



Small But Mighty: Delivering Big Results With Minimal Resources

2024 SSP Conference, Pittsburg, PA

Icebreaker!

Stand up if you...

“Feel that sensory is underleveraged in your company”

“Starting (or have started) a sensory program from scratch”

“Spend a lot of valuable time coding cups &/or doing grunt work”.

“Do not have a ‘proper’ sensory facility to work in”

“Have too few employees at your company to facilitate panels”

“Feel your management is reluctant to fund outside testing resources and consultants”

“Are fighting a ‘golden tongue’ mentality”

Panelists



Annette Hottenstein
Program Manager,
Sensory & Consumer Insights
Fuchs North America



Julie Drainville
Sensory Manager,
Edlong Flavors



Rebecca Maine
Sr. Director,
Strategic Product Insights
Curion



Lauren Yunker
Sr. Sensory Manager,
Nature's Fynd



Our Panel Has Experience Across the Food Industry

	Business to Business (B2B)	Consumer Retail	Research Firm
Small	 		
Large	  	 	 

Audience Poll

To join, go to: ahaSlides.com/3XEY3

Who's in the audience? (CATA)

Join at: ahaSlides.com/3XEY3

Start AhaSlides

Response	Count
None	0
Very Low	0
Low	1
Medium	0
High	1
Very High	0
Other	0

50x

smighty

(small but mighty)



Learning Objectives

To share solutions to common sensory testing challenges that are faced in small sensory departments, these can relate to:

- Facility
- Methodology
- Leveraging Outside Resources
- Growth & Influence

smighty

(small but mighty)





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Facilities

Audience Poll

←

To join, go to: ahaslides.com/3XEY3 ✕

Which sensory lab features do you have?

Feature	Count
Sensory booths	0
Dedicated training/panel room	1
Panelist computers/tablets	1
Sensory survey software (Red Jade...)	1
Red (other) lighting	0
Thermostat/humidity control	0
Air purification system	0
Dedicated kitchen/prep area	0
Focus Group Room	0
Water filtration system	1
Fridge/Freezer	1
Adequate storage	1
Oven/stove	1
n/a	0

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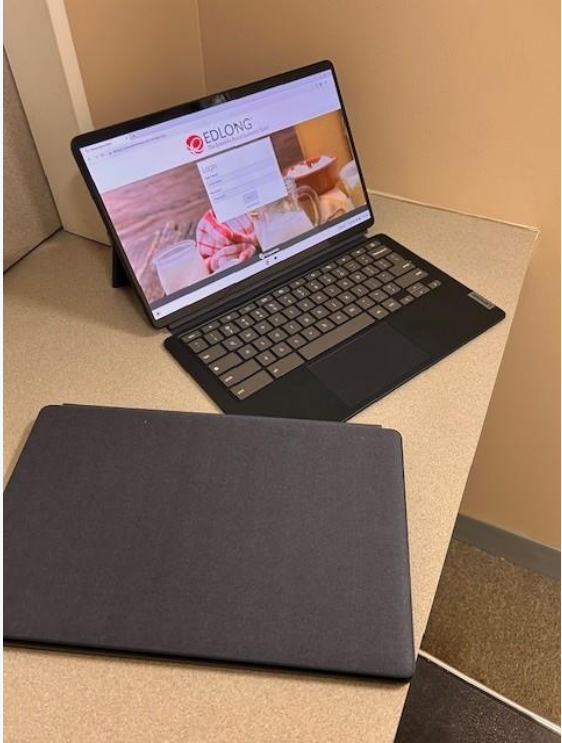
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NEW

1 0

Facility Work-arounds

Hurdle: shared multi-function room



Facility Work-arounds

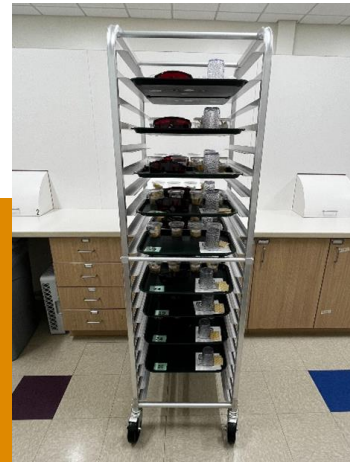
Hurdle: little counter space, no red lights, no panel room



Pricing Gun

\$30

amazon.com



Restaurant Style Speed Cart

\$189

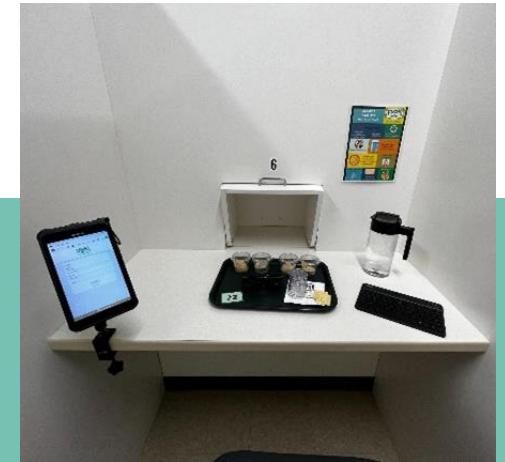
webstrantstore.com



Red Tinted Safety Glasses

\$9.59

amazon.com



Booth Set Up With Tablets And Wireless Keyboard

Facility Work-arounds

Hurdle: no temperature/humidity control, no booths, no whiteboards



Facility Work-arounds

No odor control?



No extra oven space to keep products warm?



No fryer or fryer vents?



