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In-home panels, a new normal for sensory descriptive analysis

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**More pragmatic practices in
descriptive analysis while
maintaining the ever so
important panel performance
and quality of data.**

Conclusion:

Opening descriptive analysis
to allow more variability,
including being closer to real
life.

Allow evaluation protocols
for products to be more
adapted to the actual use of
products at home.

Contributes to more consu-
mer centricity, increasing
predictive power and return
on research for the descripti-
ve analysis as a whole.



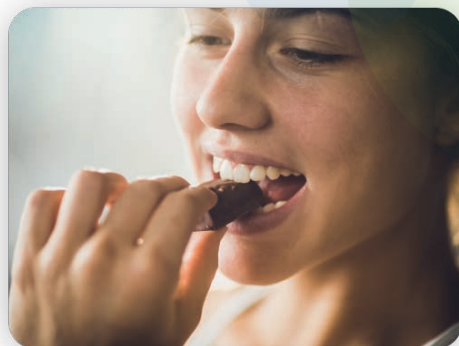
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Background & Rationale:

The current global pandemic has forced our traditional ways of working to evolve very rapidly.

In this context, sensory analysis performed with trained assessors in a central facility has shifted to more sustainable practices. Among them, **at-home panels have turned out to be an efficient alternative to traditional ones.**

In-home descriptive panels allow increased flexibility - a perfect match in agile and consumer-centric product development.



Sensory descriptive panels @ Facility



In-Home Descriptive Panels

Location	Sensory Booths in Facility	Partly at facility, partly at home
Training moderation	Done in person within a group as open interaction, sharing product perceptions, defining attributes and establishing the attributes list / lexicon	Use of online platforms, videos and tutorials to discuss and explain in online groups, sharing documents, establishing the lexicon More one-to-one virtual meetings between panel leader and panellists individually using webcams and video recording
Product preparation	According to defined preparation protocols	Special preparation for home delivery: facilitating easy, safety and hygienic use for home panellist

Advantages of Panels @ Facility

- Controlled environmental conditions: room temperature, relative humidity, lights, distance between assessors, neutral odour, visual and sound ambiance
- Controlled product preparation: size, quantity, temperature of service, anonymisation, etc.
- Interaction between panelists during training to obtain agreement between assessors

Advantages of in-Home Panels

- Allow the measuring of long-term sensory effects such as long-lastingness or remanence of characteristics without constraining panelists to stay in a central facility until the moment of measure
- Allow home conditions (material, water temperature and hardness) to be taken into account

Challenges of in-Home Panels to Overcome

Creating detailed and supportive documents:

- Easily understandable instructions for test protocol (pictures, videos, scenarios, etc.)
- Balanced presentation design for evaluation of products (sides of face/hair, days of evaluation)
- Instructions on testing environment (temperature, lights in evaluation room, etc.)

Panelist compliance control:

- Agreement to show testing environment at home
- Being familiar with digital tools (webcams, online questionnaires)

Maintain the benefits of interaction between panelists

- Ensure group homogeneity and consistency in evaluation
- Use of video-conferencing tools to ensure group dynamic (alignment on definitions and scores usage)

