

**VITAL PROTEINS®**



# BRAND AUDIT REPORT

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*Figure 1: Vital Proteins Collagen Peptides Advanced*

## Executive Summary

This brand audit is compiled for Vital Proteins, a leading collagen supplement and wellness company. Vital Proteins is a health and wellness brand established in 2013 that provides everything from collagen powders to vitamins to functional foods. Its Chicago-based headquarters is majority owned by Nestlé Health Science and is constantly growing its presence in the global wellness market.

The objective of this study is to assess Vital Proteins brand positioning and image by looking at both primary and secondary data regarding internal and external brand elements. Data were first collected through a Qualtrics survey inspired by the author based on strategies discussed in *The Brand Relationship Playbook* by Dr. Marc Fetscherin (2020). The 15-question survey covered brand awareness, brand perception, positioning, net promoter score and brand personality of Vital Proteins and competitors. Secondary data provided a detailed overview and analysis of Vital Proteins' branding, connections, and brand strategies in the past.

It is clear from the data that Vital Proteins is viewed well for quality and health advantages, aligning seamlessly with its focus in wellness. However, there are still challenges in branding it apart from the competition in a highly saturated supplement marketplace and further building its brand identity as a premium and essential wellness brand.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The Company

Vital Proteins was started in 2013 by the aerospace engineer Kurt Seidensticker, who came up with the company because of his own running-related joint pain. Seidensticker found the answer to his problem in collagen and figured there was a market for collagen supplements in general. Ever since, Vital Proteins began to take the health market by storm and become one of the most prominent wellness brands in the collagen supplement space (Chicago Tribune, 2020). The company’s vision is to be healthy, wellness and beautiful inside with superior collagen products for skin, hair, nails, joints and overall health. Vital Proteins has grown exponentially over the years and is now America’s No.1 collagen brand (Nestlé Health Science,2022).

### 1.1.2 Corporate Structure, Leadership, and Ownership

Nestlé Health Science acquired Vital Proteins with a majority stake in 2020 and is using Nestlé’s resources globally to scale (Nestlé Health Science, 2022). The company, Vital Proteins, is still privately run out of their Chicago headquarters despite this purchase. Kurt Seidensticker had stayed as CEO but then switched to advisory. Tracey Warner Halama, Chief Revenue Officer and President of Vital Proteins, is now CEO after Seidensticker’s departure (BevNet, 2023). Halama has managed to expand its product portfolio and innovate under his leadership, without forgetting about the ingredients.

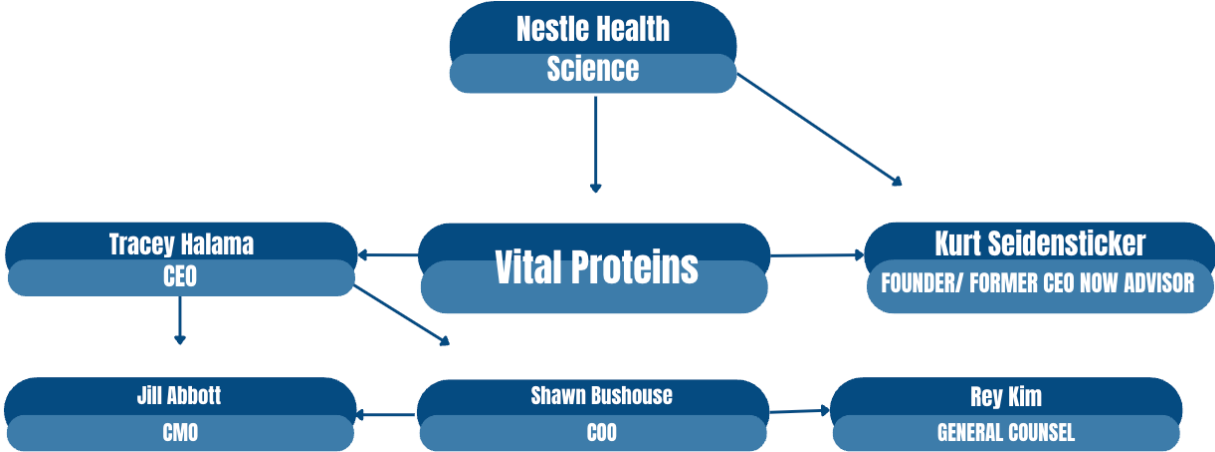


Figure 2: Vital Proteins Corporate Structure

### 1.1.3 Main Products or Services Overview

Vital Proteins' line of collagen-based products cater to a variety of consumer health and wellness requirements. The company's flagship item is their Collagen Peptides which are still the most popular product. Along with collagen powders, Vital Proteins has added beauty products (Hair Complex and Skin Complex), nutrition bars, collagen drinks, and coffee creamers (Vital Proteins, 2024). These are products to help support joint health, skin elasticity, hair health, and general health. It also launched Vital Performance, a line of active consumer products designed for athletes and sports enthusiasts (Nestlé Health Science, 2022).



Figure 3: Vital Proteins Product Offering

### 1.1.4 Key Figures of the Company

It is estimated to be around 450 people in total who work at Vital Proteins headquarters and manufacturing plants in 2024 (Chicago Tribune, 2020). It has a 40,000-square-foot office in Chicago's Fulton Market neighborhood and a factory in Franklin Park. Vital Proteins has taken off since its inception by Nestlé Health Science. It earned more than \$250 million a year in 2020 alone, and it is projected to grow 80 per cent in 2020 (Chicago Tribune, 2020). Featuring in more than 70,000 retailers worldwide (Whole Foods Market, Target, Walmart, CVS) Vital Proteins is increasing in store and online (BevNet, 2023).

## 1.2 The Industry

### 1.2.1 Global and National Industry Overview

This collagen supplement market in the global market is expanding at a high pace because of the rising demand for health and beauty supplements that combats the signs of aging, arthritis, and skin care. Global collagen supplement market size was USD 1.65 billion in 2024 and will increase to USD 3.08 billion by 2034 at a CAGR of 6.4% (Future Market Insights, 2024). The we drive this market and will grow at a CAGR of 6.2% until 2034 (Future Market Insights, 2024). This rise is based on consumer awareness for collagen supplements as health-conscious and old-age consumers become more interested in it.

Brand	COO	Sales (as of Nov 2024)	# of Employees	Principle Products
Vital Proteins	USA	\$75M	201-500	Collagen supplements, including powders, capsules, and beverages
Ancient Nutrition	USA	\$35M	152	Collagen supplements, bone broth protein, probiotics, and herbal supplements.
NeoCell	USA	\$282M	5000-10000	Collagen supplements, including powders, capsules, and chews.
Absolute Collagen	UK	\$23M	60	Marine collagen supplements in liquid sachets
Youtheory	USA	\$34.9M	56	Collagen supplements, Turmeric, and other health supplements.

Table 1: Competitive Analysis (Glassdoor.com)

### 1.2.2 Industry Life Cycle and Competition Report

The collagen dietary supplement market is at the expansion phase of its lifecycle. This segment has expanded in recent years because there is more science supporting collagen’s health, and consumers want preventive care. As the industry develops, product development and diversification will drive growth. Companies are experimenting more and more with R&D in order to launch novel product types such as gummies, beverages, and powders with native fruits and other ingredients (Technavio, 2023).



### 1.2.3 Porter's Five Forces Model of Vital Proteins

Porter's Five Forces is a strategy used to determine the competitive environment of an industry. Understanding these forces, for Vital Proteins, one of the largest collagen supplement players, enables us to understand where the company is today and what the future holds for the industry.

#### 1. Threat of New Entrants: Moderate

The threat of newcomers to the collagen supplements business is mild. This space is booming because people want to buy more wellness products, but there are several inoculations that guard major players such as Vital Proteins. These include:

**Loyalty:** Vital Proteins has an established brand and celebrity endorsements (Jennifer Aniston) and retailer relationships (Nestlé Health Science, 2022).

**Economies of scale:** Bigger companies can manufacture more cheaper as they are bigger, so there is no competition on price for new players.

**Compliance:** Safety and health rules can be expensive and time-consuming to adhere to for start-ups (Allied Market Research, 2023).

But with the emergence of e-commerce, there is now a ceiling and small brands can go direct-to-consumer. Smaller niche players can also make themselves unique by catering to niche consumers like vegan or plant-based collagen (Mordor Intelligence, 2024).

#### 2. Threat of Replacement: Moderate to Low.

– Risk of collagen supplement substitutes is minimal to negligible. Other supplements do in fact advertise health benefits of this sort (e.g., protein powders to build muscle or hyaluronic acid to hydrate the skin), but there is nothing quite like collagen for joint health, skin elasticity, and overall vitality. This science makes collagen an all-time favorite among consumers looking for these very results (Allied Market Research, 2023). Yet there's a new alternative threat: veganism, which is on the rise. Since conventional collagen comes from meat or fish, vegetarians and vegans may want something more like plant-based protein powder or artificial collagen (Future Market Insights, 2024). This might be what will make people look for new vegan alternatives down the road.

#### 3. Bargaining Power of Suppliers: Moderate

The suppliers' bargaining power is limited in the collagen supplement market. The collagen comes mostly from animal by-products (e.g., cow hides and fish pelts), and there are many suppliers around the world. This variety reduces supplier power somewhat. However, getting premium ingredients — grass-fed bovine hides, or wild-caught fish, for example — means there's usually a handful of trusted suppliers for premium brands like Vital Proteins. Since it is a transparent and sustainable business,

the company has to use suppliers with high quality standards which could give those suppliers more sway (Chicago Tribune, 2020). Further, raw material price changes based on environmental variables or supply chain disruption can affect the price.

#### 4. Bargaining Power of Buyers: High

Buying power in the collagen supplement space is powerful for a few reasons:

**Availability of products:** As consumers can avail various collagen products from various brands, they don't need to stay stuck on one brand.

**Cost-perception:** Collagen products are seen as premium products at a higher price point. Then users can switch brands for the sake of cost or discounts.

**Access to information:** Consumers are very aware of product quality and prices due to the e-commerce and social media reviews. They are more willing to negotiate with this openness as they compare products before buying (Allied Market Research, 2023).

Vital Proteins tame this by having numerous different product offerings to accommodate every individual (for example, Beauty Supplements vs Fitness Products) and strong brand awareness through marketing.

#### 5. Competitive Rivalry: High

The collagen supplement market is crowded with competitors, both established and new players fighting for market share. Principal competitors Ancient Nutrition, Neocell, Youtheory and Absolute Collagen all produce products similar products, aimed at the health-conscious consumer (Mordor Intelligence, 2024).

Vital Proteins stands out due to the large product line and solid brand presence with celebrity endorsements and partnerships with the likes of Whole Foods Market and Target (Nestlé Health Science, 2022). But competitors are also coming up with new product formats (gummies, instant-serve drinks) and different consumer groups (athletes, beauty-lovers).



Figure 4: Vital Proteins Gummies (from vitalproteins.com)

#### 1.2.4 Analysis of the Collagen Supplement Industry’s Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI)

A popular index of market concentration is the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) — which was determined by adding together the squares of market shares of all the major player companies in an industry. For the collagen supplement space, market share by available data on IBIS World is 25% Vital Proteins, The Nature’s Bounty Co. (15%) Ancient Nutrition (10%) Youtheory (8%), Bulletproof (7%), and competitors combined at 35%.

A HHI score of 2,288 is an intermediate market, as the U.S. Department of Justice describes it, and scores between 1,500 and 2,500 are moderately concentrated markets. Vital Proteins’ large market share makes it the king of the jungle and contributes to the HHI. Other large companies including The Nature’s Bounty Co. and Ancient Nutrition also hold significant shares, but the 35% share by smaller players shows the fragmentation and constant rivalry of the industry (Investopedia, n.d.).

This moderate concentration is reflective of a level playing field where some strong players live side by side with a lot of minor players. New consumer trend in health and wellness keeps the demand for collagen supplements high, which ensures growth opportunities for both new and seasoned brands. The industry has enough variation to forestall monopoly without hampering innovation (IBISWorld, 2024).