Case Study: Focus Group Without Facility

Background: Fuchs North America wants to expand our consumer testing capabilities and wanted to beta test a focus group.

Hurdle: We do not have a dedicated focus group room or a methodology to recruit. Hard to execute with small budget and small team.

Solutions:

- Custom recruited via 1Q panel and local “foodies” Facebook page. Leverage marketing intern to help with recruitment.
- Conducted group in 2nd floor executive conference room.
- Using Teams meeting and “Owl” to record the group and feed into a smaller conference room where clients sit.

Solution: Need to find more efficient means of recruitment



Small Group Discussion

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for a small group discussion. At the top left, there is a back arrow icon. Below it, a QR code is displayed on a grey background. To the right of the QR code, the text reads "Join at: ahaslides.com/3XEY3".

The main content area is a white card with a grey border. At the top of the card, it says "To join, go to: ahaslides.com/3XEY3" with a close icon (X). Below this, the text reads "Discuss with your tablemates any interesting FACILITY hacks you are using. Have a scribe add your favorites." There are three input fields: "Text", "Discussion Topic", and "Answer your lights".

A prominent blue button with the text "Start AhaSlides" is centered on the card. Below the button is a double-up arrow icon. At the bottom of the card, there is a navigation bar with several icons: a menu icon, a back arrow, a forward arrow, a document icon, a leaf icon, a trash icon, a share icon, and a toggle switch.



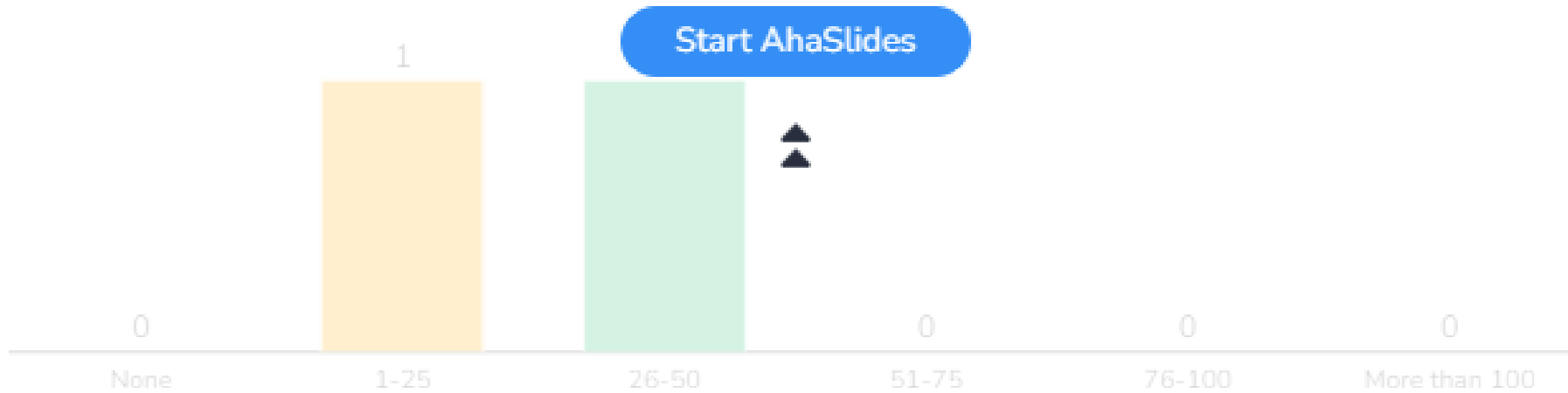
Methodology

Audience Poll



To join, go to: ahaslides.com/3XEY3

How many employee panelists do you have available to you for sensory testing?



4



NEW



2



0

Excite & Engage Employees as Panelists!

- Mandatory sensory orientation for new hires
- Fantastic treats
- Raffle prize every test
- Yearly prizes for top tongue and attendance
- Special luncheon events for “task force” panels
- Leadership Support/Part of yearly goals
- Points for company store / gift cards
- Raffle ticket box
- Watch tax implications



Ensure leadership is on board so employees can participate during work hours!

Case Study: Being Creative with Discrimination Testing and Low “n” Size

Hurdle: Project warrants discrimination testing but have low employee base.

Solutions:

- Utilize replicates or treating each completion as a different panelist
- Repeat test on back-to-back days
- Use a screened/expert panel for higher acuity
- Triangle vs. Tetrad

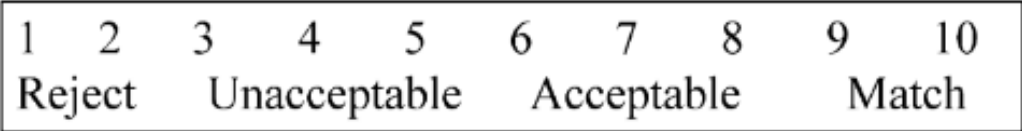


Case Study: Product Quality Checks

Hurdle: Company needed a quick and streamlined way to qualify products for approval of raw ingredients, product batches, alternate supplier ingredients without many participants.

Solutions:

- Prioritize which products you agree to quality check – can be based on volume/sales
- Recruit internal participants to yield at least 6 per panel
- Need Control or Retain Product as a Reference
- Scale is based on how “different” it is from the Reference with 6 to 10 being acceptable enough to approve



If not a match, WHY?

