PANELIST ENGAGEMENT

BUZZWORD OR GAME CHANGER?





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Louisville, KY

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10:15 AM – 11:45 AM
Session

Our Panel Communities

Different perspectives. Trusted insights.



Consumer Panel

Real consumers who share their opinions and experiences to help shape products and services.



Employee Panel

Employees who provide valuable feedback from the inside, helping the company to improve and grow.

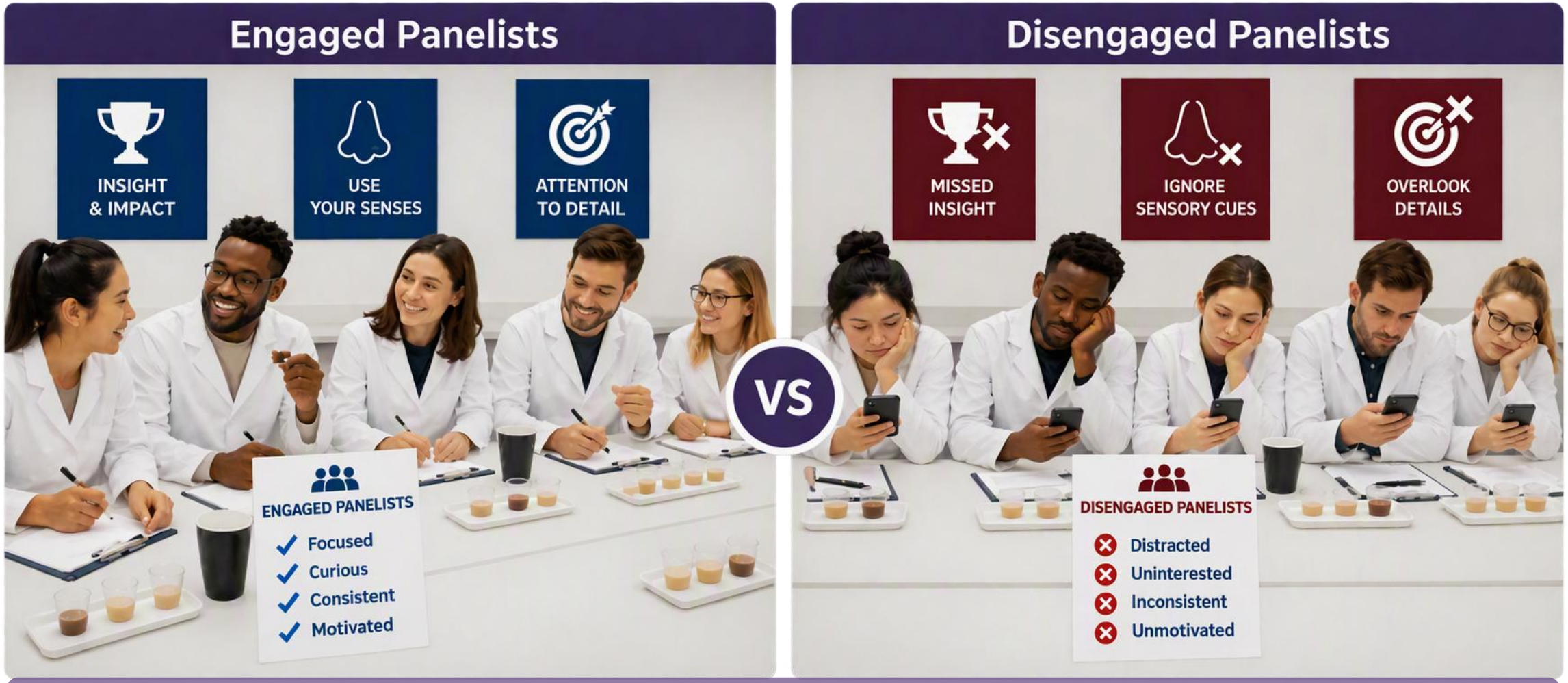


Trained Panel

Highly engaged panelists who are trained to provide focused, high-quality insights.

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Panelist Level of Engagement



There may not always be clear visual signs that a panelist is engaged or disengaged

WHY PANELISTS BECOME DISENGAGED

Common Sources of Frustration That Reduce Engagement, Motivation, and Retention.

1. **INSUFFICIENT REWARDS**
2. **REPETITIVE WORK & WORKLOAD**
3. **LACK OF APPRECIATION & IMPACT**
4. **LIMITED SUPPORT & FEEDBACK**
5. **OPERATIONAL FRUSTRATIONS**

THESE FRUSTRATIONS LEAD TO... → **DISENGAGEMENT** →

- **LOWER RETENTION**
- **REDUCED MOTIVATION**
- **POORER DATA QUALITY**

The biggest driver of disengagement isn't one issue alone. It occurs when panelists feel undercompensated, overburdened, undervalued, and disconnected from the purpose of their contribution.



Every organization's costs will differ, but the business impact is similar. Partnering with HR, recruiting, finance and sensory teams to estimate the true cost of panelist turnover can help quantify the return on investment and help build a compelling case for engagement and retention programs.