Company	Market Share (%)	HHI Contribution
Vital Proteins	25	$25^2 = 625$
The Nature's Bounty	15	$15^2 = 225$
Ancient Nutrition	10	$10^2 = 100$
Youtheory	8	$8^2 = 64$
Bulletproof	7	$7^2 = 49$
Other Competitors	35	$35^2 = 1,225$
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,288</b>

Table 2: Collagen Supplement Industry HHI (IBISWorld Collagen Supplement Market Data)

### 1.2.8 Key Competitors: Points of Parity (POP) & Points of Difference (POD)

The comparison of Vital Proteins and its competitors' Key Points of Parity (POP) and Points of Difference (POD) shows Vital Proteins brand competitive position in the collagen market. Vital Proteins' first POP consists of its premium collagen derived from grass-fed bovine hides and an abundance of other products, consistent with industry standards for quality and variety. Such qualities give collagen brands credibility and adhere to what consumers want. Yet Vital Proteins stands out thanks to several PODs, not least of which is their strong celebrity support, like Jennifer Aniston who gives brand recognition and legitimacy.

Also, it's sourcing is transparent and has a large U.S. retail footprint with stores in Target, Costco, etc giving it an advantage because it becomes more accessible and trusted. Competitors such as Ancient Nutrition focus on wider health benefits, like the ancient superfoods like bone broth, while NeoCell targets beauty-minded users through retail partnerships. Revive Collagen benefits from luxury positioning with liquid collagen shots and Absolute Collagen focuses on direct-to-consumer subscription.

Overall Vital Proteins' POP-POD hybrid sets Vital Proteins apart as a premium brand that has product diversity, marketing and access to address diverse customer demands.

Brand	Points of Parity (POP)	Points of Difference (POD)
<b>Vital Proteins</b>	High-quality collagen sourced from grass-fed bovine hides Wide variety of products	Celebrity endorsements, Strong US retail presence Transparency in sourcing
<b>Ancient Nutrition</b>	Collagen peptides from grass-fed cows Focus on joint health & skin benefits	Emphasis on ancient superfoods (bone broth) Broader focus on holistic wellness beyond just collagen
<b>Noecell</b>	Hydrolyzed collagen peptides Available in powder & capsule forms	Focus on beauty from within Strong presence in beauty-oriented retailers
<b>Revive Collagen</b>	Marine-based collagen focus on skin health	Liquid collagen shots targeting beauty-conscious consumers premium positioning
<b>Absolute Collagen</b>	Marine-based collagen peptides	Direct-to-consumer model with personalized subscription services

Table 3: POP & POD

### 1.2.9 Trends Shaping the Industry

Here are a few of the trends in collagen supplementation for the future:

**Beauty-from-within:** With the trend of people seeking ingestion-based cosmetics to fight skin aging from within. This has created an uptick in the demand for beauty collagen supplements, such as Revive Collagen and Absolute Collagen (Mordor Intelligence, 2024).

**Functional Foods:** Collagen foods and drinks are rising as consumers search for easy ways to integrate supplements into their diet.

**Sustainability:** With the rising environmental issues, brands now focus on sustainable source for raw materials. Collagens made from the ocean are gaining in popularity because they appear to be more eco-friendly than the bovine ones (Technavio, 2023).

Vital Proteins is in an edgy, but evolving space with the potential for growth through product development and international expansion. It has leveraged its affluent brand, celebrity support and high-quality sourcing to be a market leader in the collagen supplement industry globally.



Figure 5: WWD (Women's Wear Daily): TikTok's Top 10 Fastest-growing Wellness Trends

## 1.3 The Consumer

### 1.3.1 Target Markets

Vital Proteins is more of a wellness, beauty and active lifestyle brand with healthy consumers. The original brand target was millennial 25-34 year old women, who were attracted to collagen supplements for their claims to support skin health, hair health, and joint health (Similarweb, 2024). But the brand has since expanded its customer base to a wider age group and gender range. "We now aim to make collagen supplements a wellness product accessible to more people, from men to seniors, who can harness collagen's joint and bone health benefits," Vital Proteins' Chief Marketing Officer Jill Abbott told me (MediaPost, 2023).

### 1.3.2 STP Model: Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning

Vital Proteins uses Segmentation-Targeting-Positioning (STP) method to target its consumers.

**Market Segmentation:** The brand segment their market by demographics (age, gender), psychographics (health conscious) and behavior characteristics (wanting to buy beauty and wellness products). The largest segment are 25-34-year-olds but also the older population who are worried about their health and joints. Psychologically, the brand is for those who value the use of natural ingredients and sustainable practices in their daily lives.

**Targeting:** Vital Proteins' primary demographic now exceeds millennial women and now encompasses men and women 25-54. This change comes from the increased knowledge about collagen's beautifying and health and wellness advantages. Its products are made to cater to those who take action to keep themselves looking and feeling good by using natural supplements (MediaPost, 2023).

**Positioning:** Vital Proteins is a premium wellness brand with high-quality collagen products based on grass-fed bovine skins and wild-caught fish. In the marketing campaigns, the brand is all about openness, environmental sustainability, and scientifically validated benefits. Its position is further underwritten by celebrity endorsements from the likes of Jennifer Aniston, which make the brand trustworthy and goal-driven (Hello Magazine, 2024).

### 1.3.3 Consumer Profile(s)

Vital Proteins' typical customer is the kind of person who takes their wellness seriously and takes action to ensure that she is. Most website visitors to Vital Proteins are female (58.15%), aged 25-34 (41.85%) (Similarweb, 2024). These are the people who will be highly educated and have money to shell out for high-quality wellness products. They want collagen to support skin, joints and overall vitality long term. Not only that, many of these consumers are swayed by social media buzz and celebrity recommendations to purchase.



Figure 6: Consumer Profile - AI Generated Photo – ChatGBT Prompt: \*Create an image of the Ideal Consumer for Vital Proteins based on the demographics, psychographics and behaviors I have provided for you\*

It also has older people as consumers, who are interested in collagen for joint pain relief and bone health. This group has natural collagen production that decreases approximately 1% per year for every 10 years after the age of 30 (MediaPost, 2023), which is why it is such an important segment for Vital Proteins. Vital Proteins has been able to grow its consumer base through segmentation and targeted marketing strategies and establish itself as a premium wellness brand targeting a large population. Its emphasis on premium ingredients and celebrity backing has kept it in good brand-image at a highly competitive market.



### 1.3.4 SWOT

The US dietary collagen and supplement market has a good market position on the back of a few strengths. Barriers to entry high and growing, growth-based life cycle stage, and low market volatility all make this industry robust. Also, the market has lower customer class and product/service concentration, which means that the revenues are diverse. Such attributes along with the highest revenue per worker point towards efficiency and market stability. But there are clear cracks in the industry. Low government support and intense competition make things difficult for new players and those that are already there. Margins are not at the sector-average level based on capital requirements and competitive environment which pushes pricing and profitability. Potential for the industry includes a high-growth rate between 2024 and 2029 driven by growing consumer interest in health and wellness products. And with the explosion of e-commerce being such a huge growth channel, brands can now get access to a greater number of customers and simplify direct-to-consumer sales. Despite these gains, there are risks for the market with lack of revenue growth after 2029 and low outlier growth suggesting market saturation. Also, weak performance drivers and external shocks may reduce profitability in the long term and force companies to adapt fast to maintain an edge.

<div style="text-align: center;">    <b>S</b> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></div>	<div style="text-align: center;">    <b>W</b> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></div>	<div style="text-align: center;">    <b>O</b> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></div>	<div style="text-align: center;">    <b>T</b> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High &amp; Increasing Barriers to Entry</li> <li>• Growth Life Cycle Stage</li> <li>• Low Volatility</li> <li>• Low Imports</li> <li>• Low Customer Class Concentration</li> <li>• Low Product/Service Concentration</li> <li>• High Revenue per Employee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low &amp; Steady Level of Assistance</li> <li>• High Competition</li> <li>• Low Profit vs. Sector Average</li> <li>• High Capital Requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Revenue Growth (2019-2024)</li> <li>• High Revenue Growth (2024-2029)</li> <li>• E-commerce sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low Revenue Growth (2005-2024)</li> <li>• Low Outlier Growth</li> <li>• Low Performance Drivers</li> </ul>

Figure 7: SWOT Analysis of Vitamin & Supplement Manufacturing in the US (IBISWorld)

## 2. Branding Basics

### 2.1 Brand Name

#### 2.1.1 Brand Heritage and Origin

Vital Proteins is a company created in 2013 by Kurt Seidensticker and his desire to transform lives with high-quality collagen supplements that support wellness for the rest of your life (Vital Proteins, n.d.-a). And internal health is the brand's core ideology – health of hair, skin, nails, joints and bones using collagen. Buying ingredients around the world, Vital Proteins features pasture-raised, grass-fed, pasture-raised bovine collagen from Brazil and wild-caught fish collagen from North America. This focus on transparency and responsible sourcing is now at the core of the brand and distinguishes it from others in the wellness industry (Vital Proteins, n.d.-b).

#### 2.1.2 Brand Meaning

The name "Vital Proteins" refers to the brand mission to deliver essential nutrients with "vital" being representative of the brand's emphasis on foundational health and "proteins" representing collagen, a structural protein critical for holistic health. The brand continues to educate consumers on the individual health effects of collagen, while bringing wellness to the masses through product innovation and lifestyle solutions (Vital Proteins, n.d.-c). By selling collagen as a daily wellness necessity, Vital Proteins is appealing to the entire spectrum of age and lifestyle.

#### 2.1.3 Brand Names Spread Across the World

As a global company, Vital Proteins has stuck to the same name and formula in almost every market. But some product offerings and ingredients are different in the US and, for example, in other nations of the European Union.

Vital Proteins has a number of collagen products available in the United States including their bestseller, Original Collagen Peptides. It comes with a grass label and not just collagen but other ingredients including hyaluronic acid and vitamin C (Reddit, 2023). These synthetics are advertised as providing extra benefits for the skin and the immune system.

Oddly, the same Vital Proteins product you can buy in EU nations like the Netherlands has different ingredients. This EU version of Vital Proteins Collagen Peptides is comprised of just collagen and protein, not the hyaluronic acid and vitamin C in the U.S.

version (Reddit, 2023). This formulation variation could be due to regulatory or consumer preferences at different sites.

As Vital Proteins' footprint spreads worldwide, it tailors its products to specific market needs. In China, for example, the company started off with two products — an Original Collagen Peptides powder and an Marine Collagen powder (both unflavored) (NutraIngredients-Asia, 2021). We chose these products because they were hot sellers in the US. Yet the brand would launch up to 20 product SKUs in China by the end of 2021, including products for beauty, lifestyle and immune health purposes (NutraIngredients-Asia, 2021).

The way the company name and market its products is also regional. In the US, Vital Proteins is a lifestyle brand where people realize that there's so much more to it than skin care. In China, by comparison, the firm was faced with teaching consumers more broadly about the use of collagen, because the market mostly related collagen to skin care and female cosmetics (NutraIngredients-Asia, 2021).

These local variations are what Vital Proteins responds with in their marketing campaigns. In China, for instance, the firm would consult opinion leaders to inform consumers on various forms of consumption of collagen products — for instance, by using the powder in milk tea or desserts. They also planned to work with medical professionals to develop educational material on the many health advantages of collagen (NutraIngredients-Asia, 2021).

Vital Proteins retains the same brand name across the globe but different product formulations, categories and marketing strategies are evident in different countries. These differences are the way the company is responding to regional variations in regulations, consumer demand and market maturity.

### 2.1.4 Brand Identity Elements

Vital Proteins' visual brand features an understated, calming blue color scheme that aligns with the brand's focus on health and purity. The logo, which is minimal with minimal typography, is immediately recognizable and relatable. Their slogan, "For everybody with a body" reiterates inclusivity and accessibility to ensure that the brand keeps collagen available for all. Further underscoring the brand identity is packaging, which uses sustainable products such as paperboard canisters (a reflection of Vital Proteins' sustainability) (Vital Proteins, n.d.-d).



Figure 8: Vital Proteins Brand Identity Elements - Product Line



Figure 9: Vital Proteins Product With Slogan "For Everybody with a Body."