NOT NEARLY ENOUGH	NOT ENOUGH	FLAVOR	TOO MUCH	MUCH TOO MUCH
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Vanillin	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Total Resin	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Woody	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

- Provides additional ratings on which attributes differ, if applicable
- Requires some training for familiarization of certain attributes and definitions of low, medium and high in application
- Ensure objective is clearly stated (this is quality acceptance, not asking for their personal acceptance)

Case Study - Rapid Descriptive Methods

Hurdle: Project warrants more details than discrimination (attributes & intensities), but lack of resources for expert trained panel

Solutions:

- Start with a bench screening
 - Many questions can be answered here! Discuss future testing w/ scientist
 - Qualitative vs. Quantitative
- Employee trained panel on a few core products
 - Build lexicon & scales
- FOCUS! Only utilize attributes that are most impactful to the project/product
- Caveat: may be hard if you have a large product portfolio (large consumer retail or B2B)



Additional Efficiencies...

- Sensory request form (can use Google/Microsoft, etc)
- Utilize a sensory software (help/support, too!)
 - Help/support lines
 - Recruiting/scheduling/incentives
- Streamline Reporting
 - 1-page topline format
 - Enter data into shared database vs. report (QC)
 - Handing off printed results with highlights and notes



To improve efficiency, we propose key initiatives for software integration, reporting, and data handling.

Small Group Discussion

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for a small group discussion. At the top, there is a back arrow on the left and a URL "To join, go to: ahaslides.com/3XEY3" with a QR code on the right. Below this is a text prompt: "Discuss with your tablemates any interesting 'small but mighty' METHODS you are using. Have a scribe add your favorites." Underneath the text is a text input field containing the word "Test". A large blue button labeled "Start AhaSlides" is centered on the screen, with a double-up arrow icon below it. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with several icons: a menu icon, a slide navigation icon showing "5" in a box, a "NEW" badge, a keyboard icon, a lightning bolt icon, a speech bubble icon, a "Group" icon, and a toggle switch. On the far right of the bottom bar, there are icons for a hand and a person, with the number "1" next to the hand icon and "0" next to the person icon.



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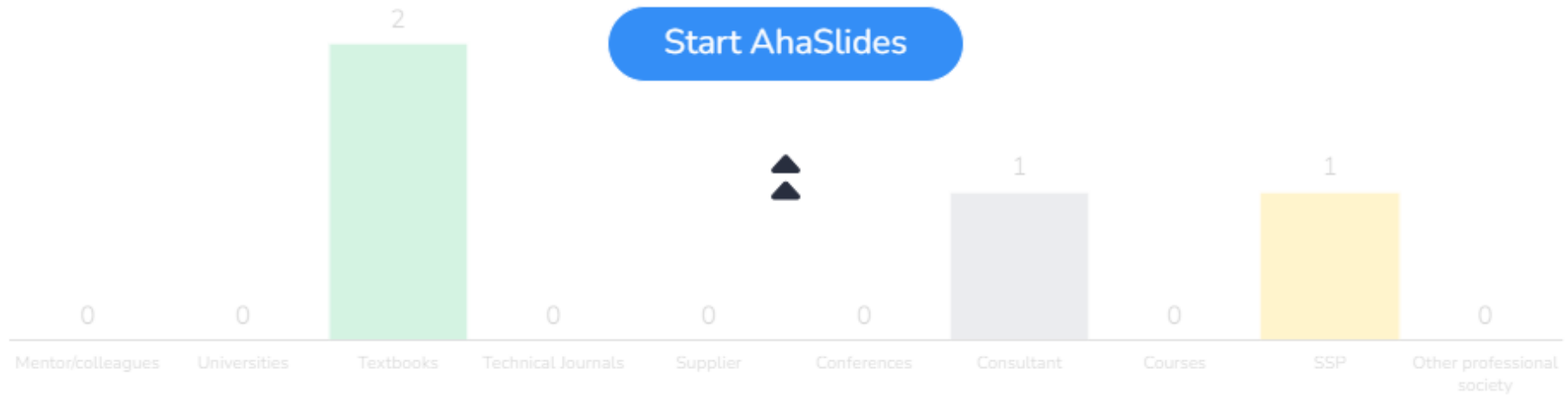
Leveraging Outside Resources

Audience Poll



To join, go to: ahaslides.com/3XEY3 

What are your top 2 resources for sensory & consumer science information....



Navigation icons: menu, back, 6, forward, keyboard, eye, refresh, and a blue button with a question mark.

👤 2 🧑 0

Build your “Board of Directors”

- Use consultants and resources to informally expand a small sensory group
- Have different resources for different needs
 - Descriptive panel resource
 - Sensory statistician resource
 - Consumer testing agencies
 - Sensory software provider
 - Sensory professionals at other companies
 - Message boards.....
- Network at industry events to meet these people



Combine [Supplier] Data w/ Customer

Background: A customer was looking to expand their panelist pool outside of their own company, as a supplier we offered our employees to run CLT testing at no cost.

Solution: We worked together to run concurrent testing which gave our customer confidence to move to outside panel testing and/or make further modifications before running expensive consumer testing.

Cautions:

- Not the product's target demographic
- Still a relatively small "n" size
- *Extent of testing should be based on each individual project/project case. (Risk vs. Reward)

Other options to expand "n" size outside of company: friends & family panel (onsite or pick-up/drop-off), universities, external firm

Industry Groups

Getting involved:

SSP & Regional Connectors

ASTM

IFT Sensory & Consumer Interest Group

Pangborn


Sensometrics Society

Eurosense

Monell

Adjacent market research events
(Quirks, TRME, etc)



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Standard **Active**

Last Updated: Mar 06, 2024

 Track Document

ASTM E3009-24 

Standard Test Method for Sensory Analysis—Tetrad Test

Significance and Use

5.1 The test method is effective for the following test objectives:


5.1.1 To determine whether a perceptible difference results or a perceptible difference does not result, for example, when a change is made in ingredients, processing, packaging, handling, or storage; or

5.1.2 To select, train, and monitor assessors.

5.2 The test method itself does not change whether the purpose of the test is to determine that the products are perceptibly different versus that the products are sufficiently similar to be used interchangeably. Only the selected values of α , β , and δ or P_d change. If the objective of the test is to determine if there is a perceptible difference between two products, then initially the products are assumed to be indistinguishable (for example, $H_0: \delta$ or $P_d = 0$) and the data are examined to determine if the assumption can be rejected (that is, conclude that the products are perceptibly different). If the

Version


E3009-24 **Active** ▾

Language 

English (United States) ▾

Format

PDF ▾

What is a Redline? 