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THE BUSINESS CASE FOR PANELIST ENGAGEMENT

Cost of Engagement
None to Minimal Costs



Small, proactive investments

Recognition, communication and feedback that help sustain participation.

VS

Cost of Disengagement
Significant Costs



Larger, reactive costs

Replacement, delays and quality risks that emerge after disengagement.

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CONSUMER PANEL





$ = motivation to attend

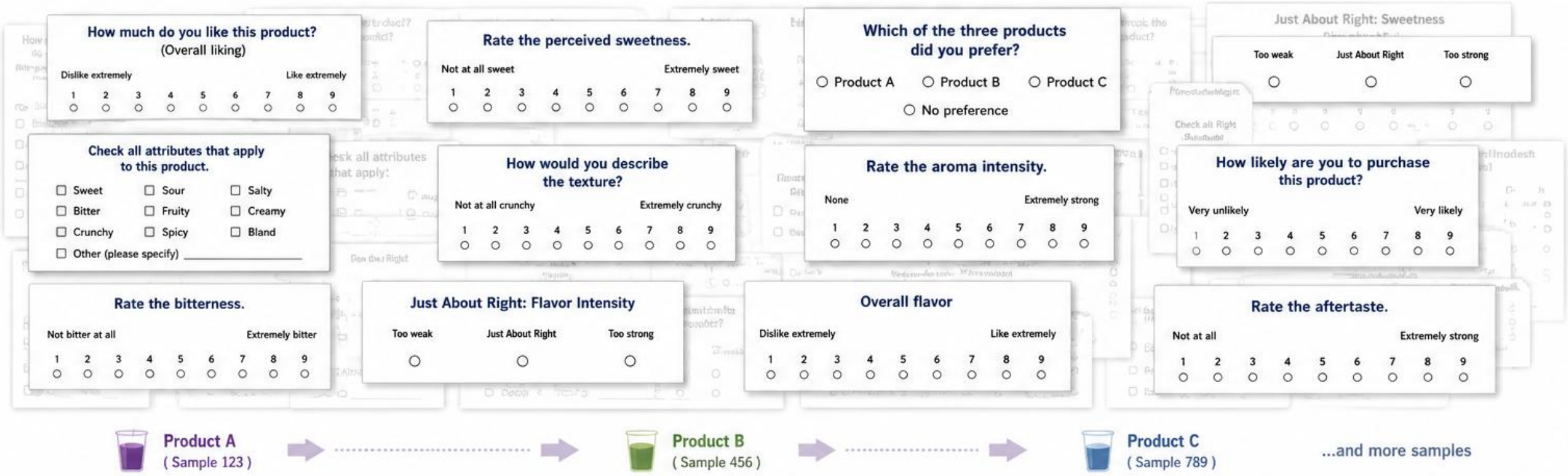


$ ≠ good data

Study Design



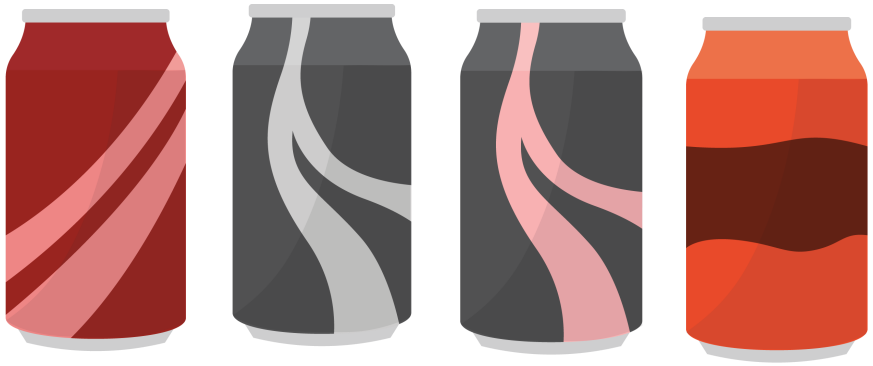
Study Design



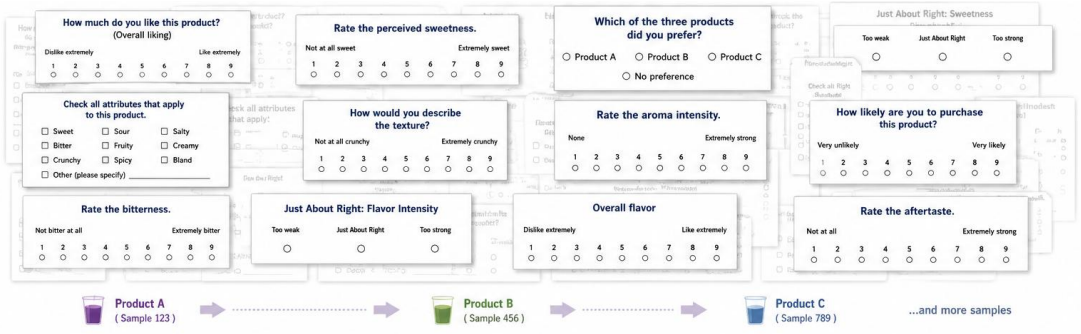
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Study Design