## 2.2 Brand Elements Analysis

### 2.2.1 Key Brand Elements

Here are Vital Proteins' main brand features:

- Logo: A basic, typographical logo with the brand name.
- Color Pattern: Mostly blue, as the color of confidence and trust.
- Packaging: Clean, modern designs with product benefits.
- Slogan: "For Everybody With a Body"
- Characters: Vital Proteins doesn't have a mascot or character, but you can usually find images of healthy, moving people in their ads.
- URL: [www.vitalproteins.com](http://www.vitalproteins.com)



Figure 10: Vital Proteins Marine Collagen

### 2.2.2 Meaning of the Logo and Colors

The bare Vital Proteins logo is all about the name itself, ensuring that the brand feels simple and trustworthy. The blue hue speaks of purity and trustworthiness, while its simplicity is consistent with the brand's mission of honest, no-nonsense wellness. This design integrity is reproduced in the brand packaging and website, enabling it to have a consistent visual presence throughout the world (Vital Proteins, n.d.-d).



Figure 12: Vital Proteins Brand Kit (Brand Colors)



Figure 11: Vital Proteins Brand Kit (Logo)

### 2.2.3 Slogan and Jingles

Vital Proteins' slogan, "For everybody with a body" is broad and focused on the universality of the product. This tagline affirms the brand's premise that collagen is good for everyone, young or old, male or female, and athletic or unfit. Vital Proteins doesn't have a well-known jingle but they use catchy, upbeat music in video ads to promote their brand of health and wellness.

### 2.2.4 URL

Vital Proteins' website URL, [www.vitalproteins.com](http://www.vitalproteins.com), is simple and easy to remember, and it ties in the brand name right away. This cleanliness is in tune with the brand's general minimalist, clean design that allows consumers to easily identify and recall the brand online.

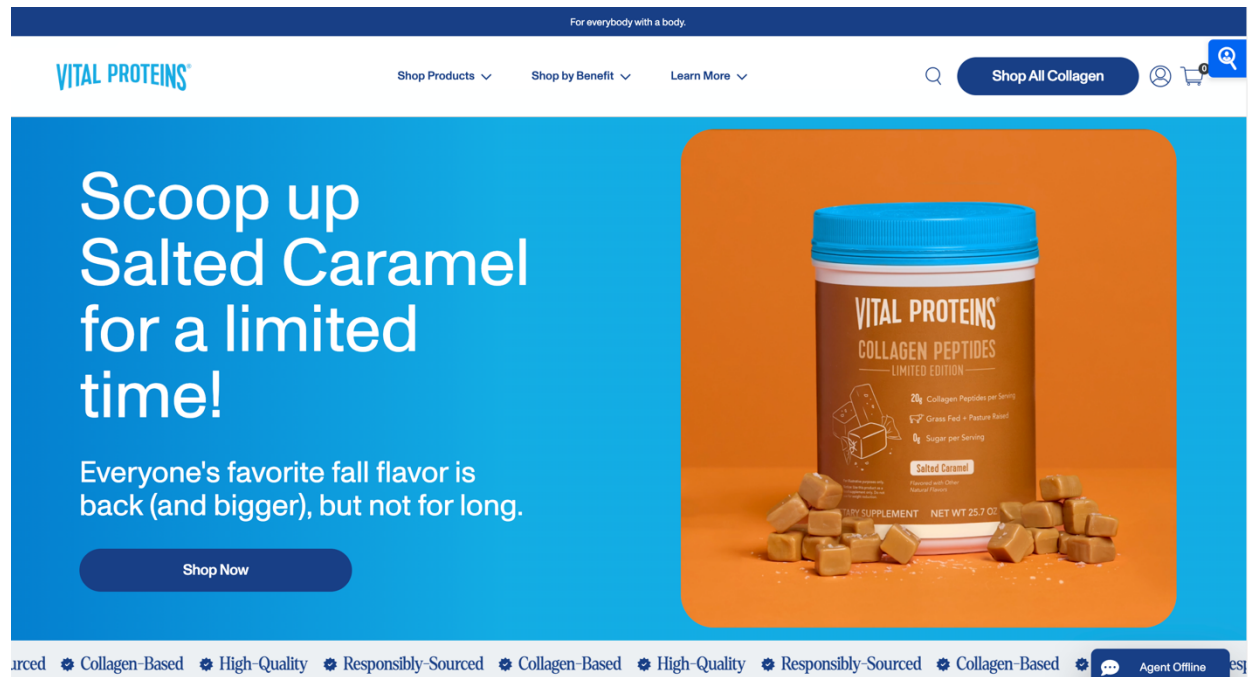


Figure 13: Vital Proteins Homepage ([www.vitalproteins.com](http://www.vitalproteins.com))

## 2.3 Secondary Brand Associations

### 2.3.1 Country of Origin

Vital Proteins is rooted in the United States. The company was founded in Chicago, Illinois and still operates in the Fulton Market district (Chicago Tribune, 2020). Although it is housed in the US, Vital Proteins source raw materials from all over the world to ensure purity and sustainability. When it comes to source, quality is what the brand is after. Vital Proteins' collagen comes from two sources in particular. In the case of bovine collagen, the company sources it from pastured, grass-fed cattle in Brazil (Chicago Tribune, 2020). The decision is also a demonstration of the brand's philosophy of only using the best, responsibly farmed animals for their products. It is a process of procurement that does not only guarantee the products but also the company's environmental commitments.



*Figure 14: Reyna Alcala checks labels on the high speed canister line Oct. 1, 2020, at Vital Proteins in Franklin Park. Workers were making Vital Proteins' Collagen Peptides product. (Chicago Tribune)*

Despite its overseas raw materials origin Vital Proteins still produces in the US. The company owns a giant 180,000-square-foot plant in the suburb of Franklin Park in Chicago (Chicago Tribune, 2020). It is the plant used for Vital Proteins' entire collagen product line, which allows Vital Proteins to guarantee rigorous quality control across all manufacturing processes. As Vital Proteins has expanded internationally, it is not just in the US. It's sold in more than 32 global markets including Canada, the UK and China, with plans to open further markets including France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Japan, Australia, and South Korea (B Lab Global, n.d.; Chicago Tribune, 2020). This global expansion has been made possible by the firm's alliance with Nestlé Health Science, which bought Vital Proteins in 2020 and completed the

transaction in 2022 (Nestlé Health Science, 2022). To sum it up, though Vital Proteins is an American-based company, with headquarters and main manufacturing facilities in the US, it does so globally both in terms of sourcing and distribution. This cross-border protocol allows Vital Proteins to be consistent with the highest quality and sustainability, while addressing the growing global need for collagen supplements.

### 2.3.2 Distribution Channels

Vital Proteins has built an extensive, diversified distribution network so that their collagen products are accessible to the masses. Its distribution channel includes both physical stores and online shops for its customer base to be expanded to different markets.

In the retail space, Vital Proteins has managed to occupy prime spaces in flagship stores. The brand products are available at mass stores, grocery shops, drugstores and natural foods stores (MediaPost, 2024). This national retail coverage enables Vital Proteins to appeal to people who love to shop face-to-face and make impulse purchases. Retail distribution by the company is strong especially in wellness-centric locations like New York City, Colorado, and Los Angeles, with the company also launching a distribution center for West Coast distribution (Chicago Tribune, 2020). Digital sales is one of Vital Proteins distribution strategies. The brand has its own e-commerce store, and delivers all the products and subscriptions to customers (Appstle, 2022). It can be a channel for selling but also it can be used to reach out to the consumer, collect information, and establish brand loyalty with subscriptions.

Vital Proteins has also spread to more countries. The brand has products available in 32 different countries as of 2024 (B Lab Global, n.d.). The brand has been introduced in Canada, the UK and China, and plans to expand to France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Japan, Australia and South Korea (Chicago Tribune, 2020). This global expansion has been made possible by the company's relationship with Nestlé Health Science, which offers extensive resources and knowledge on how to handle complexities in international regulatory affairs (Chicago Tribune, 2020).

Distribution partners of the company are also professional sports teams. Vital Proteins is "official collagen of the Chicago Cubs" since 2017 and now has "access to every pro sport teams clubhouse" (Chicago Tribune, 2020). Not only do these partnerships add new distribution options, but they also solidify the brand with athletes and gym enthusiasts.

Using the multi-channel distribution platform, Vital Proteins has been able to tap into all sorts of consumer needs and shopping trends, making it easy for its products to be in front of thousands of possible consumers, domestically as well as internationally.



### 2.3.3 Co-Branding and Partnerships

In October of 2024, Vital Proteins and Nespresso are teamed up for a co-brand collaboration that builds on the growing number of consumers putting collagen supplements into their coffee each day. The star of the show is the "Daily Wellness Pack," bringing together Nespresso's fine coffee and Vital Proteins' collagen peptides in one convenient package, so that people can integrate both into their morning routine (MediaPost, 2024). This is a combination driven by consumer behavior; Vital Proteins estimates 60% of collagen consumers sprinkle the supplement on their coffee and that is a strong reason to pair the two (MediaPost, 2024). Co-branding is also backed up by an entire marketing campaign with celebrity endorsements and influencer connections.



*Figure 15: The Daily Wellness Pack (Nespresso x Vital Proteins)*

The Daily Wellness Pack is represented by Drew Barrymore, a recent Vital Proteins ambassador hired by Vital Proteins, and Nespresso ambassador and fitness influencer Rad Lopez who helps to share the partnership on social media and at events (MediaPost, 2024). Featuring social media campaigns, TV spots and physical events like a run club with Rad Lopez of the Nespresso Boutique in New York This collaboration offers many benefits to both brands, including growth in market, product development and access to common principles of quality and simplicity.

Jessica Padula, VP of Marketing and Sustainability at Nespresso USA said the brands'

mutual values agreement is a good way to tap into the latest morning ritual — the coffee and collagen blend (MediaPost, 2024). Combining the right expertise and brand value, Vital Proteins and Nespresso have developed a solution with something truly special that will create growth and customer satisfaction in their markets. This Daily Wellness Pack is a product that makes life easy for consumers and it is also unique in the wellness and coffee segments which can lead to revenue and brand retention. The alliance is intended, as per the Nespresso website, to "proactively support simple morning habits to start your day right" (Nespresso, n.d.).

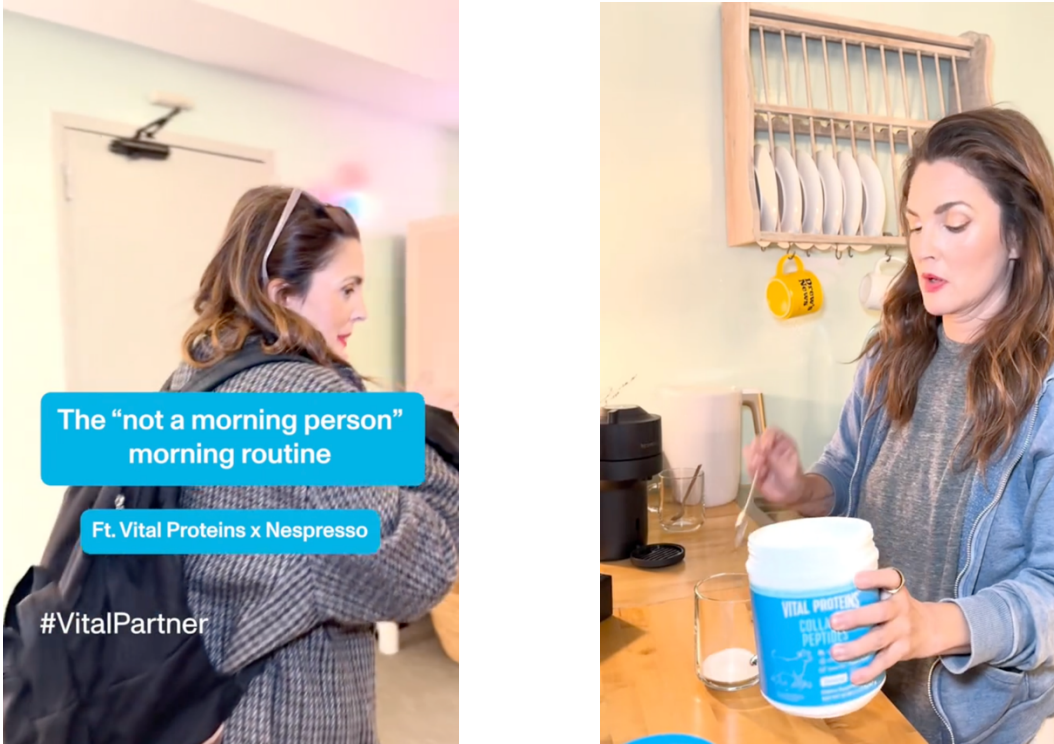


Figure 16: TikTok The Daily Wellness Pack Partnership (@drewbarrymore)

### 2.3.4 Celebrity Endorsements and Event Sponsorships

Vital Proteins has strategically invested in celebrity endorsements and event sponsorships to give its brand awareness and trust in the wellness industry. The company has also signed some celebrity and influencers to advertise its products and join the global brand campaigns.