Price: \$76.00

[Add to Cart](#)

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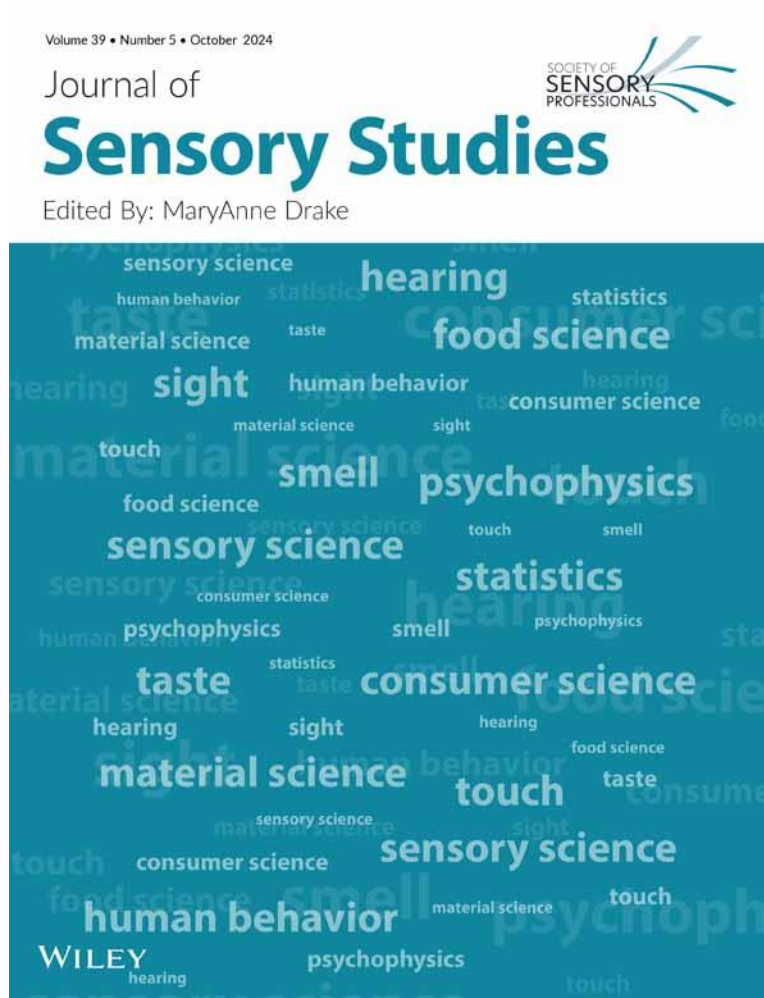
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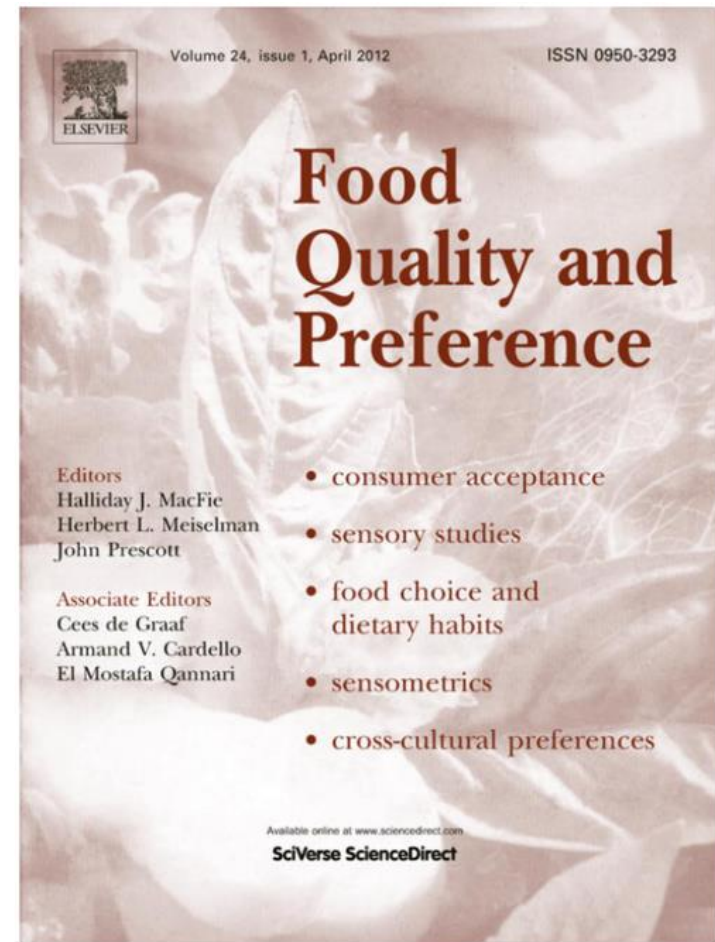
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ASTM Committee E18 on Sensory Evaluation was formed in 1960. E18 meets twice a year, usually in April and October, with about 50 members attending over three days of technical meetings capped by a presentation on relevant topics in the Sensory Evaluation Field. The Committee, with a membership of 187, currently has jurisdiction over 41 standards.

