

How to select and train a new sensory panel

Phase	Number of Panelists**	Estimate of Hours (Trainer/Panelist)	Required Action	Objective
Planning	NA	20/0	Layout time frame and plan	Determine test objectives, get management support, organize logistics such as location, supplies, etc.
Pre-screening	100	10/1	Questionnaire	Screen out candidates with food allergies, medications that prevent alcohol consumption, limited availability
Screening	40	40/2	Tasting exercises (triangle tests, basic tastes, scaling intensities)	Look for sensory acuity in products that will actually be evaluated, screen out bitter blind tasters
Panel Selection	10-20	10/0.5	Communicate results with all candidates	Let panelists know who will be on the panel. Share their personal results, relative to the group.
Panel Training	10-20	200/100	Train panelists on descriptors, scaling techniques, review ballots, share results, etc.	To familiarize panelists with their overall objective and protocol for sensory testing BEFORE real product evaluation occurs.

** This is an ideal number, but can be adapted based on company size. We pre-screened about 60, screened about 40 and selected 20.

Resources for learning more about general sensory evaluation:

Sensory Evaluation Techniques, Meilgaard, M., Civille, G.V., Carr, B.T., CRC Press, 4th Edition, 2007

Sensory Evaluation of Food, Principles and Practices, Lawless, H., Heymann, H., Aspen Publishers, 1999

Resources for learning more about sensory evaluation in beer.

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Flavor Chemistry of Beer: Part 2: Flavor and Threshold of 239 Aroma Volatiles, Meilgaard, M., MBAA Technical Quarterly, Vol 12. No. 3, 1975