*Figure 17: Celebrity Partnership: Jennifer Aniston (Chief Creative Officer)*

One of the most popular celebrity partnerships is with Jennifer Aniston, who has used Vital Proteins products for years. In 2020, Aniston joined the brand as Chief Creative Officer, showing that she is an all-in person for the company's vision. She's been reported as saying: 'Collagen is what makes it all together. "I have always been passionate about supporting your health from within, which is why I first started taking Vital Proteins so many years ago." (Hello Magazine, 2024). This collaboration has done a huge amount to boost the brand image and trust of consumers.

Vital Proteins created an entire worldwide brand awareness campaign "Every Moment is Vital," with a diverse cast of personalities in 2022. Among the cast was actor and content creator Addison Rae who was also announced that same year as a Global Brand Ambassador. In addition to Rae, the campaign featured British model and entrepreneur Iskra Lawrence, personal trainer and coach Chase Tucker, and fitness influencer Silvy Araujo. These influencers gave their own wellness stories and day-to-day lives with Vital Proteins products, which was a great way to reach a diverse audience (PR Newswire, 2022).

Recently Vital Proteins 2024 partnered with Drew Barrymore for their special edition "Daily Wellness Pack" collaboration with Nespresso. Barrymore spread the word about this collaboration through social media and an episode of "The Drew Barrymore Show," spreading the brand (MediaPost, 2024).



*Figure 18: Vital Proteins x Nespresso*

On the subject of event sponsorship, Vital Proteins has a tactical bent towards fitness and wellness events. The brand, for example, brought together Nespresso ambassador and fitness model Rad Lopez to run club from the Nespresso Boutique on Madison Avenue in New York City, promoting the brand along with the local community (MediaPost, 2024).

In the UK, Vital Proteins has also got a lucrative sponsorship with ITV's weekday morning show "Lorraine". This 4-month partnership, which begins on April 1, 2024, will help show how easily Vital Proteins Collagen can be part of morning routines. Vital Proteins Brand Manager Marta Lima, a proud member of Vital Proteins, was enthusiastic about the collaboration, "The partnership with Lorraine is how we bring the brand to people's morning routine and where we can share how easy it is to integrate it into their lives" (Nestlé UK, 2024).

These celebrity endorsements and events have helped Vital Proteins to become one of the top collagen supplement brands in the industry, educating consumers about the benefits of collagen while relating the brand to health, wellness, and exercise.



*Figure 19: Vital Proteins has also got a lucrative sponsorship with ITV's weekday morning show "Lorraine".*

## 2.4 Brand Ranking/Value

### 2.4.1 Current Brand Valuation

We don't have direct brand value rankings for Vital Proteins, and we don't know what brand value estimates from major brand valuation firms would look like, but we can extrapolate the company's significant market share and development from various reports and financial information.

Vital Proteins is a company that's become one of the market leaders for collagen supplements, especially in the US. Vital Proteins, America's #1 collagen brand (SPINS), (Nestlé Health Science, 2022). This dominance in the market implies a lot of brand value, though exact numbers aren't publicly available.

The exponential growth rate of the company tells us something about the company's rising brand value. As recently as 2020, Vital Proteins was said to expect revenues in excess of \$250M that year and 80 percent growth the following year (Chicago Tribune, 2020). This huge revenue growth is a good sign of healthy and growing brand value.

Vital Proteins' purchase by Nestlé Health Science only makes it more valuable in brand. No price was reported but Nestlé's commitment to take over a majority share in 2020 and complete the transaction in 2022 means that the brand was well-priced to be picked up by an international nutrition conglomerate (Nestlé Health Science, 2022).

Global collagen market, in general, Grand View Research assessed the collagen market size at USD 8.36 billion in 2020 and will witness a CAGR of 9.0% between 2020 and 2028 (Grand View Research, 2021). Vital Proteins is one of the top sellers in this market which probably holds a major portion of this value, which further indicates its high brand value.

Obviously not a direct indicator of brand value, but Vital Proteins growth in Canada, UK, China and future expansion to additional countries is proof of the brand's international visibility and value (Chicago Tribune, 2020).

Finally, though there are not publicly available brand value rankings for Vital Proteins from big brand valuation firms, despite the leadership position, high revenues, purchase by Nestlé Health Science, and international growth of the company, there's certainly a lot of increasing brand value in the collagen supplement market.

## 2.4.2 Evaluation of Brand Elements

	Brand Name	Logo	Colors	Slogan	Packaging	Product Range
Memorability	Easily recalled by health-conscious consumers	Minimalist design	Blue is relaxing - associated with trust and health	inclusive - appealing to a greater population	Recognizable - now have the eco-friendly paperboard canister	Multi product line with collagen products
Meaningfulness	Stands for key wellness and nutritional services	Exhibits brand's minimalist, wellness orientation	Embraces purity, relaxation and health consciousness	Highlights inclusivity, in line with mission	Emphasizes sustainability commitment	Strengthens brand's health and wellness message
Likeability	Popular among different types of consumers	Clear and cute, no fancy style	Great color palette, loved by all	Catchy, and for everyone (consumers included)	Sustainable packaging which liked by consumers	Variety suites consumer tastes/preferences
Transferability	Quickly converts to new wellness products	Versatile enough to use for different products.	Fits many wellness groups	Fits all kinds of product offerings	Flexible for all packaging formats	Collagen and health supplements can expand with ease
Adaptability	Can be used on international markets without any modifications	Minimal design suitable for global market	Blue palette flexible for wellness products	Flexible for wellness product lines	Flexible to other product categories and regions	Wide product range easily expandable
Protectability	Registered trademark and recognized globally	Trademarked for exclusivity	Distinctive brand kit	Trademarked phrase for brand identity	Eco-friendly design with patent-protection	Protected under brand's own unique product lines

Table 4: Vital Proteins Brand Elements

Vital Proteins has built itself as a premium brand in the collagen supplements market using several elements of branding. They are all aspects that add value to the brand and can be quantified through the six-brand factor scoring scales of Memorability, Meaningfulness, Likability, Transferability, Adaptability, and Protectability (Keller, 2013). Memorability is a big part of Vital Proteins' value proposition. It's brand identity and packaging and logo have given the company its own visual personality on shelves and online (MediaPost, 2024). This visual strength helps increase brand awareness and recognition, which leads it to be America's number 1 collagen brand (Nestlé Health Science, 2022).

The Meaningfulness side of Vital Proteins really comes into its own as they tell us why you should be supplementing with collagen. Their advertisements (for example, "For Everybody with a Body") are simple and tell you exactly what the product is for and how it will help you and they are sure to make the value point very easy (PR Newswire, 2024). This direct link between the brand and the alleged benefits makes the brand appear more valuable to health-conscious consumers.

**Vital Proteins Credibility:** Vital Proteins is a brand with a lot of credibility in the celebrity and influencer world. Collaborations with people such as Jennifer Aniston as Chief Creative Officer and Drew Barrymore, who markets their work, help build the brand's value and relatability (Hello Magazine, 2024; MediaPost, 2024). Such relationships make your brand good and make it likeable to various types of consumers.

Vital Proteins offers high Transferability as it scales into more product categories besides its native collagen peptides. The company has developed collagen waters, protein bars, and formulated products for various applications and has proven its brand equity to carry over across product lines (Chicago Tribune, 2020).

**Vital Proteins: Adaptability.** The brand proved to be flexible enough to keep up with consumer demand, entering foreign markets and tailoring products to specific regional preferences. In the case of China, for instance, the company modified the product portfolio and marketing strategy to match local consumer knowledge of collagen benefits (NutraIngredients-Asia, 2021).

Last, the Protectability of Vital Proteins. The strength of Vital Proteins' market position and its legal brand elements confirm its protection. We don't know about trademarks and patents, but the brand being bought out by Nestlé Health Science indicates an active IP portfolio that guards its proprietary formulas and trademarks (Nestlé Health Science, 2022).

Vital Proteins' brand strength is the way it manages to pull these 6 points together. The brand's success on all these measures led to its rapid growth, market dominance and global expansion. With collagen still in its infancy, Vital Proteins' dedication to these brand elements will go a long way towards keeping its brand valuable.





Vital Proteins' brand reaches beyond the visual and verbal strategies as well. The packaging of the brand is minimalist and calming in color that calls up feelings of purity and wellbeing. The style is paired with marketing messaging focusing on ingredients and research support, which appeals to healthy consumers who value openness and effectiveness in their health regimes.

Vital Proteins' celebrity endorsements (Jennifer Aniston) also confirm the premium status of Vital Proteins. A sense of trustworthiness and goal-drivenness from Aniston as CCO lends the brand to the beauty and wellness sensibilities (Hello Magazine, 2024). This connection cements the brand as a not just functional supplement company but also a way of life for holistic wellness.

Vital Proteins created an effective brand that is embraced by those consumers looking for natural ways to nourish their health and beauty. Using only the finest collagen ingredients, sourcing sources responsibly, and celebrity ambassadorships, the brand has been able to establish itself as a wellness innovator.

**Increases bone mineral density and collagen formation\*\*<sup>1</sup>**

About **30** Servings Per Container

**Helps maintain optimal joint mobility\*\*<sup>2</sup>**

**Supports endogenous synthesis of hyaluronic acid\*\***

<sup>1</sup> After 8 week supplementation with VERISOL® <sup>2</sup> After 12 month supplementation with FORTIBONE®  
<sup>3</sup> After 12 week supplementation with FORTIGEL®

\*\*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

Figure 21: Product Benefits Descriptions (from vitalproteins.com)

## 3.2. Brand Awareness

### 3.2.1 Based on Secondary Data

Brand awareness refers to “the ability of a consumer to recognize and recall a brand” (Fetscherin, 2020, p. 84). Vital Proteins has seen huge brand recognition in the US and overseas for the last 10 years. This expansion can be seen in many social media indicators and search data which offer insights into the brand growth and consumer attraction. Vital Proteins has a strong following on social media.

Brand	Instagram	Twitter (X)	TikTok	Youtube	LinkedIn	Facebook
Vital Proteins	899K	7.6K	37.7K	7.68K	79K	280K
NeoCell	50K	10.5K	3,356	4.13K	1K	95K
Youtheory	33.3K	1.4K	52	192	1K	52K
Ancient Nutrition	451K	2.3K	9,767	44.2K	17K	1.8M
Absolute Collagen	83.6K	1.6K	17K	2.18K	3K	78K

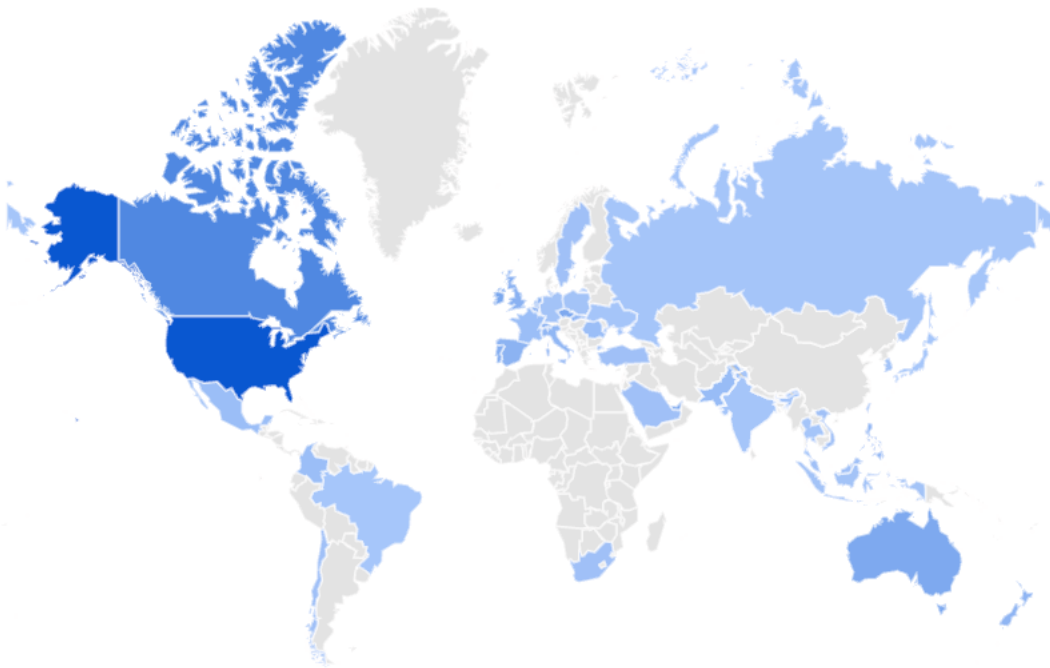
Table 5: Social Media Following Among Competitors

The company’s official Instagram account (@vitalproteins) has almost 900,000 followers, so the community is huge and engaging (Instagram, 2024). The brand’s Facebook page has more than 200,000 followers and is clearly a mass-market brand (Facebook, 2024). All these figures point to a strong social media following, which results in increased brand exposure among health conscious consumers.



