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# Asking Smarter Questions

*By Philip Wolf*

# Presentation Summary

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- **Playing a broader Strategic role**
- **Creating Value**
- **Background**
- **Historical Problems**
- **The Approach**
- **Questionnaire Design**
- **Analysis**
- **Key Learning**
- **Conclusion**

# Fredrik Nauckhoff

## Play a broader strategic role

- **How we achieved this through product work**
- **More actionable info from respondents**
- **More meaningful results for users**
- **More cross functional communication**
- **More focus on corporate core values**



# Creating Value In Research

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- **Manage the research project first**
- **Involve those functions to achieve success**
- **Get the correct answer/ask the right question**
- **Provide insight / know what's important**
- **Make results actionable, meaningful, affordable**
- **Cross functional communication saves design time and dollars by dealing with limitations before they occur**

# Paper Background

- **Corporate mandate “consumer driven product”**
- **Work done over five years**
- **North America, England, Japan**
- **15,000 respondents, 25 cities**
- **Beer market but fragrance was the breakthrough**
- **SAS software, psychographics, graphic software**

# Historical Problems

- Overall ratings close
- Close repeated directional losses
- Bitterness higher, sweetness lower, no character
- Little direction from results
- Results were not actionable



# Historical Problems

- Paired comparison tests getting expensive
- Specs did not explain consumer ratings
- Experts could taste minute differences but our direction did not help
- Marketing/production communication poor



# The Approach

## Building On The Experts Knowledge

- How did they learn?
- How did they train?
- What processes were used?
- How was the product prepared?
- How did they discuss attributes?
- How did they agree?
- Could brands be recognized?
- Could process and ingredients be recognized?







# The Approach

## Giving Consumers Fragrance Power

- We would have to “prompt” respondents
- Use single “familiar” notes
- Select notes on the basis of balance, ingredients and process
- Include mouth feel descriptors
- About forty notes/descriptors chosen



# The Approach

## Copying The Lab Environment

- Brief respondents on a Sample question with a Q&A period
- Give respondents flavor note exposure with a “trial” of their “ideal” beer
- Follow Lab procedures as close as possible in product selection, temperature, environment, lighting, product preparation and presentation



# The Approach

## Copying The Lab Environment

- Ensure glass shape and size meets the fragrance needs as well as legal drinking limit restrictions

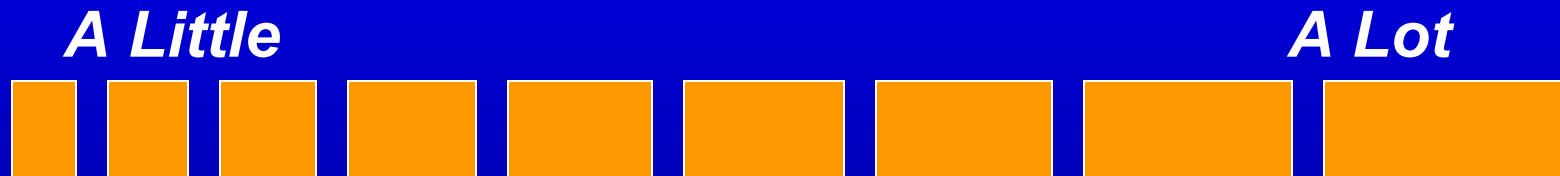


- Account for rotational influence of product, respondent and trial effects.

# Questionnaire

## Design and Analysis

- Don't let a number rating influence note strength



- Account for rotational influence wherever you can- that includes question sequence

# Analysis

## Fragrance Groupings

Any aroma, Sweet, Smooth creamy, Pleasant Aftertaste

Malty, Robust, Thick,  
Body, Filling, Color,  
Spicy, Sawdust, Nutty,  
Canned Corn, Cereal,  
Caramel