Multiple Similar Products

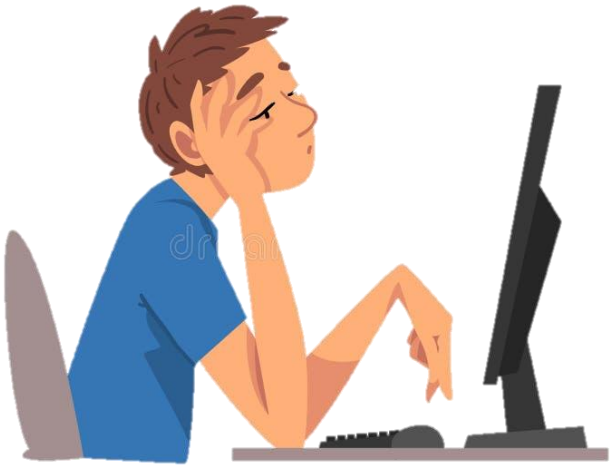


Multiple Questions



Monotonous

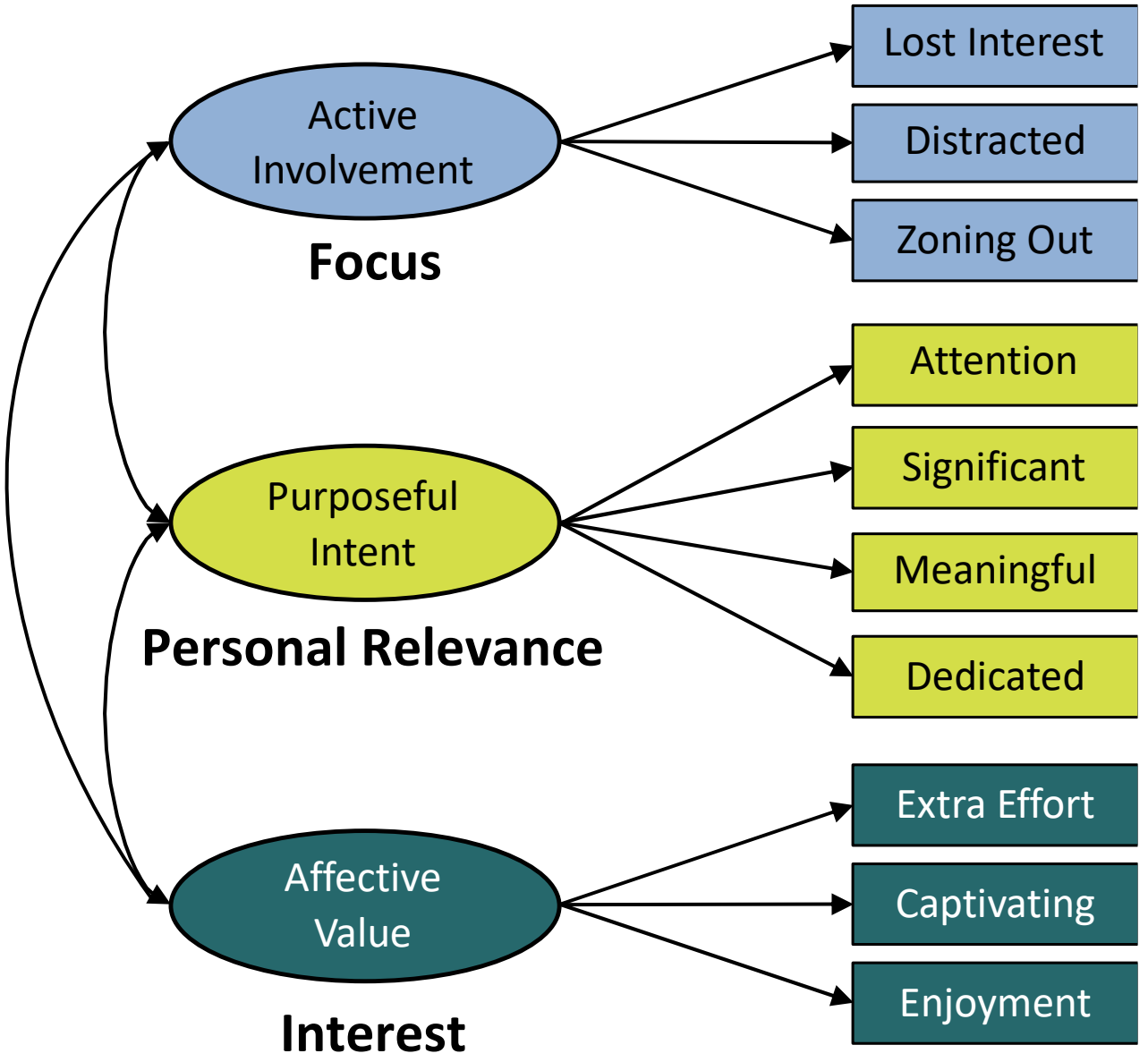
Lack of Engagement

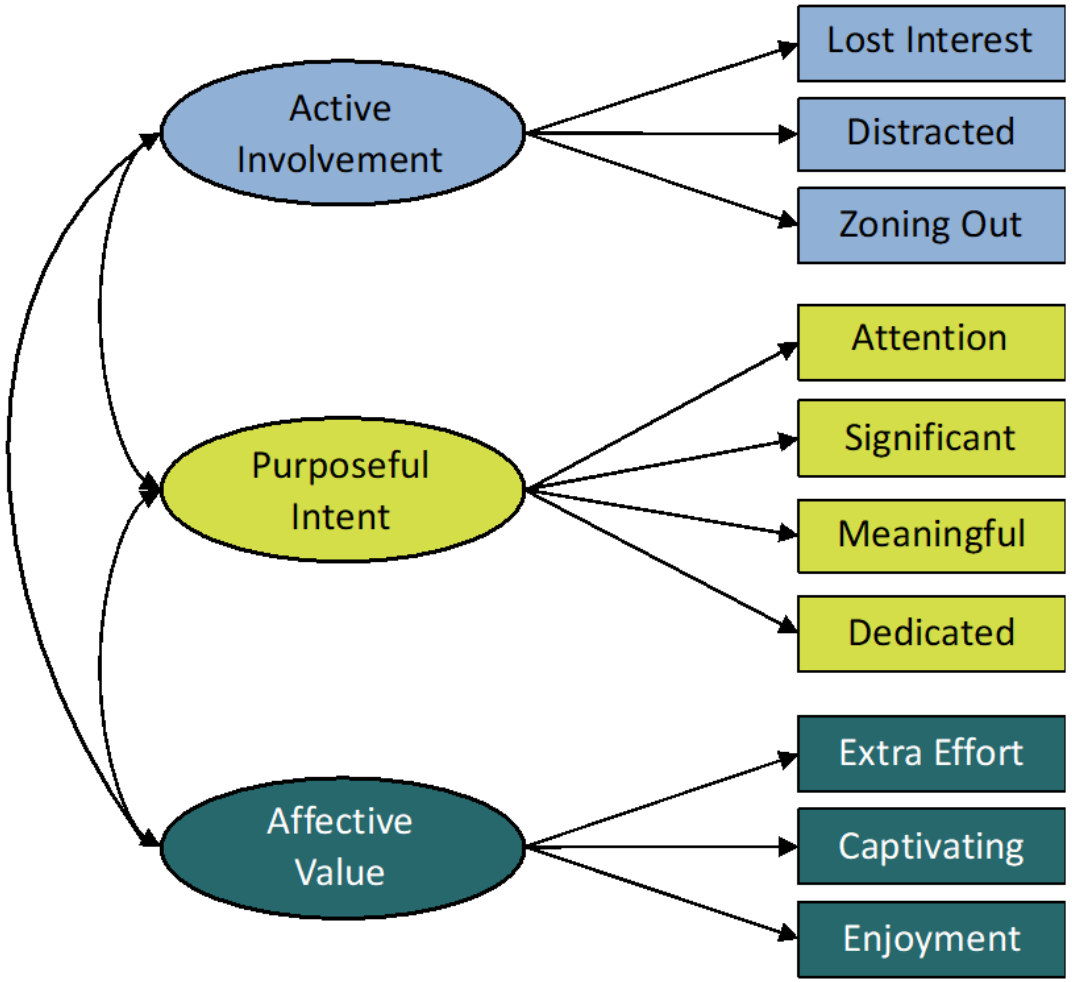


But how do you measure engagement?



Proposed Model of Engagement





Engagement Questionnaire (EQ)
I lost interest in the task.
I was distracted.
I felt myself zoning out during the task.
I wanted to devote my full attention to the task.
My contribution was significant to the outcome of the task.
I found the task meaningful.
I felt dedicated to finish the task.
I was motivated to expend extra effort during the task.
I found the task captivating.
During the task, I was enjoying myself.

Hannum and Simons 2020

Active Involvement (Focus)

Purposeful Intent (Personal Relevance)