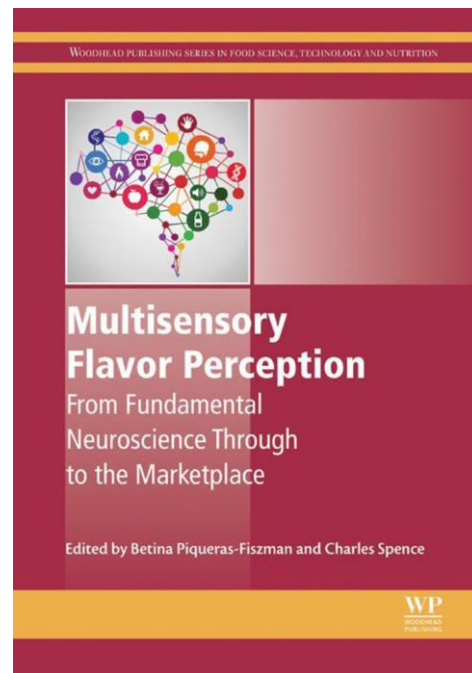
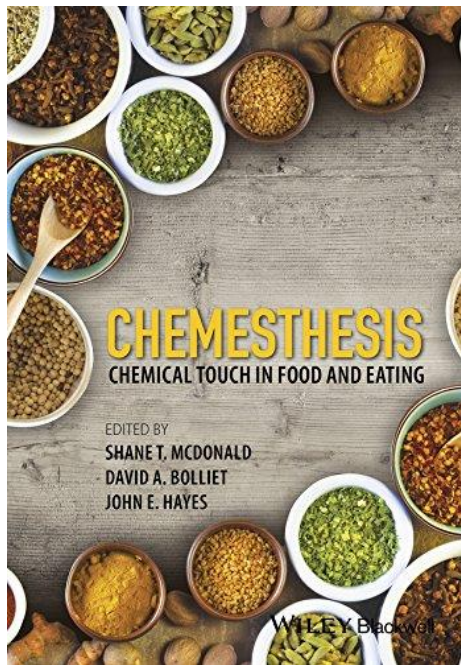
Journals



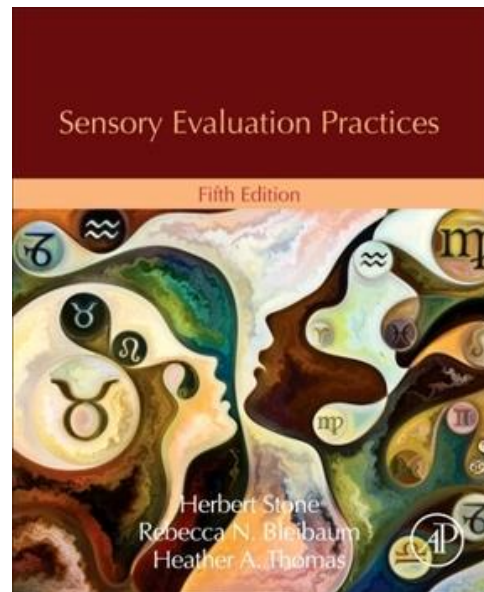
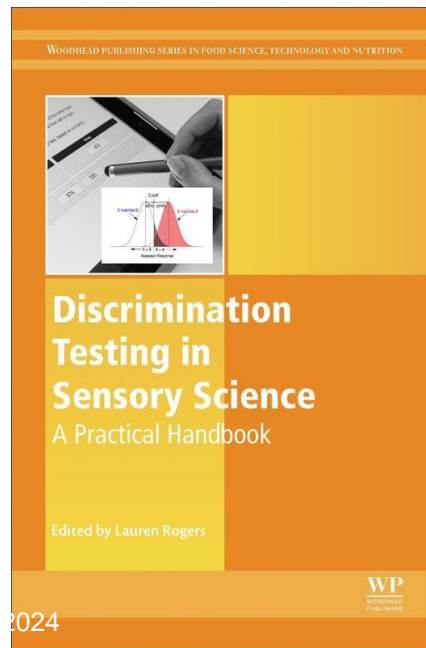
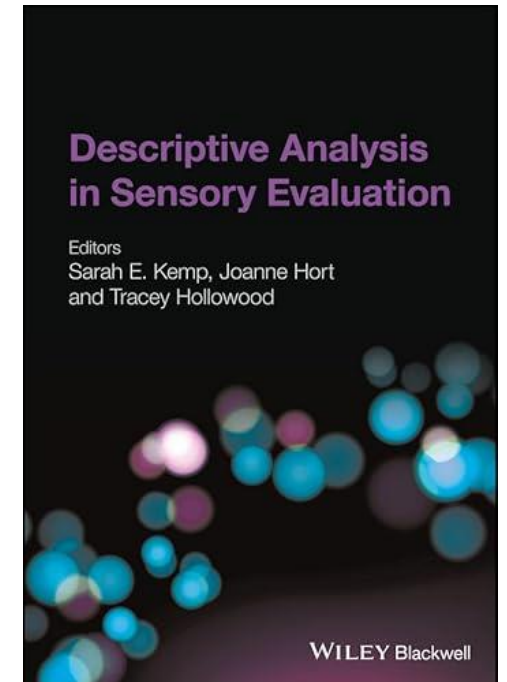
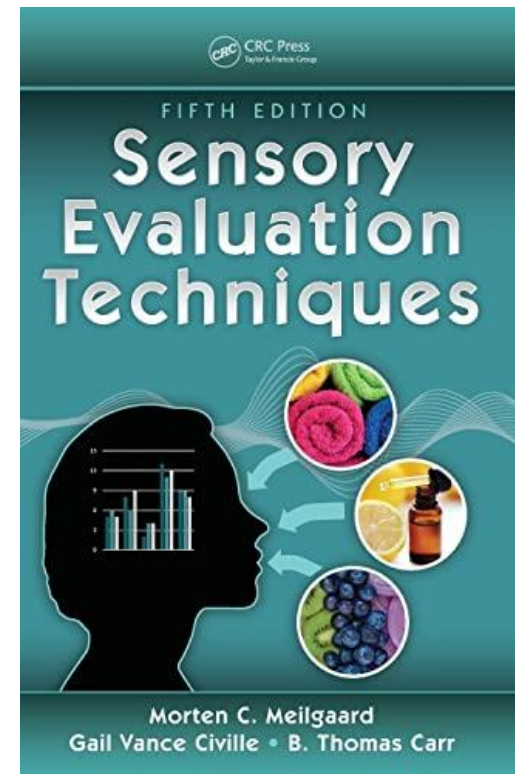
Official journal of SSP