Banana, Apple-Like,  
Lemon/Grapefruit,  
Flowery, Grassy,  
Honey, V8 Juice

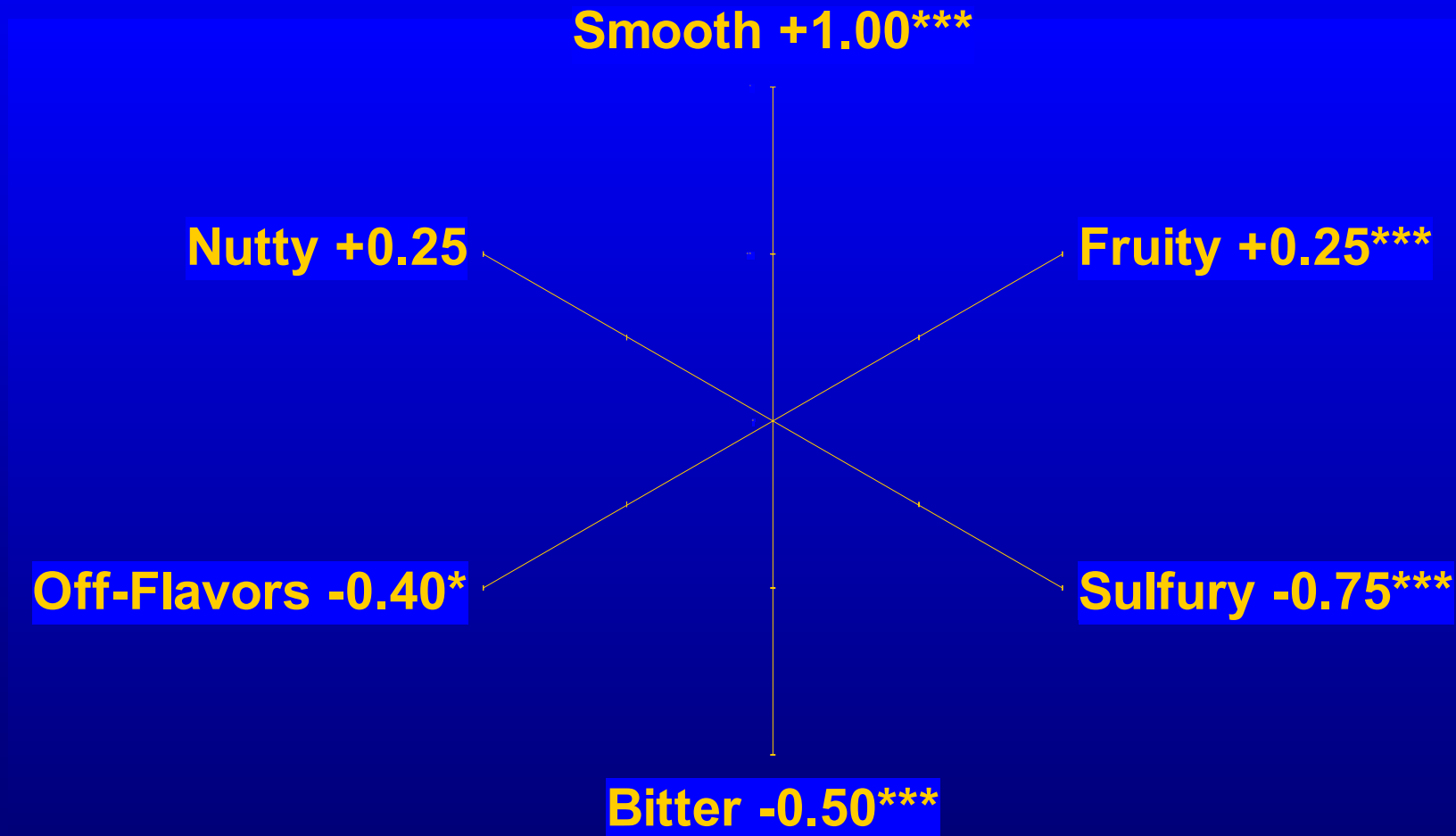
Soapy, Cardboard,  
Musty, Moldy,  
Carbonation

Toy Model Glue,  
Sulfury, Rotten Egg  
Garlic, Burnt Rubber,  
Brunt Toast, Cheesy,  
Amount Of Aftertaste