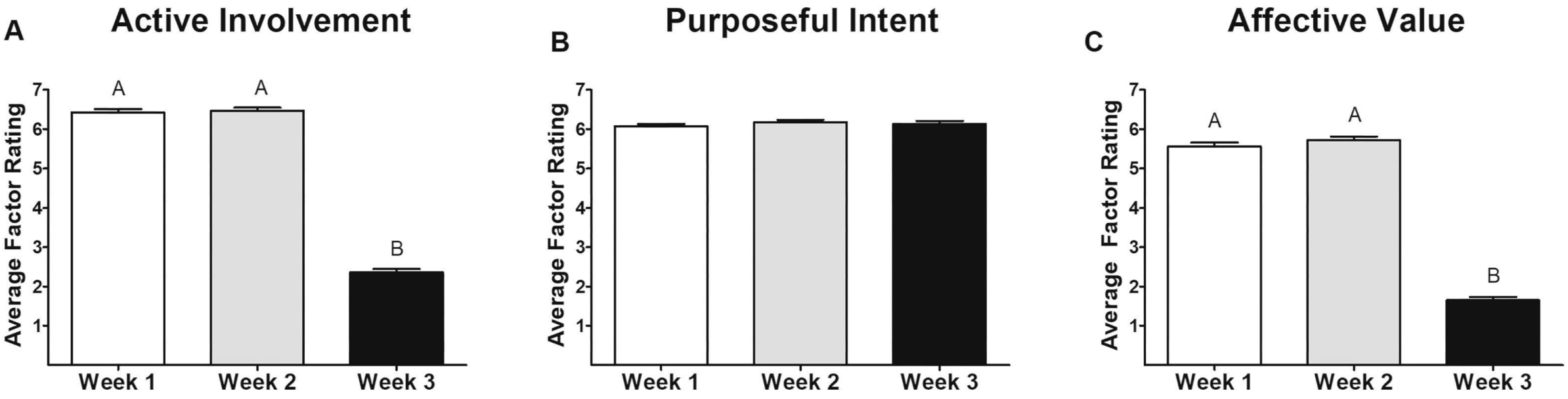
Affective Value (Interest)

What study design manipulations can be implemented to impact engagement?

What study design elements impact engagement?

Potential Demotivators

Multi-Day Assessment



Cotter et al., 2022

What study design elements impact engagement?

Potential Demotivators



How would you rate the saltiness of this mac and cheese?

- ❑ Not salty enough
- ❑ Slightly not salty enough
- ❑ Just about right
- ❑ Slightly too salty
- ❑ Too salty

Attributes
Saltiness
Sweetness
Cheese flavor
Sauce-to-noodle ratio
.
.
etc.

22 attributes in total

Kano

If the saltiness of the sample was just-about right, how do you feel?

- ❑ I like it that way.
- ❑ I am expecting it that way.
- ❑ I am neutral.
- ❑ I can accept it to be that way.
- ❑ I dislike it that way.

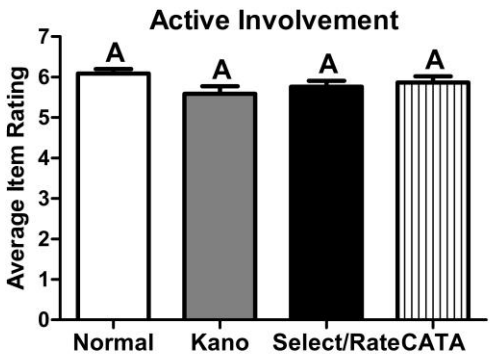
Select and Rate

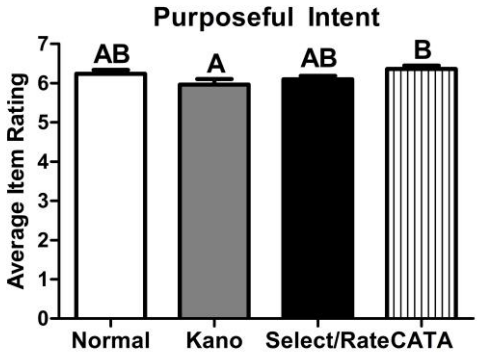
Select the attributes you think are most important to mac and cheese and rate their levels using the normal JAR scale.

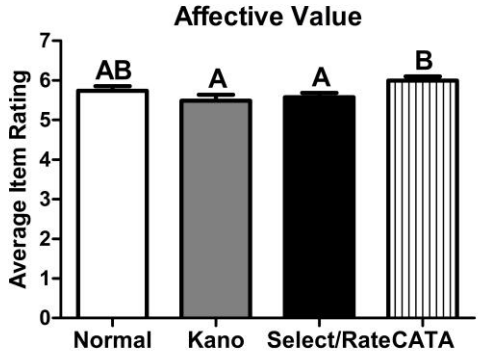
Check-all-that-apply (CATA)

Check all the attributes below that are JUST ABOUT RIGHT.
Check all the attributes below that are TOO MUCH.