Figure 22: Google Trends: USA and Worldwide Interest Over Time for Vital Proteins (2013-2024)

Over the last 10 years there is constant demand for "Vital Proteins" since 2013, with the highs of recent years. The biggest surge in search interest took place in June 2020, with the hiring of Jennifer Aniston as brand CCO (Google Trends, 2024). This alliance likely also made for an incredible brand boost because Aniston’s celebrity provided more press and consumer interest for Vital Proteins. There was another increase in search interest in January 2023, during the launch of Vital Proteins’ "For Everybody with a Body" national brand campaign. This was a campaign to teach consumers the value of collagen and make the category more democratic, which could lead to increased brand awareness and consumer demand (PR Newswire, 2023).



*Figure 23: Interest by Region (Google Trends)*

Internationally, Vital Proteins now has offices in more than 25 countries, showing international brand recognition (PR Newswire, 2023). And with the launch of the brand in Canada, the UK, and China it must have gained international recognition. To cite just one example, Vital Proteins launch in China using cross-border e-commerce in 2021 was another significant step to expand the brand worldwide (NutraIngredients-Asia, 2021).

The brand's tie-up with Nestlé Health Science, which bought a majority in Vital Proteins in 2020 and completed the deal in 2022, has potentially increased the brand's reach globally. Nestlé's global distribution and marketing resources must have helped Vital Proteins to gain visibility in different markets (Nestlé Health Science, 2022).

Online, Google has about 22.9 million results for "Vital Proteins" (as of 2024) — so there's a lot of online visibility and information surrounding the brand (Google, 2024). That's a lot of search queries, which means people are talking and reading about the brand all over the internet.

This brand awareness was also improved through the strategic influencer relationship. The 2022 "Every Moment is Vital" global brand campaign starring key players like Addison Rae, Iskra Lawrence, Chase Tucker, and Silvy Araujo could open the brand's arms to multiple demographics (PR Newswire, 2022). Overall, Vital Proteins is a brand that has grown exponentially in the last 10 years due to its social media presence, rise in search volume, and worldwide expansion. Celebrity endorsements, marketing campaigns, global scale, and the support of Nestlé Health Science are among the major reasons behind this growth. All these factors have put Vital Proteins on the map as a trusted, recognized name in the collagen supplement industry.



Figure 24: Acquisition of Vital Proteins by Nestlé Health Science ([mergersight.com](https://www.mergersight.com))

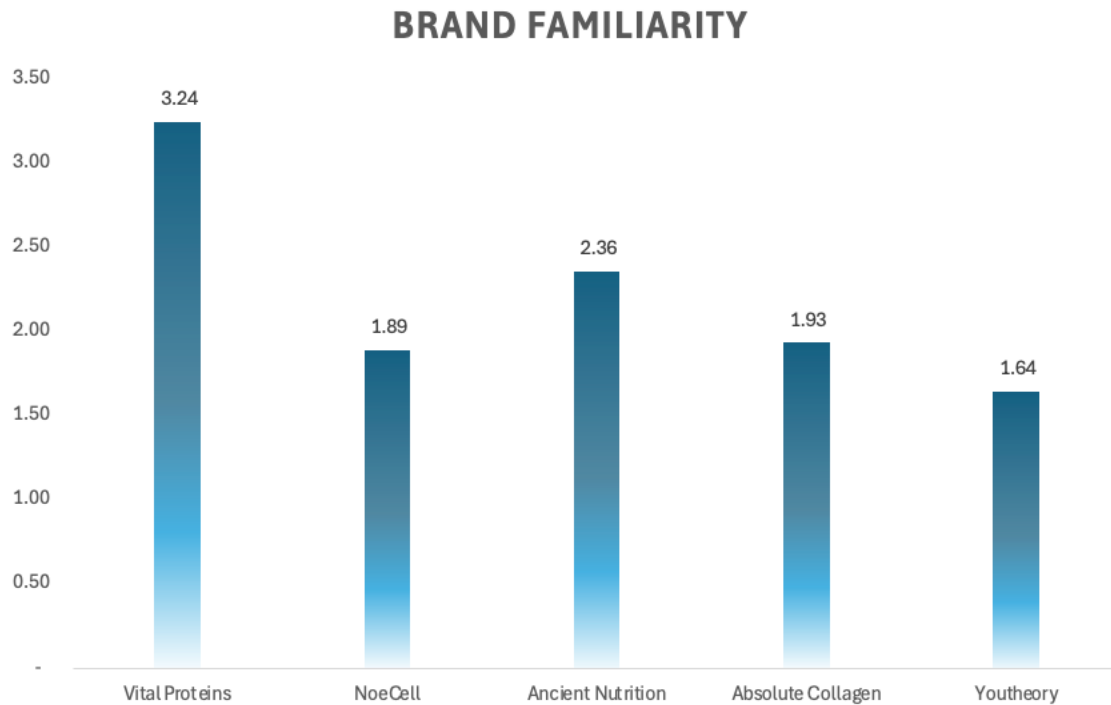
### 3.2.2 Brand Recall (TOM)

Brand recall – particularly Top of Mind (TOM) recall – is when consumers randomly name a brand, after being offered a product category (Keller, 2008). It is a key indicator of brand recall and the quality of a brand's association in memory.

The survey asked users to identify the top 5 brands that came to mind when you think about the collagen supplement market. The results showed Vital Proteins as the leading player in TOM recall with significantly higher number of mentions than its rivals. Other names such as Ancient Nutrition, NeoCell, Youtheory were listed but much lower. This difference underscores Vital Proteins' brand awareness and category dominance. Vital Proteins' TOM recall thanks to extensive marketing efforts, prominent stores and partnerships with celebrities such as Jennifer Aniston makes it more visible and credible. The lower TOM recall for the other brands, on the other hand, indicates difficulties capturing the same degree of consumer mindshare.



### 3.2.3 Brand Recognition



*Figure 26 Average Familiarity (Primary Data)*

Brand familiarity is the degree to which a brand is known and understood by a consumer and is typically a major source of brand equity and purchase decisions (Keller, 2008). Participants were asked to rate how familiar they were with Vital Proteins and other collagen supplement brands on a 5-point Likert scale, from "Not at all" (1) to "Extremely familiar" (5).

Vital Proteins earned the highest average familiarity score of 3.24/5, much higher than Ancient Nutrition (2.36), NeoCell (1.89) and Youtheory (1.64). A two-tailed t-test for familiarity between Vital Proteins and NeoCell returned 4.85 and a p-value 0.01. That is an incredible result statistically, 100% certainty that the level of familiarity for both brands is very different. This confidence shows Vital Proteins' superior brand recognition.

	<i>familiarity - Vital Proteins</i>	<i>familiarity - Noecell</i>
Mean	3.10	1.83
Variance	1.93	1.38
Observations	48.00	48.00
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0.00	
df	91.00	
t Stat	4.85	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.00	
t Critical one-tail	1.66	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.00	
t Critical two-tail	1.99	

*Figure 27: T-Test Results - Vital Proteins & NeoCell (Primary Data)*

Vital Proteins’ strong brand recognition comes from omnichannel, partnerships, and creative marketing. On the contrary, competitors with lower familiarity scores would benefit from better branding and outreach activities. Vital Proteins high visibility ensures that Vital Proteins’ lead in the collagen supplement industry remains secure and enables it to stay on top. By leveraging the deep affinity it offers, Vital Proteins can target customer engagement and penetration into underserved groups to maintain momentum and brand equity.

### 3.3. Brand Image

#### 3.3.1 Based on Secondary Data

The company Vital Proteins has a largely good brand profile, national and global, according to the Talkwalker data. The brand is visible and popular in multiple markets across the world, where its impact is at its highest, especially in strategic areas such as the US, India and China. The geographic spread indicates 59.8% mentions of the brand are from US, 15.6% India, and 7.1% China (Talkwalker, 2024). This is a distribution that speaks volumes to the brand's market dominance within its home country and growing strong in the overseas regions.

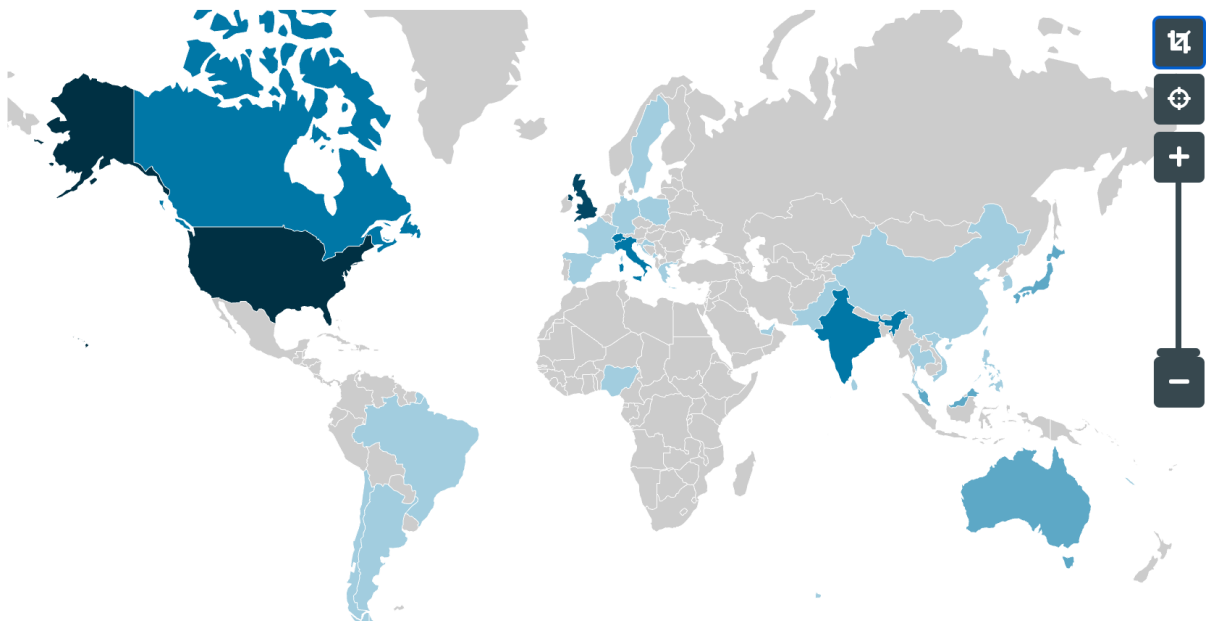


Figure 28: World Map of Vital Proteins Mentions (Talkwalker)

When it comes to sentiment, Vital Proteins is a fairly good brand. There are 35.3% of positive mentions and 3.4% of negative (Talkwalker, 2024). That's a good thing because it shows consumers are happy with the brand's products and advertisements. These November 5th spikes in engagement most likely coincide with certain marketing campaigns or product launches which create a surge of interest and discussion on the internet. Those spikes indicate Vital Proteins' marketing strategy is working on creating buzz and increasing consumer engagement. Vital Proteins' reach is also a dream as the overall potential audience stands at 434.3 million people (Talkwalker, 2024). This number shows the brand can access a large global market through its online presence and advertisements. The engagement rate of 394 interactions also shows that customers are spending their time engaging with the brand on social media.





NeoCell’s word cloud, on the other hand, is all about "skin," "innovative" and "new," which indicates its niche interest in beauty and skincare. Ancient Nutrition places an emphasis on "holistic," "natural," and "wellness" - as in the old-style medicine and whole-body health. Youtheory touts "young" and "scientific" targeting consumers in search of anti-ageing benefits based on science. Absolute Collagen focuses on "effective" and "innovative" as that means ease and innovation of product.