Sour, Rough Bitter, Dry

# Analysis

## Clusters to Overall Rating



# Analysis

## Brand vs. Brand

**Brand A**

**Smooth +1.00\*\*\***

**Brand B**

**Nutty +0.25**

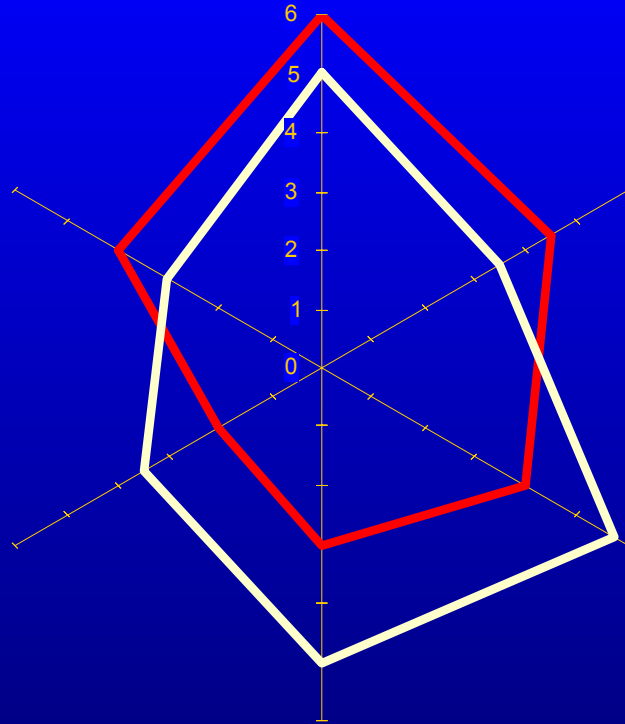
**Fruity +0.25\*\*\***

**Off-Flavors -0.40\***

**Sulfury -0.75\*\*\***

**Bitter -0.50\*\*\***

6  
5  
4  
3  
2  
1  
0





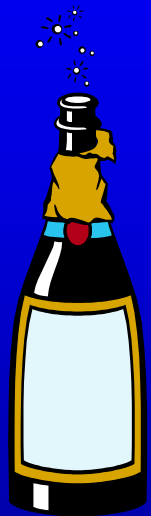
# Key Learning

Consumers Don't Recognize Product Defects  
The Way Experts Do

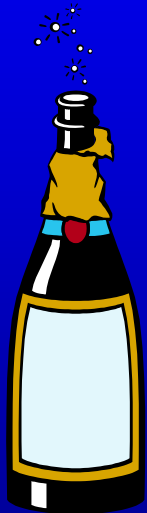


# Key Learning

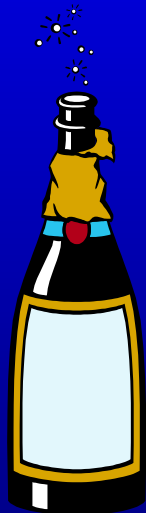
Image Can Override Fragrance Perception



Imported



Brewed  
Under  
Licence



Brewed  
By Locals



# Key Learning

## Matching Perception to Taste



**Starts**

**Bold**

**Finishes**

**Clean**

# Key Learning

## Dealing With Fragrance By Country

### Tradition



### Customs



### History



# Key Learning

## Don't Become A Policeman

- If business plans have not been going well be sensitive conducting research on one issue
- Recognize the blind and branded components of poor performance within the same survey
- Create an environment in which everyone contributes towards a solution



# Key Learning

## Building Confidence Will Grow The Strategic Role of Research

- **All functions must do more with less**
- **All additional demands must be assessed**
- **Research must be sensitive to these pressures**
- **Solicit the broader concerns and issues**
- **Seek a constructive and balanced approach**
- **Avoid the “silo” syndrome**
- **Seek input and support at each step**
- **Show staff how to win their “bosses” over**

# Key Learning

## Success Depends On The Support Of Others

- **Research offers the opportunity to bring together functions that normally do not work together**
- **Be proactive in seeking opportunities to assist other departments in their decision making**
- **Recognize opportunities, assist others and gain their support**



# Conclusion

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- **Always seek new ways to uncover human behavior**
- **You can ask technical questions with respondents**
- **Take advantage of the insights of other functions**
- **Seek the “Bigger” picture to increase your value**
- **Seek analysis patterns that fall inside and outside of conventional thinking**
- **Communicate throughout the whole process**



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