Official journal of the Sensometric Society & European Sensory Science Society



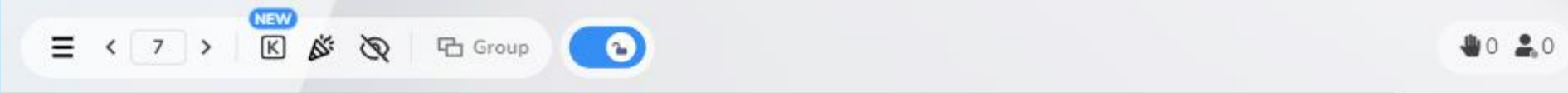
Favorite Textbooks.....



Small Group Discussion

To join, go to: ahaslides.com/3XEY3 

Discuss with your tablemates any interesting some of your favorite outside RESOURCES/training courses about sensory. Have a scribe add your favorites.





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Growth & Influence

Show & Make Your Value Known

Background: I work in a start-up & was the 1st sensory hire - developed the program. Nature's Fynd is a biotech company that makes food out of fungi. Not everyone has a background in the food industry or had ever heard of "sensory science".

Hurdle: Colleagues & leadership with little to no knowledge of "sensory science" or its value to the company. Don't know when to utilize.

Solutions:

- Create a **mission statement** to help people understand the function
 - "They don't know what they don't know."
- **Take a seat at the table** - invite yourself to meetings & into water cooler conversations
- Hold a basic **sensory training** with non-technical cross-functional partners
- **Find your allies** in upper management or invite to shadow/observe a big panel

Set your boundaries...

Background: Fuchs Gruppe is the largest privately owned spice & seasoning company. I am the 1st sensory scientist at my company and started the program from scratch. 2 years ago we hired a sensory scientist in Germany and most recently Brazil.

Hurdle: Sensory testing is labor & time intensive. We have a very small group and facility. Management and customers keep asking for “trained panels” to make “spider plots” and are reluctant to spend \$ on outside resources.

Solutions:

- **Familiarize management** on sensory methods
- **Understand resource commitment** involved in the various methods
- **Provide metrics** on sensory group size relative to business
- **Identify outside suppliers** for work that cannot be done in house
- **Focus** on what you have the bandwidth for
- Make sure everything you do have **business benefit**

Get Familiar With Methods That Fit Your Companies Needs



Discrimination

- Triangle#
- Tetrad*#
- Duo-trio#
- 2-AFC#
- Paired Comparison#
- Threshold Testing#
- A not A#



Descriptive

- Spectrum method
- Quantitative descriptive analysis (QDA)
- Free Choice Profiling
- Different from Control (DFC)#
- Flavor Profile Method
- Texture Profile Method
- #Lexicon Development
- Time Intensity
- Rapid methods%