Figure 31: Youtheory's Word Cloud (Primary Data)

If Vital Proteins appeals widely and has an image of quality and health, its status as a premium brand can turn away pricey buyers. Competitor brands excel in the small niches, so there is still room for Vital Proteins to segment messages and innovations around targeted audience segments without weakening its core brand. external (image) brand perception.



Figure 32: Absolute Collagen's Word Cloud (Primary Data).



Figure 33: Ancient Nutrition's Word Cloud (Primary Data)

### 3.3.3 Brand Personality

Brand personality is the human characteristics a brand adopts, allowing consumers to feel connected to the brand and to distinguish it in a crowded marketplace (Aaker, 1997). Vital Proteins' brand personality was evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale, measuring consumers' sentiment on points related to trustworthiness, accessibility and innovation.

According to the survey, Vital Proteins' top rating was "accessible" (4.69/5), highlighting that the brand is highly accessible through strong retail and online presence making it easy to purchase. Quality attributes: "conveys a healthy lifestyle" (4.48/5), "brand trust" (4.37/5), and "excellent brand reputation" (4.35/5) were also highly rated, indicating that the brand had been able to communicate its wellness identity and garner consumer trust. Readers also noted Vital Proteins as providing "quality products" (4.33/5) and "good value for the price" (4.26/5), putting it in a competitive yet affordable position in the collagen supplement market.

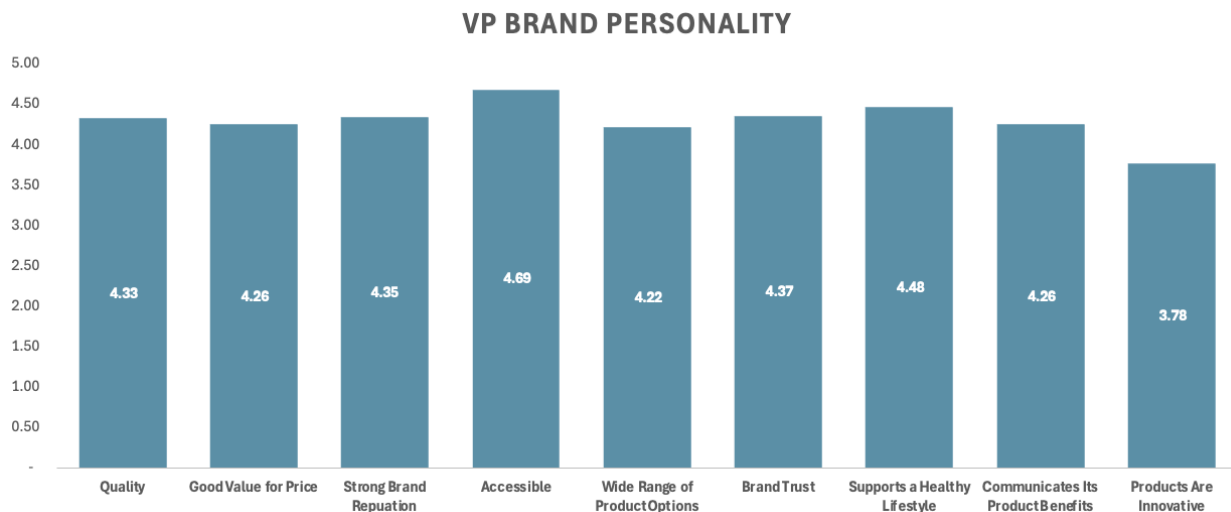


Figure 34: Vital Proteins - Brand Personality (Primary Data)

However, "wide selection of product alternatives" earned the lowest rating (4.22/5), and "products are innovative" the lowest (3.78/5). Though customers have positive perceptions of the brand as a whole, this suggests that they can still innovate with product range. These findings highlight Vital Proteins' key strengths – access and trust – and suggest opportunities to further diversify and innovate its product offering to better address changing consumer expectations.

### 3.3.4 Brand Hate vs. Brand Love

Brand love and brand hate represent consumers' extremes in emotions: brand love refers to emotional attachment and brand hate to dissatisfaction or resentment (Batra et al., 2012). The survey evaluated brand emotions and satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale to get a feel for Vital Proteins and its competitors.

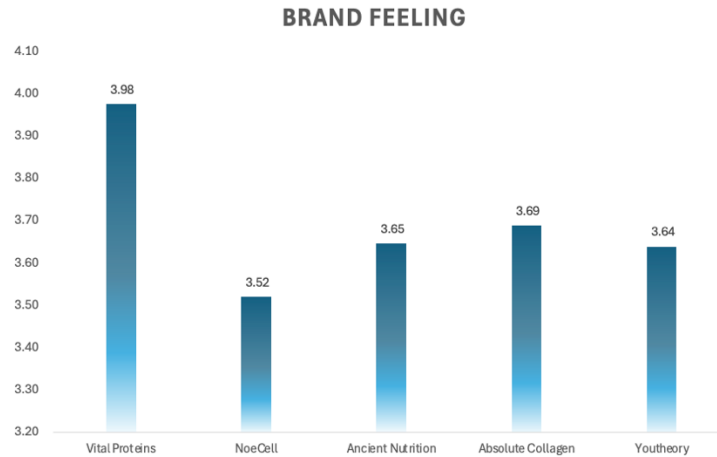


Figure 35: Brand Feeling (Primary Data)

Vital Proteins was the most loved brand, with an average brand feeling score of 3.98/5 and top brand satisfaction score of 4.13/5. These findings point to its emotionally close relationships with consumers, who feel it is offering good quality, easy access, and reliable services. Comparators such as NeoCell (3.52 brand feeling, 3.63 satisfaction) and Ancient Nutrition (3.65 brand feeling, 3.83 satisfaction) however showed fewer levels of consumer affinity and satisfaction.

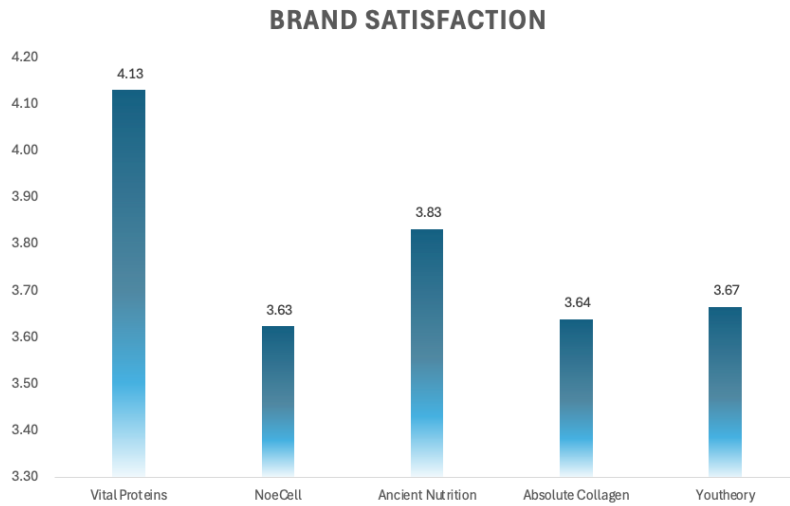


Figure 36: Average Brand Satisfaction (Primary Data)

The fact that Vital Proteins received a top rating on satisfaction also ensures that they're a trustworthy and popular brand, making Vital Proteins a market leader in the collagen supplement market. But its word cloud references to "pricey" and its average Net Promoter Score of -5% indicate low areas of unhappiness in a subset of customers. Reducing brand hate and building loyalty could be addressed by strategically communicating the value and benefits of its products. Overall, the results tell us Vital Proteins is a master of cultivating love and fulfillment, but if they continue to improve upon price perception and trust, Vital Proteins will have an even stronger market position.

### 3.3.5 Net Promoter Score

Net Promoter Score (NPS) tracks loyalty in terms of customer recommending a brand to others. Participants assigned probabilities on a scale ranging from 0 (impossible) to 10 (highly likely). The Scores were Segmented into Promoters (9–10), Passives (7–8) and Detractors (0–6). NPS is the result of subtracting the percentage of Detractors from Promoters.

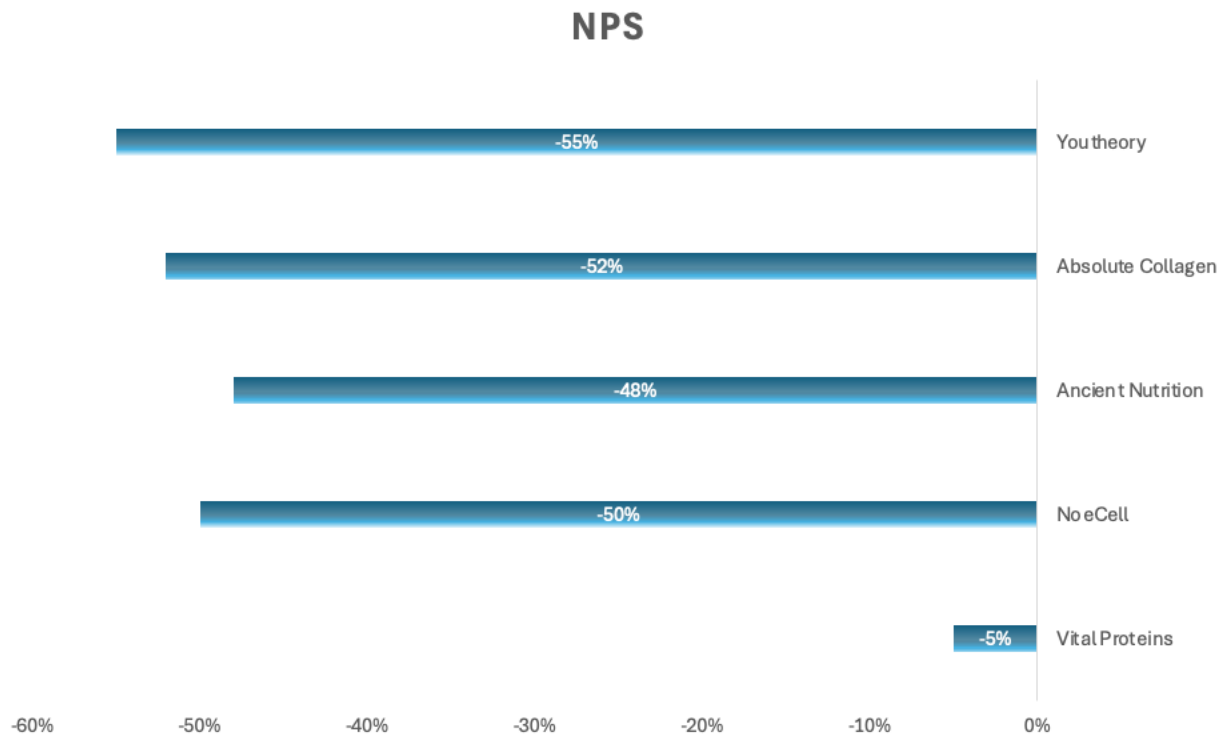


Figure 37: Net Promoter Score (Primary Data)

Vital Proteins landed at an NPS of -5%, which is significantly better than competitors Ancient Nutrition (-48%) and Youtheory (-55%). This score shows that there are a lot more Promoters than rivals, but Detractors are still difficult. The higher NPS suggests more loyal customers than the collagen supplement industry – and Vital Proteins’ good name in quality and affordability.

Other brands such as Youtheory and Absolute Collagen came in a lot lower, which means they have a harder time converting customers and minimizing negative sentiment. The survey data highlights Vital Proteins’ ability to garner the confidence and satisfaction of a larger number of customers. But there is room to shave this point on some of the areas of dissatisfaction — in this case, perceived pricing — that are mentioned in other sections of the survey.

The reason Vital Proteins does so well on the NPS is because they have done a good job at building loyal customers. Optimizing Detractor scores (increase product innovation and value messaging) can also increase its NPS and competitive position by implementing the right strategies.

### 3.4. Price and Quality Ratings Analysis

To evaluate the perceptions of each brand's price and quality were, respondents' answers were measured by 5 point Likert scale. Quality scored from "Very Low Quality" (1) to "Very High Quality" (5), and price scored from "Very Cheap" (1) to "Very Pricey" (5). These scales captured consumers' thoughts on Vital Proteins' competitors in the collagen supplement space.

