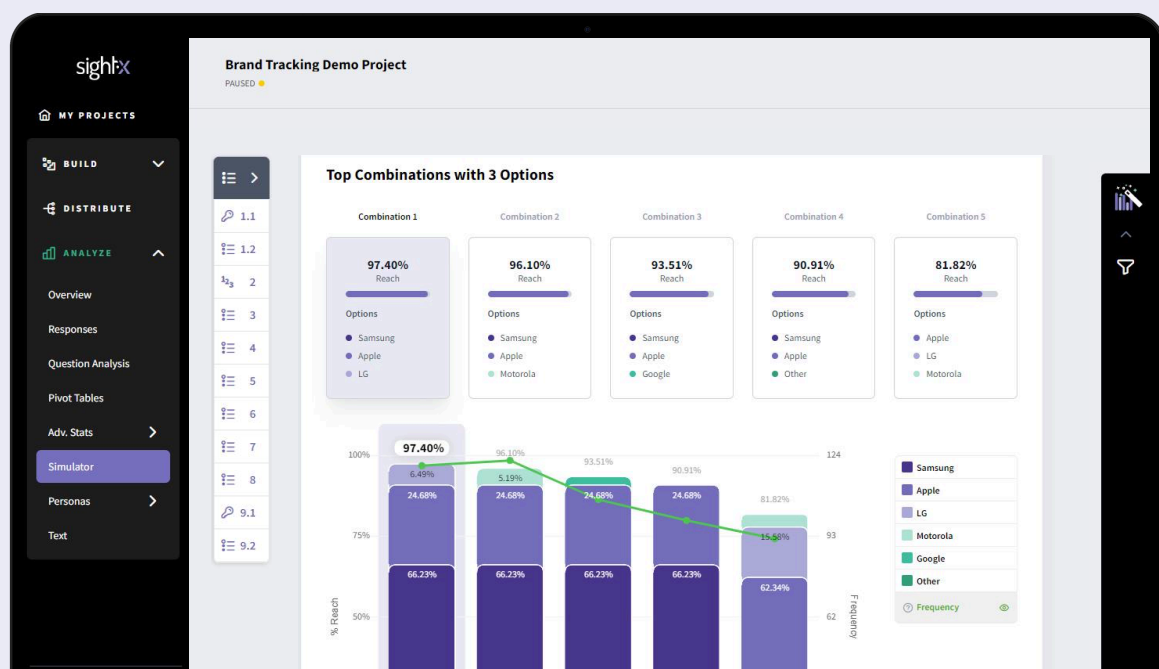
About us

SightX is an all-in-one consumer research platform that combines advanced survey methodologies with a user-friendly experience, automated analysis, and visualization to deliver real-time insights.

With access to over 100 million qualified consumers worldwide, it offers a comprehensive suite of tools—including audience segmentation, concept testing, and pricing strategy optimization, among others—to support any research use case and any team.

SightX by Ada, a generative AI-powered research consultant, will streamline the research process by quickly analyzing open-ended responses and creating executive summaries with a single click.

Access in-depth, automated insights and fuel your growth with the SightX consumer research platform that puts you in the driver's seat of success.

Want to learn more? Schedule a free demo, or reach out to us at hello@sightx.io.

sight·x

Join the Future of Consumer Research

Learn how