Summary: Panelist Engagement Workshop – Breakout Session Ideas

This document captures engagement ideas generated for **Consumer Panels, Employee Panels, and Trained Panels**, organized by estimated cost level (**No Cost, Minimal Cost, and Moderate Cost**).

Key Themes Across All Panel Types

Several engagement strategies appeared consistently across groups:

- Recognition and appreciation
    - Thank you notes/cards
    - Awards and recognition programs
    - Management acknowledgements
    - Employee/panelist spotlights
    - Milestone and attendance recognition
- Food and social events
    - Pizza parties
    - Brunches/lunches
    - Snacks and treats
    - Potlucks
    - Holiday celebrations
- Incentives and rewards
    - Monetary incentives
    - Gift cards
    - Raffles
    - Giveaways and prizes
    - Points-based reward systems

- Gamification and fun activities
    - Trivia
    - Bingo
    - Prize wheels
    - Mystery flavor panels
    - Escape rooms
    - Blind tasting challenges
- Education and involvement
    - Training opportunities
    - Company updates
    - Understanding business impact
    - Leadership engagement
    - Cross-department learning opportunities

Consumer Panel Highlights

The ideas for consumer panels focused primarily on:

- Making participants feel welcome and valued
- Communicating the importance of their feedback
- Simplifying participation through shorter screeners and improved ballots
- Providing incentives such as coupons, giveaways, gift cards, and monetary rewards
- Creating a fun experience through snacks, swag, raffles, and gamification

Employee Panel Highlights

Employee panel ideas were the most extensive and emphasized:

- Recognition programs and management visibility

- Social events and food-based gatherings
- Educational opportunities and company updates
- Friendly competition through trivia, challenges, and gamification
- Opportunities for personal connection, such as birthdays, cultural celebrations and family-focused events
- Continuous feedback and performance reporting
- Creating variety through special activities, tours, open houses, food tours and themed panels

Trained Panel Highlights

Ideas for trained panels focused on maintaining motivation and reducing fatigue associated with repetitive testing:

- Advanced training and professional development
- Regular recognition and milestone celebrations
- Stronger leadership engagement and visibility
- Learning experiences such as open houses, department tours and educational sessions
- Team-building experiences, field trips, volunteer opportunities and off-site activities
- Fun sensory-focused activities such as mystery tastings, flavor spotlights and calibration exercises
- Mechanisms for listening to panelists, including surveys and anonymous comment boxes

Overall Takeaway

The breakout sessions suggest that successful panelist engagement is built on five core pillars:

1. **Recognition** – showing appreciation and celebrating contributions.
2. **Fun** – incorporating games, challenges and social activities.
3. **Rewards** – providing meaningful incentives when possible.
4. **Connection** – fostering relationships with colleagues, leadership and the broader company.
5. **Growth & Purpose** – helping panelists understand their impact and offering opportunities to learn and develop.