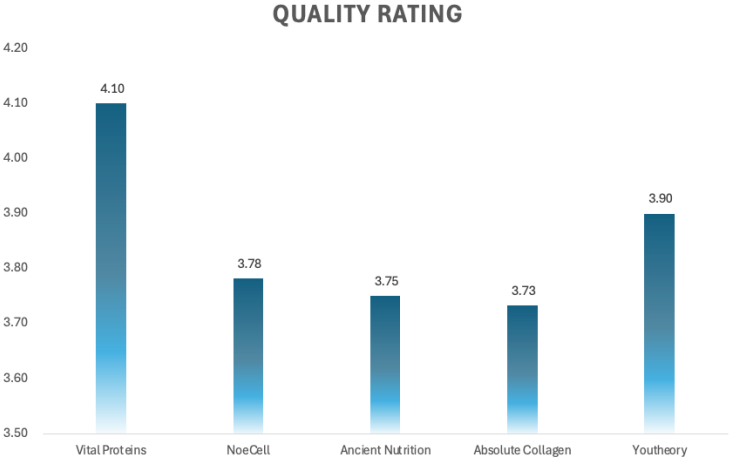


Figure 38: Average Quality Rating (Primary Data)

Quality Rating: Vital Proteins scored the highest of all the competitors 4.1/10/5 indicating that customers found the product to be of high quality. Others like Youtheory (3.90), Noecell (3.78), and Ancient Nutrition (3.75) came behind. This higher quality impression matches Vital Proteins' wellness brand, a brand that values transparency, sustainability and new formulations.

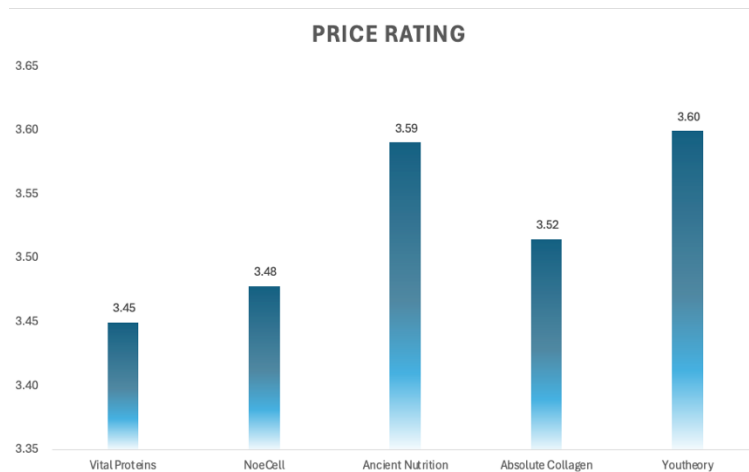


Figure 39: Average Price Rating (Primary Data)

Price Rating: Vital Proteins scored lowest (3.5/5) in terms of price among its competitors — meaning people said it was more affordable. More expensive rivals like Youtheory (3.60) and Ancient Nutrition (3.59) were assessed. Which is to say that Vital Proteins, though seen as a premium brand, is priced well and thus will appeal to budget conscious collagen supplement buyers. All of this proves Vital Proteins’ strategy to strike a balance between quality and affordability. If the brand is affordable in comparison to its competitors, that’s a great selling point — if you’re able to communicate it well to drive home your value proposition.

### 3.4.2 Brand Positioning

Based on primary data collected through a Qualtrics survey, a positioning map was created to analyze consumer perceptions of price and quality for five major collagen supplement brands: Vital Proteins, NeoCell, Ancient Nutrition, Absolute Collagen, and Youtheory. The map shows visually where those brands rank against one another, based on average rating from the survey participants.

Vital Proteins is considered to be high quality at a moderate price, creating a strong market position. NeoCell is fairly priced as Vital Proteins but quality-wise it’s about half as good. Youtheory is the most expensive brand but it is still a very good brand in quality. Ancient Nutrition follows the same line of thinking, with more money but perceived quality. Absolute Collagen is on the smaller side with low quality and low prices.



This positioning analysis shows Vital Proteins being the brand with high quality expectations while brands such as Youtheory and Ancient Nutrition have premium consumers paying the premium. With low cost and decent quality NeoCell has potential to go mainstream, while Absolute Collagen may need to fill in some of its perceived quality shortfall if it is going to compete. All in all, these statistics show a more segmented market with very different consumer price and quality needs.

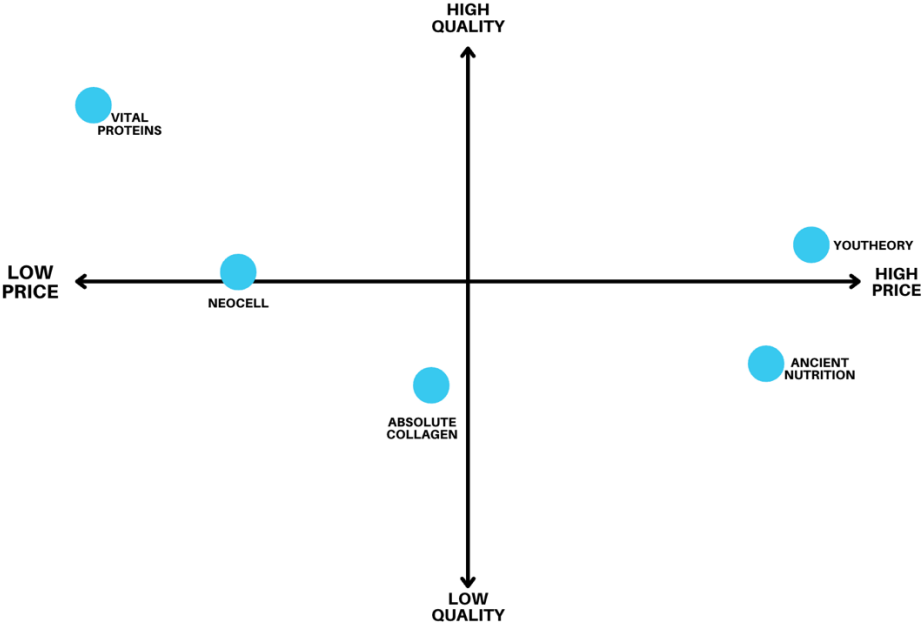


Figure 40: Positioning Map Based On Perception of Price & Quality

## 4. Brand Strategy

### 4.1. Brand Strategy

Vital Proteins has implemented a three-pronged brand strategy in recent years that places a premium on transparency, quality, and inclusivity. Among the most notable parts of this plan is "For Everybody with a Body" campaign that would make collagen consumption more accessible for everyone, regardless of age and lifestyle (PR Newswire, 2024). The campaign highlights how collagen supplements can support joint health, skin elasticity, and general wellbeing. With this open messaging, Vital Proteins' customer base is no longer limited to wellness geeks.

And Vital Proteins has also leveraged celebrity endorsements for its brand name. Creating exclusive partnerships with celebrities like Jennifer Aniston have made the brand very visible and trusted. As Chief Creative Officer, Aniston has helped position the brand as dream-centric and accessible (Hello Magazine, 2024).

#### 4.1.2 Perceived Quality and Value

Vital Proteins is deemed as a luxury brand by the quality of ingredients. Its collagen comes from grass-fed, pastured cow hides from Brazil and wild-caught fish from Alaska (Chicago Tribune, 2020). It's this focus on sustainability and pure ingredients that appeals to health-conscious and environmentally conscious consumers. The brand is open about ingredients and how they're made which makes it even more valuable.

Customers, in turn, acquaint Vital Proteins with real health

benefits. Review and social media sentiment: Customers say they see improved skin hydration, hair growth and joint flexibility after regular use of the brand's products (Talkwalker, 2024). This glowing review supports the belief that Vital Proteins has high-quality supplements that are producing results.

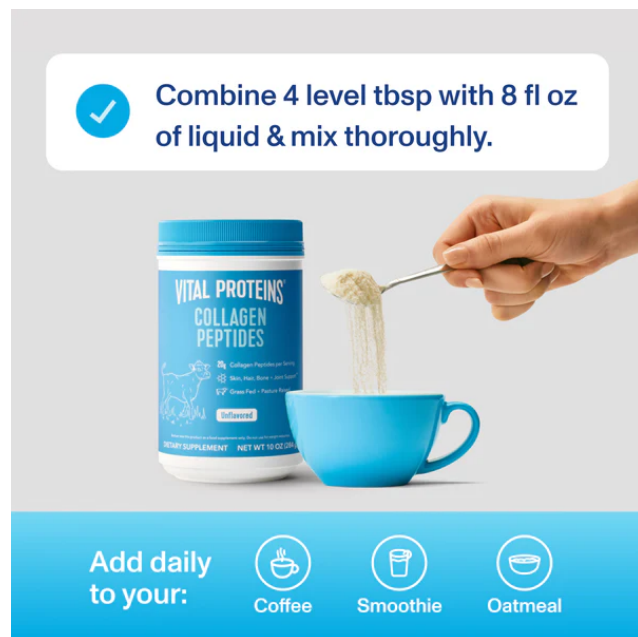


Figure 41: Vital Proteins Collagen Peptides  
([www.vitalproteins.com](http://www.vitalproteins.com))

### 4.1.3 Brand System / Brand Architecture / Brand Hierarchy / Brand Portfolio

Vital Proteins operates with a brand house model where all the products are sold under the Vital Proteins brand. The company has a long list of collagen products that cater to different types of consumers. These are powders of collagen peptides, beauty supplements such as the Hair Complex and Skin Complex, collagen waters, nutrition bars, and pre- and post-workout supplements (PR Newswire, 2024). This brand consistency lets Vital Proteins build solid brand value in each of its many product lines while staying true to messaging and quality.

The brand was further established as a leader in the wellness category when it was acquired by Nestlé Health Science in 2020. Vital Proteins is still an independent company within Nestlé's portfolio, but as a joint venture, it will have access to more resources for product development and international expansion (Mergersight, 2020).

### 4.1.4 Brand Extensions

Vital Proteins has been able to market its products through targeted brand extensions that keep up with consumer beauty and wellness needs. Especially the introduction of targeted beauty products such as Hair Complex and Skin Complex which are significant steps into the category of beauty supplement (PR Newswire, 2024).



They're targeted to target specific skin issues such as hair loss and ageing while drawing on the brand's expertise in collagen supplementation. Vital Proteins has also developed functional beverages such as collagen water and coffee creamers in addition to the cosmetics. With these extensions, consumers can simply incorporate collagen into their day and the brand will reach new levels of customers besides just supplements (Chicago Tribune, 2020).

Figure 42: Hair & Skin Complex Peptides ([www.vitalproteins.com](http://www.vitalproteins.com))

Vital Proteins is successful through its focus on high-quality ingredients, honest marketing and creative product expansions. With strong support from Nestlé Health Science and continued expansion into new countries, the brand is positioned to grow steadily in the global wellness market.

## 4.2. Marketing Programs

Vital Proteins has followed a marketing mix approach where we focus on the 4 elements: Price, Product, Promotion and Placement. These factors have been key to making the brand a leading collagen supplement company, both domestically and globally.

### 4.2.2 Price

Vital Proteins have come to make prices accessible, but premium. Despite inflationary forces and health care industry costs, the brand's prices have remained essentially the same. In five years, Vital Proteins has averaged only a 2.5% price increase while the total vitamins and supplements market increased by 15% (BevNet, 2023). It's mostly because the firm owns its plant and therefore manages the manufacturing expenses and provides an attractive price. Vital Proteins believes in an "everyday low price" approach instead of a constant discount program so consumers feel like their purchase has value without overpaying (BevNet, 2023).



Figure 43: Vital Proteins Collagen Water (Line Extension)

### 4.2.3 Product

Vital Proteins' line of collagen products focus on various health and wellness demands. The company has numerous products, such as collagen peptides powders, cosmetic products (like Hair Complex and Skin Complex), collagen water, nutrition bars, and coffee creamers (PR Newswire, 2024). The products are made to help maintain your joints, your skin's elasticity, your hair's health and your health. It features the premium ingredients — grass-fed bovine skins and wild-caught fish — in keeping with its focus on transparency and labeling integrity (Chicago Tribune, 2020). It's this focus on product excellence that has allowed Vital Proteins to establish a high reputation with healthy consumers.