Question Format



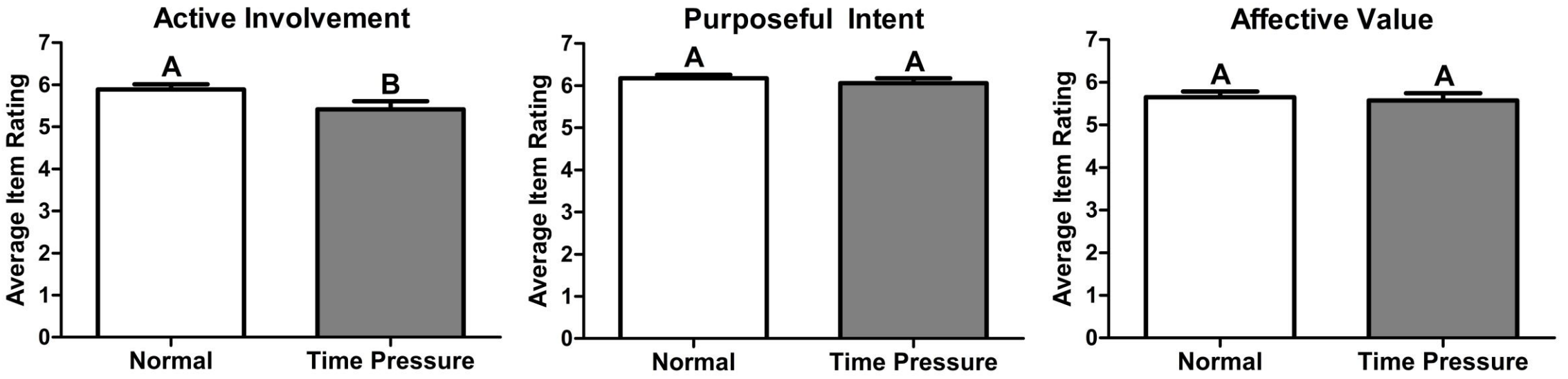




Hannum et al., 2021

Potential Demotivators

Time Pressure



Hannum et al., 2021

What study design elements impact engagement?

Negative Condition

20 tetrads
1-minute break
Ensure task is *impossible*
Same sample – 1% sucrose solutions
Never received feedback
~5 other participants present
Minimal interaction with researcher
No purpose provided



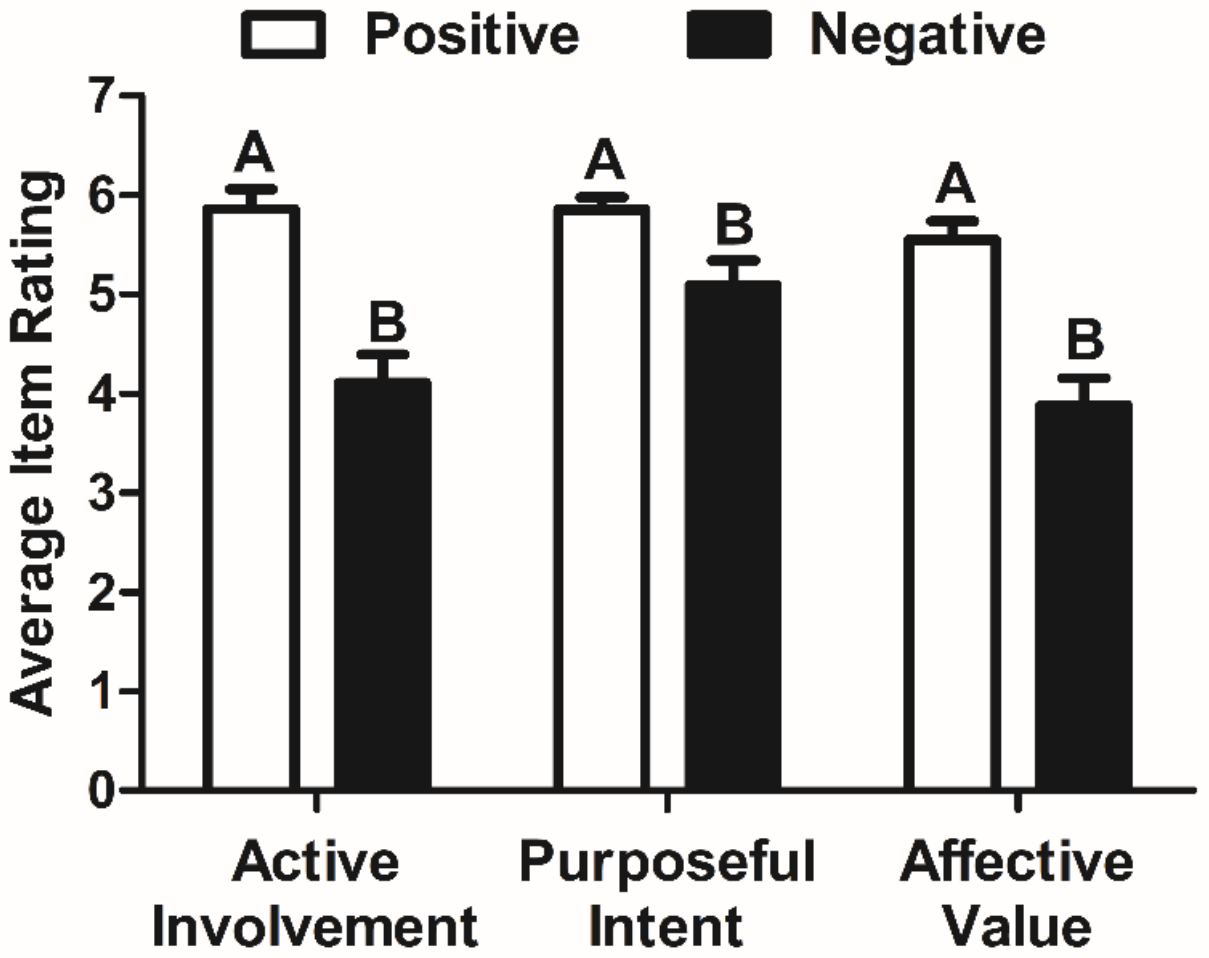
Positive Condition

20 tetrads
15-second breaks
Ensure some effort required
Sample variety – aroma, taste, visual
Received feedback every time
1-on-1
High interaction with researcher
Purpose provided



Hannum and Simons 2022

What study design elements impact engagement?



