

Qualitative Research Instrument 1 – Costco Member Guided Interview

Objective

To understand how Costco members perceive, evaluate, and respond to the “Kirkland Premium” concept. More specifically, this interview is designed to get detailed opinions on perceptions of having a curated online landing page featuring limited-time drops of dried fruits and nuts compared with their in-store experiences. The goal is to uncover what drives purchase intent, trust, and perceived value for Kirkland’s sustainable and premium products.

Estimated Interview Length: 30–40 minutes

Format: Semi-structured, one-on-one interview (virtual or in-person)

Participants: Costco members aged 25–65, with a mix of in-store regulars, hybrid shoppers, and online-first members.

Introduction

Hi, my name is _____, and I’m conducting a short research interview to better understand how Costco members experience and think about Kirkland products, especially in newer, premium categories like dried fruits and nuts.

This conversation should take about 30–40 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers. We’re just interested in your honest opinions and experiences. Your responses will be used only for research purposes, and your name won’t be shared in any report. I’ll be recording this session only for note-taking accuracy. You can skip any question you don’t feel comfortable answering.

Demographics

- What is your age range? (25–34 / 35–44 / 45–54 / 55–65)
- Which country do you live in?
- How long have you been a Costco member?
- What are the main reasons you shop at Costco? (e.g., price, quality, convenience, trust, specific products)

Category and Product Perceptions

- When you think of the Kirkland brand, what words or phrases come to mind?
- What kinds of Kirkland Signature products do you usually buy?
- Do you currently buy dried fruits or nuts? If so, how often and from where?
- Have you ever purchased Kirkland’s dried fruits or nuts? If yes, what stood out about them?
- When you see words like “organic,” “premium,” or “sustainably packaged” on a Kirkland item, what comes to mind?
- How do you usually decide between a Kirkland product and a national brand?
- In your experience, what makes a snack or grocery product feel “premium”?

- Are there times when a Kirkland product has surprised you with its quality? It could be good or bad. What happened?

Online vs. In-Store Experience

- How would you describe your typical Costco in-store experience? What makes it enjoyable or frustrating?
- How often do you typically shop at Costco in-store versus online?
- If yes, what comes to mind when you think of Costco's website or app experience?
- Do you feel the same level of excitement or discovery when shopping online as you do in the warehouse? Why or why not?
- If Costco created a "Kirkland Premium" landing page online that featured limited-time product drops, for example, special editions of dried fruits and nuts, what would attract your attention the most? Product quality, storytelling, scarcity, or something else?
- How would you expect such a page to look or feel in order to make you want to purchase?
- Would you be more likely to add those items to your cart, try them once, or reorder them later?

Value, Trust, and Sustainability

- How much do you trust Kirkland products compared to other brands? What builds that trust for you?
- How important is sustainability to you when buying food items like dried fruits and nuts? Would sustainable packaging or sourcing influence your decision to pay a bit more? Why or why not?
- When you see claims like "organic" or "ethically sourced," do you usually believe them? What helps you decide if they feel genuine?
- How do you feel about Costco promoting premium or sustainable products under the Kirkland label?

Closing and Reflection

- What could Costco do to make shopping for Kirkland products online more enjoyable or trustworthy?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience with Kirkland or Costco's online platform?
- If you could give Costco one piece of advice for improving Kirkland's premium product line, what would it be?

Qualitative Research Instrument 2 – Costco Staff Guided Interview

Objective

To understand Costco employees' and managers' perspectives on the “Kirkland Premium” concept, particularly the idea of a curated online landing page featuring limited-time drops of dried fruits and nuts. This interview aims to explore staff views on customer behavior, product positioning, and operational feasibility to complement the member interviews.

Estimated Length: 25–30 minutes

Format: Semi-structured, one-on-one interview (virtual or in-person)

Participants: Costco employees or managers involved in merchandising, e-commerce, marketing, or category management.

Introduction

Hi, my name is _____, and I'm conducting a short research interview about Costco's Kirkland Signature brand to understand how members and staff perceive the potential for premium and sustainable Kirkland products like dried fruits and nuts.

This conversation should take about 25–30 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers. I'm simply interested in your professional insights and observations based on your experience working with Costco members and products. Your responses will remain confidential, and no individual names or store locations will be included in any report.

Demographics

- What is your age range? (25–34 / 35–44 / 45–54 / 55–65)
- Which country do you live in?
- How long have you worked at Costco?
- Can you tell me a bit about your role? What are your main responsibilities related to merchandising, operations, or customer engagement?

Kirkland Brand and Product Strategy

- How would you describe the Kirkland Signature brand in your own words?
- What factors do you think make Kirkland successful compared to national brands?
- How do you see sustainability and “premium” positioning fitting into Kirkland's brand image?
- From your perspective, what do customers value most about Costco and the Kirkland brand?

- Have you noticed increased interest or demand for organic, plant-based, or sustainable food products, especially snacks like dried fruits and nuts?

Online vs. In-Store Member Behavior

- What differences do you observe between how customers shop for Kirkland products in-store versus online, if there's any?
- Warehouse wholesalers like Costco are known to give customers the “treasure-hunt” feel. In your experience, what makes in person shopping at Costco stand out?
- If Costco were to launch a “Kirkland Premium” landing page featuring limited-time product drops, what do you think would make it appealing or effective?
- What challenges might arise when promoting premium Kirkland products online?

Closing Reflection

- What advice would you give Costco's marketing or merchandising teams about balancing affordability, quality, and sustainability in the Kirkland brand?
- If you could make one change to how Kirkland products are presented online, what would it be?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share about member behavior, product performance, or ideas for evolving the Kirkland brand?