Consumer

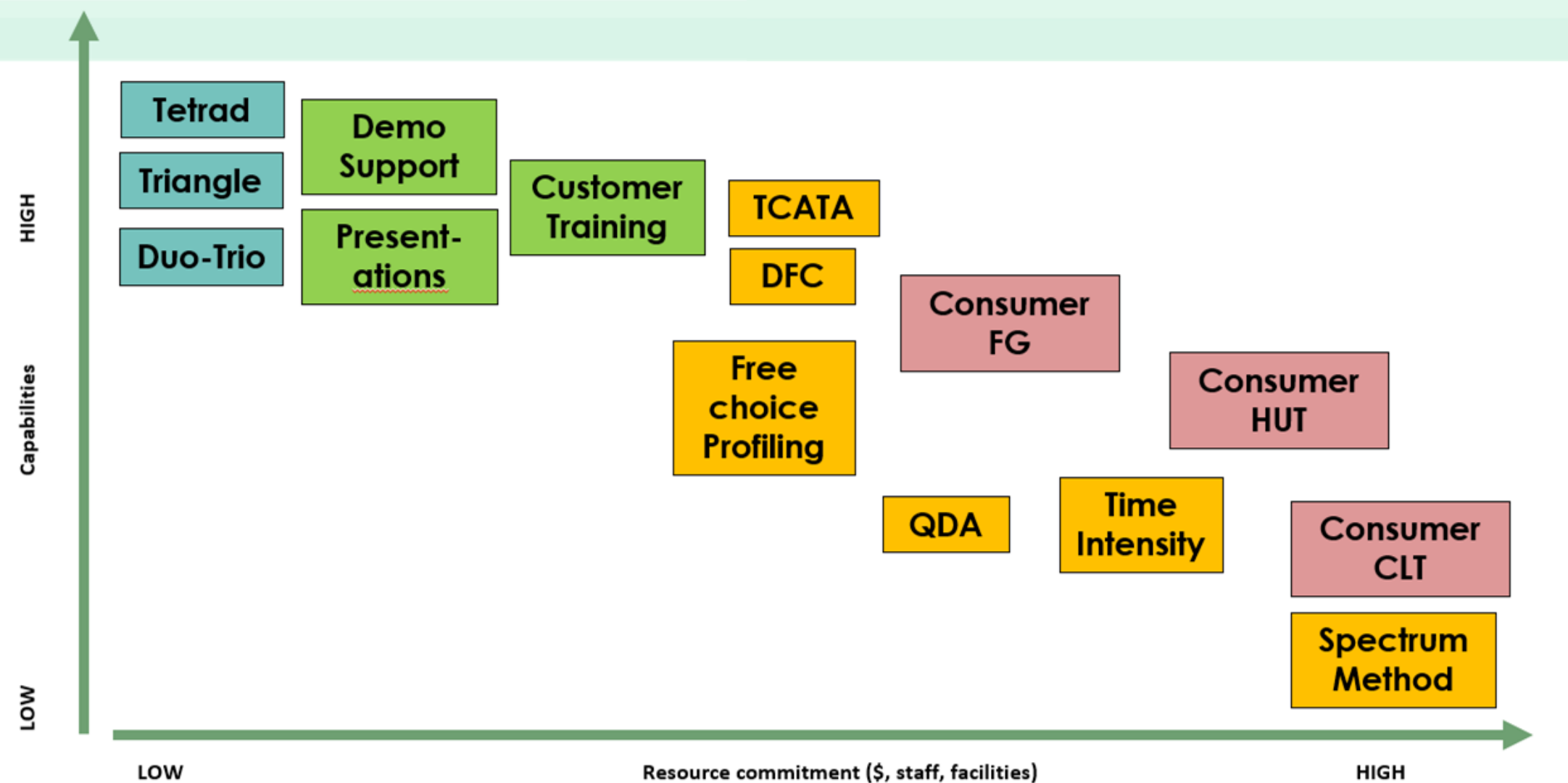
- Acceptance Testing
- Central location test (CLT) *#
- Home Use Test (HUT) *#
- Penalty analysis#
- TURF#
- Conjoint
- Drivers of Liking
- Focus Group%
- Ideation Sessions#
- Artificial Intelligence%
- Restaurant Tours#