Hannum and Simons 2022

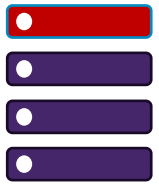
What study design elements impact engagement?

Gamification





Progress Bar



Leaderboard



Feedback





(P-51) Impact of Disengagement and Gamification on Panelist Performance in Discrimination Testing by Audrey Kuei

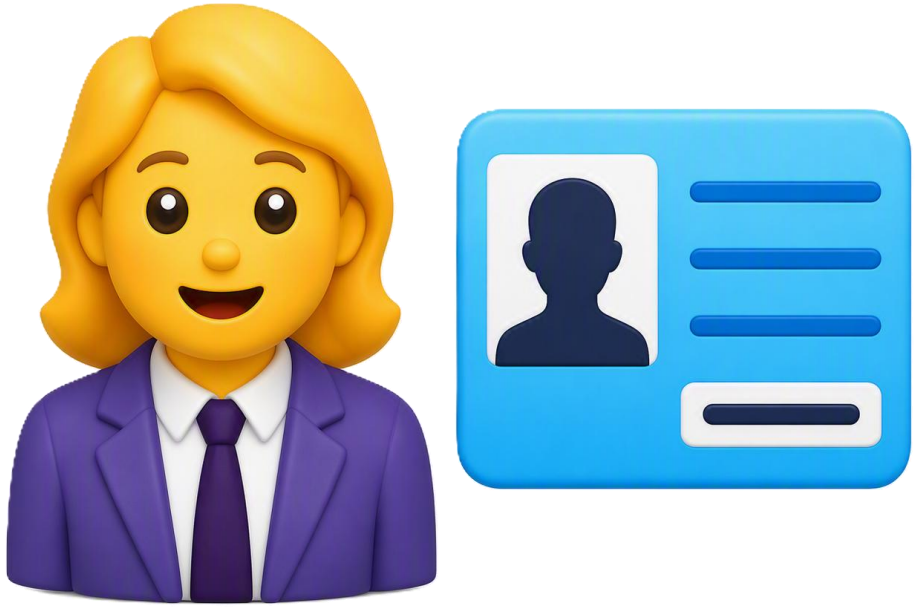
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Engagement is shaped by the choices researchers make

Reduces Engagement				Increases Engagement	
Long test durations	Long breaks between tasks	Multi-day studies		Short test durations	Short breaks between tasks
Complex question structure	Multiple difficult tasks			Clear, intuitive question structure	Fewer, simpler tasks
Minimal researcher interaction	Purpose unclear			1-on-1 testing with researcher	Provide purpose and impact
Cognitive difficulty	Time pressure			Feedback	Progress bar | Competition

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EMPLOYEE PANEL



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EMPLOYEE COMMENTARY

"Not My Job"



"I'm too busy"



"This again?"



Make Sensory Participation…

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MAKE SENSORY PARTICIPATION "COUNT"

Sensory Team + Leadership Partnership

1

BUILD THE CULTURE

2

SET PERFORMANCE GOALS

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MAKE SENSORY PARTICIPATION AN "EXPERIENCE"

PRODUCTIVITY BOOSTER

OUTSIDE THE BOOTH
The noise of the workday



INSIDE THE BOOTH
The "Sensory Sanctuary"



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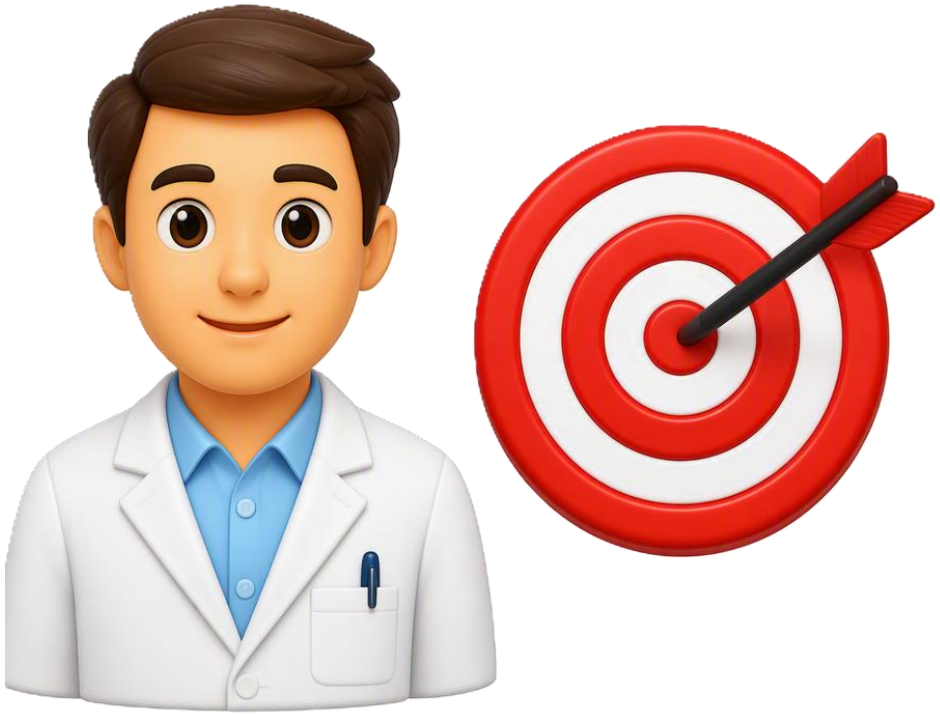
MAKE SENSORY PARTICIPATION "MEANINGFUL"