Figure 44: Jennifer Aniston Brand Ambassador & CCO

### 4.2.4 Promotion

Vital Proteins promotes through multiple channels including traditional media, digital marketing, influencer relationships, and celebrity endorsements. The company's "For Everybody with a Body" initiative is a prominent marketing campaign that educates consumers on why it's healthy to consume collagen every day regardless of age or gender (PR Newswire, 2024). This campaign is underpinned by omnichannel campaigns like TV ads, streaming, online videos, social media, influencer relations and PR campaigns (Drug Store News, 2024). Brand ambassadorship has also been important to create brand exposure; endorsements from stars such as Jennifer Aniston lent the brand an aura of the aspirational and the attainable (Hello Magazine, 2024). Vital Proteins also

has the micro-influencers who connect with small audiences to show authenticity and earn consumer trust (FoodNavigator-USA, 2019).



*Figure 45: Vital Proteins Storefront*

#### 4.2.5 Placement

Vital Proteins' distribution network includes both storefronts and online retailers. The brand has more than 70,000 retail doors at Whole Foods Market, Target, Walmart, CVS Pharmacy and Walgreens (BevNet, 2023). Vital Proteins has also taken the business to new territories, including Canada, the UK, China and some European countries (Chicago Tribune, 2020). The brand is also an active e-commerce brand with its direct-to-consumer website and collaborations with online stores such as Amazon. Vital Proteins subscriber model lets you get your products every few months along with perks like discounts and free shipping (Appstle.com, 2022). The advantage of this model is that it helps maintain the consistency of products. Vital Proteins' marketing mix approach is a winning combination of affordable prices, high quality products and wide variety of consumer preferences. Thru promotions that include celebrity partnerships and influencer marketing along with regular placement in store and online, the brand is maintaining its position as a global wellness leader.

# Appendix

## Vital Proteins Qualtrics Survey

Start of Block: Introduction



Q1 What is your Prolific ID? Please note that this response should auto-fill with the correct ID.

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Page Break



Q2 Dear Participant, you are invited to participate in an anonymous survey on **Health & Wellness** brands specifically focusing on **the Dietary Supplement Industry**. To participate, you must be over **18 years old**. Please provide answers that best reflect **your** opinion and feelings. It should take **less than 10 minutes** to complete, and you can terminate the survey anytime. Your participation is highly appreciated. By clicking "**Continue**" you agree with the above. If you do not wish to participate in this study, please close this survey and return your submission on Prolific by selecting the 'Stop without completing' button.

Continue (1)

Discontinue (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Dear Participant, you are invited to participate in an anonymous survey on Health & Wellness bran... = Discontinue

Skip To: End of Survey If Dear Participant, you are invited to participate in an anonymous survey on Health & Wellness bran... = Discontinue

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Brand Awareness

Q3 Name the **first 5 brands** that come to mind when considering the **collagen supplement industry**.

Brand 1 (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Brand 2 (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Brand 3 (3) \_\_\_\_\_

Brand 4 (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Brand 5 (5) \_\_\_\_\_



Page Break



Q4 How **familiar** are you with the following brands?

	Not familiar at all (1)	Slightly familiar (2)	Moderately familiar (3)	Very familiar (4)	Extremely familiar (5)
Vital Proteins (1)					
NoeCell (2)					
Ancient Nutrition (3)					
Absolute Collagen (4)					
Youtheory (5)					

Page Break

End of Block: Brand Awareness

Start of Block: Brand Image



Q5 Describe the following brands in **up to 3 words**. (please write one word for each column)

	Describe the Brand in up to 3 words		
	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)
Vital Proteins (1)			
NoeCell (2)			
Youtheory (3)			
Ancient Nutrition (4)			
Absolute Collagen (5)			



Q6 How do you **feel** about the following brands?

	Hate it (1)	Dislike it (2)	Neutral (3)	Like it (4)	Love it (5)	I don't know the brand (6)
Vital Proteins (1)						
NeoCell (2)						
Ancient Nutrition (3)						
Absolute Collagen (4)						
Youtheory (5)						



Q7 Overall, how **satisfied** are you with the following brands?

	Extremely Dissatisfied (1)	Dissatisfied (2)	Neutral (3)	Satisfied (4)	Extremely Satisfied (5)	I don't use this brand (6)
Vital Proteins (1)						
NeoCell (2)						

Ancient  
Nutrition  
(3)

Absolute  
Collagen  
(4)

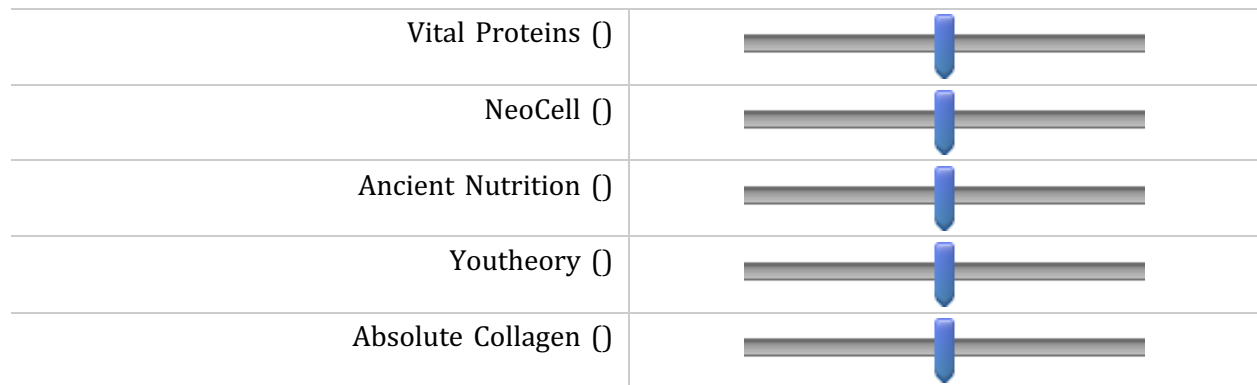
Youtheory  
(5)

Page Break



Q8 On average, how many times per year do you **purchase** the following brands?

0 1 2 4 5 6 7 8 10 11 12

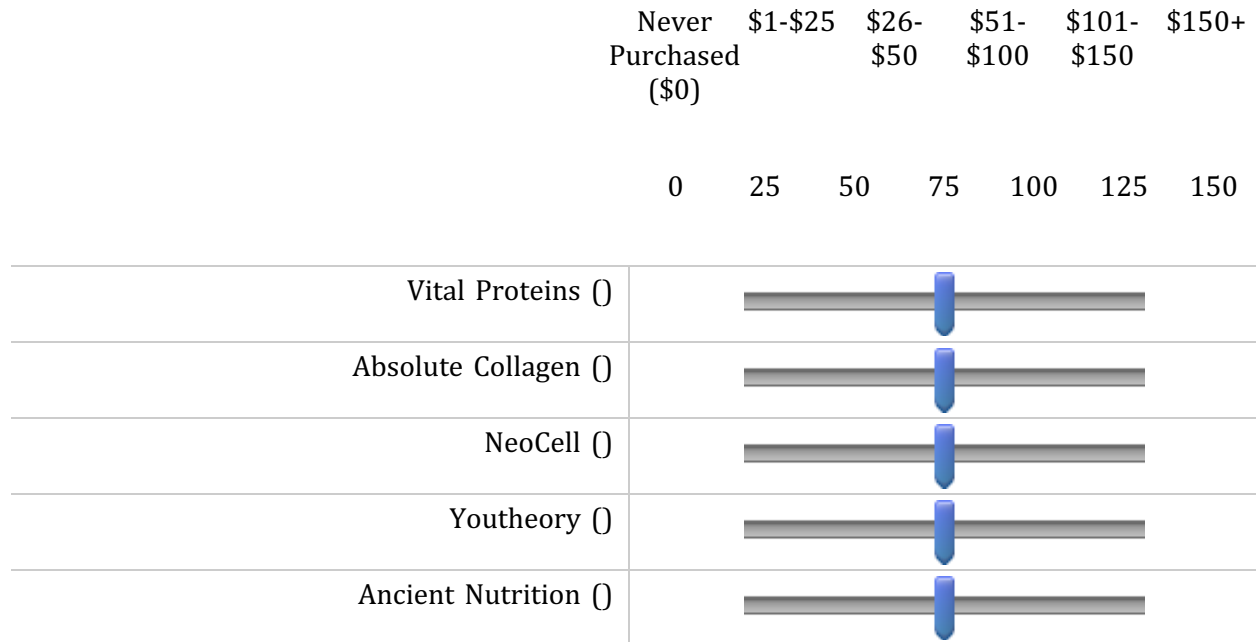


End of Block: Brand Image

Start of Block: Brand Positioning Map



Q9 On average, how much do you spend (USD \$) on the following brands per year?



Q10 How would you rate the **quality** of each of the following brands?

	Very Low Quality (1)	Low Quality (2)	Average Quality (3)	High Quality (4)	Very High Quality (5)	I don't know (6)
Vital Proteins (1)						
Absolute Collagen (2)						

Youtheory  
(3)

Ancient  
Nutrition  
(4)

NeoCell (5)



Q11 How would you rate the **pricing** of the following brands?

	Very Inexpensive (1)	Inexpensive (2)	Fair/Reasonable (3)	Expensive (4)	Very Expensive (5)	I don't know (6)
Vital Proteins (1)						
NeoCell (2)						
Youtheory (3)						
Ancient Nutrition (4)						
Absolute Collagen (5)						

End of Block: Brand Positioning Map

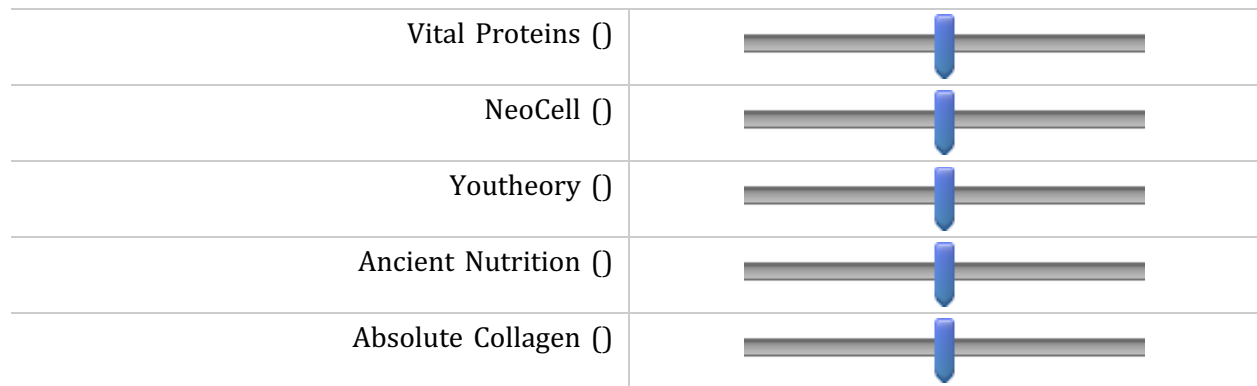
Start of Block: Net Promoter Score



Q12 How likely are you to recommend each of the following brands to a family member or friend? **0 = Not likely at all** and **10 = extremely likely**

Extremely unlikely   Moderately unlikely   Slightly unlikely   Neither likely nor unlikely   Slightly likely   Moderately likely   Extremely likely   I don't know

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10



End of Block: Net Promoter Score



Start of Block: Vital Proteins Specific Questions



Q13 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about **Vital Proteins (VP)**?

	Disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Agree (5)	I don't know (6)
VP has high quality products (1)						
VP offers good value for the price (2)						
VP has a strong brand reputation (3)						
VP is easy to find in-store and online (4)						
VP has wide range of product options (5)						
VP is a brand I trust (6)						
VP supports a healthy lifestyle (7)						
VP communicates its product benefits clearly (8)						
VP products are innovative (9)						

End of Block: Vital Proteins Specific Questions

Start of Block: Sociodemographic Questions



Q14 What gender do you identify with?

Male (1)

Female (2)

Non-binary / third gender (3)

Prefer not to say (4)



Q15 Which country do you currently reside in?

▼ United States of America (1) ... Zimbabwe (196)



Q16 What is your current age?

▼ 18 (1) ... 100 (83)

End of Block: Sociodemographic Questions

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## Honor Code

On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work.

*Sarah Kramer*