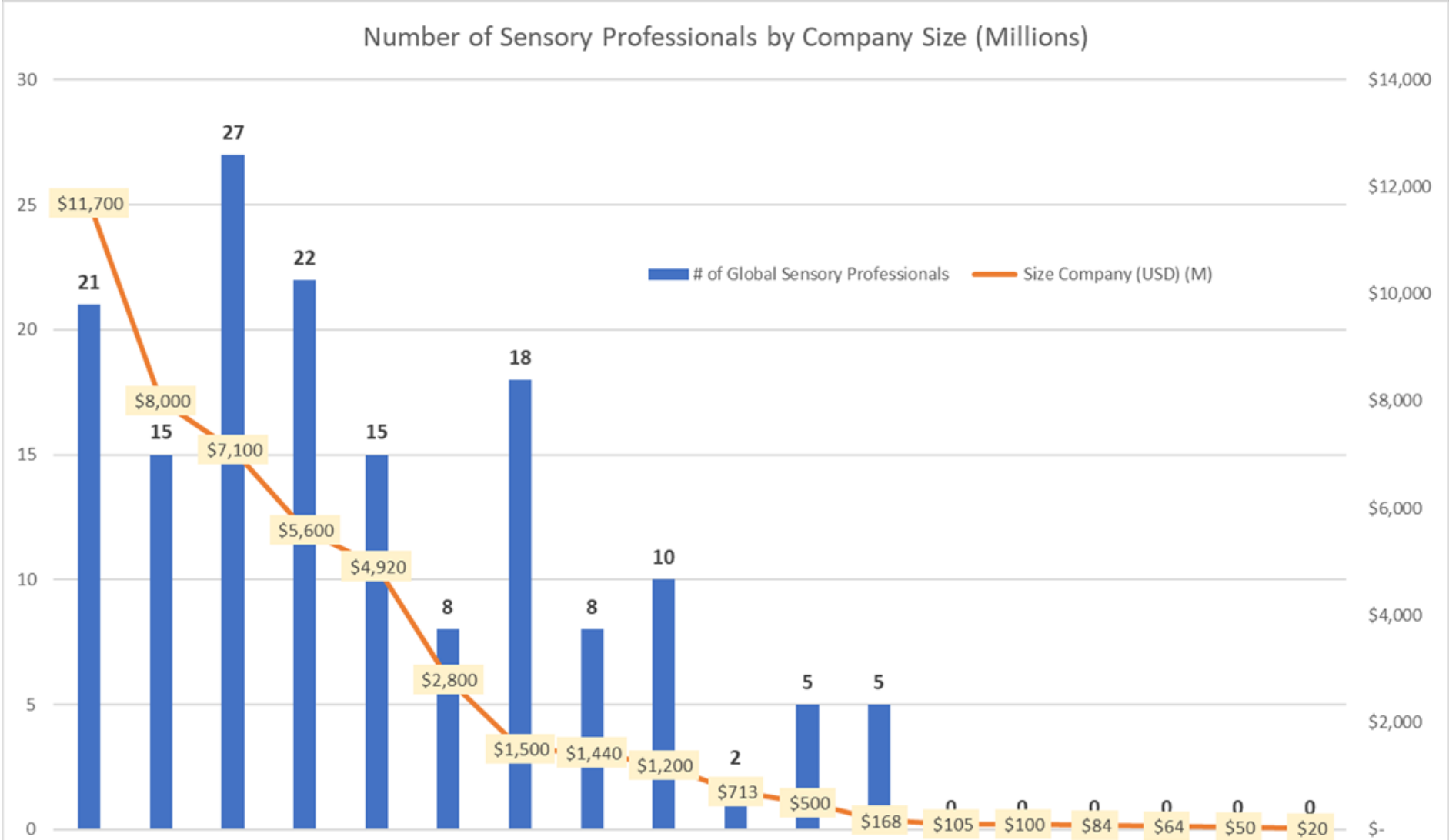
Sensory Marketing

- Demo Support
- Presentations
- Trainings
- Marketing Materials

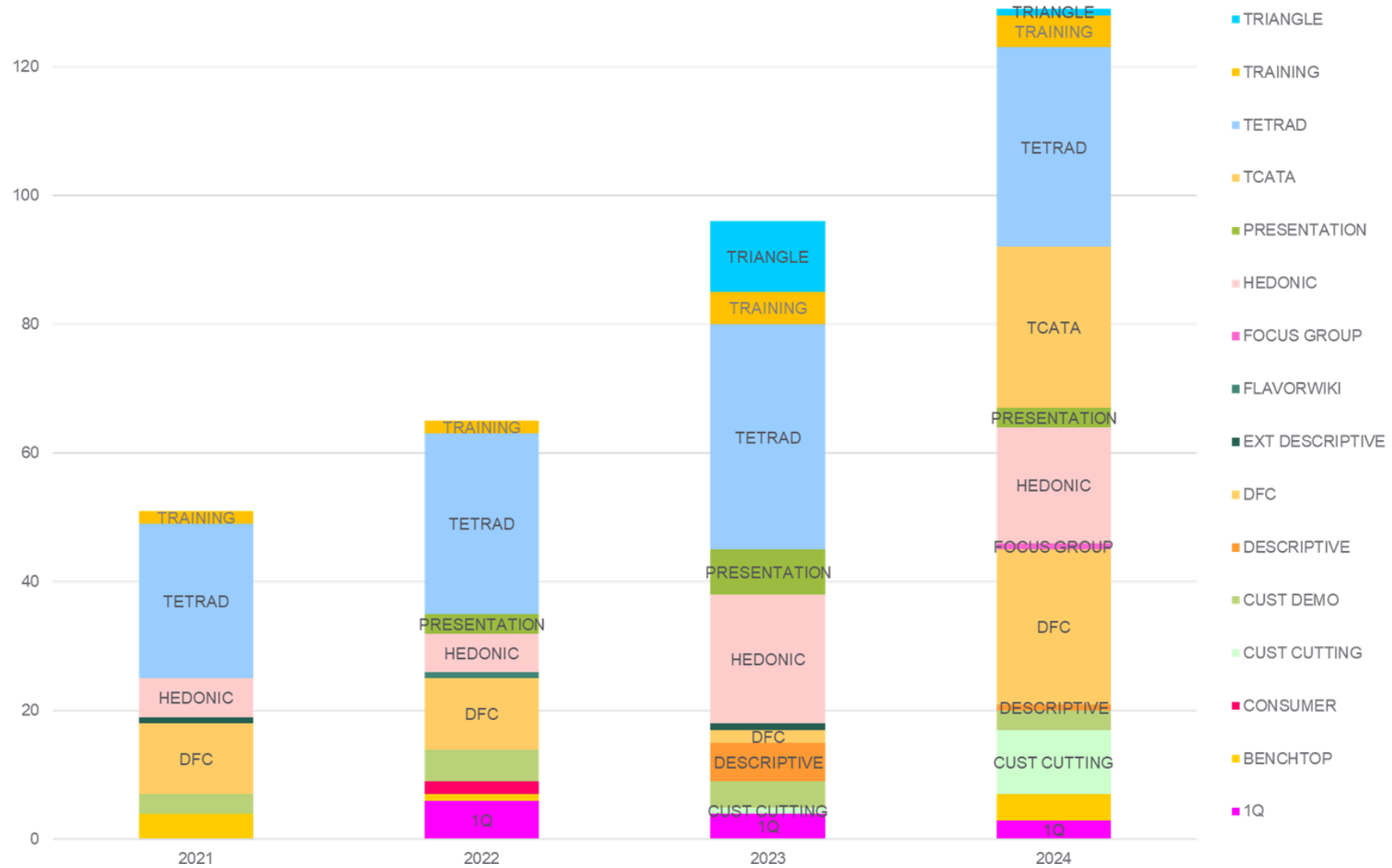
Know Thou Commitment....



Competitive Analysis



Metrics, metrics, metrics!!!



Align To Company Initiatives And Bringing Together The Story

Sensory touches so many areas:

- Innovation
- QC
- Product Development
- Marketing / Marketing Research
- Sales
- Production



Creating a Vision

Know what you are there for and communicate it

Follow the budget – who is the ultimate decision maker when it comes to product testing funds?





SELF REFLECTION EXERCISE





THANK
YOU



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Thank You!