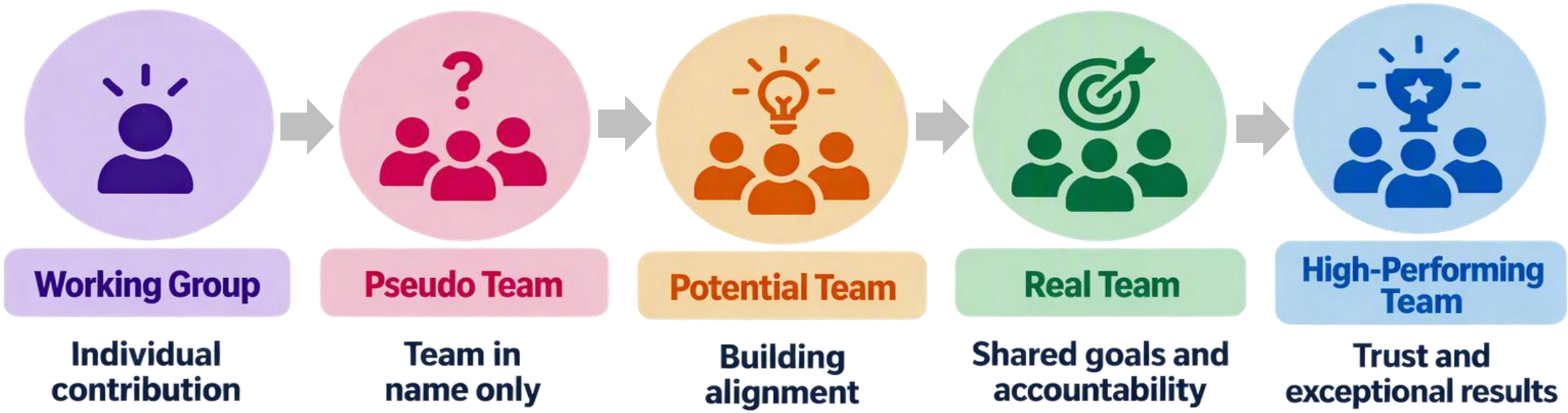
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TRAINED PANEL



THE TEAM JOURNEY

From potential to high performance



Tenured Panel → Tenured Panel

New Panel → New Panel

Source: Katzenbach, J.R., & Smith, D.K. (1993). The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

EVENT	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Company Updates	✓			✓			✓			✓		
Panelist's Birthday	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Valentine's Day		✓										
National Employee Appreciation Day			✓									
Performance Reviews			✓			✓			✓			✓
Pizza Party Mixer					✓							
"Around the World" Tastings		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
Ice Cream Social (Jeni's)							✓					
Teambuilding Activity		✓							✓			
Halloween Celebration										✓		
Thanksgiving Celebration/Activity											✓	
Holiday Party												✓

Panelist Engagement Survey Results



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TECHNICIAN FOR A DAY

Step in. Experience it. Appreciate it.



1 | THE SITUATION

2 | THE IDEA

3 | ACTIVITY DESIGN

4 | THE EXPERIENCE

5 | THE RESULT

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THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Meaningful. Manageable. Memorable.



1. COSTS
2. EFFORT
3. TIMING / SCHEDULE
4. MAKE IT FUN & EDUCATIONAL
5. EMBRACE DIVERSITY
6. KEEP IT SIMPLE
7. ROTATE ACTIVITIES
8. LISTEN TO PANELISTS

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Tools for Engaged Panels.

Resources Available in the Panelist Engagement Toolkit

- Cues of a Disengaged Sensory Panelist
- Cues of an Engaged Sensory Panelist
- Key Phrases for Panel Engagement (Why Your Participation Matters)
- Panelist Engagement Ideas
- Panelist Engagement Resources (Journal Articles & Book)
- Reasons Why Panelists Become Disengaged


BETTER COLLABORATION
IMPROVED MORALE
LOWER TURNOVER
PANELIST ENGAGEMENT
INCREASED SATISFACTION
BETTER DATA QUALITY
MORE COMMITMENT
GAME CHANGER, NOT JUST A BUZZWORD

THANK YOU!



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