



Marketing Munchies Podcast Transcript

Episode #23

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Announcer: Welcome to the Marketing Munchies Podcast series hosted by Dr. Bridget Behe. Each week Bridget and her guests will share information, insights, research-based findings, and her 30 years of experience to help your horticultural business connect better with current and future customers. Now, let's join our host, Dr. Bridget Behe.

Dr. Bridget Behe: Welcome back to the Marketing Munchies Podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Bridget Behe. Today I have with me a dear friend and colleague, Dr. Patricia Huddleston. Pat is a professor of retailing in the department of...

Dr. Patricia Huddleston: Advertising and Public Relations.

Dr. Bridget Behe: Welcome, Pat.

Dr. Patricia Huddleston: Thanks, Bridget.

Dr. Bridget Behe: Let's talk about our paper. We're actually sitting here in Porto, Portugal at the *World Marketing Congress*. We did some work looking at how complex or how simple displays were. Maybe you could give the listeners a synopsis of some of our key findings for that Display/Complexity study.

Dr. Patricia Huddleston: It was an interesting study. We had consumers evaluate different types of displays with different numbers of items. The lowest number of items was 6, there was an intermediate 12, and 24 items. We also varied the variety of types of plants in the display. A couple of key take-aways, if you're a retailer, one of the most important things to keep in mind is that the higher the variety in the display, the more likely the consumer was to indicate a purchase intention. That, I think, is probably the most important finding for garden center retailers.

Dr. Bridget Behe: Big swaths of color might be attractive, but having a display that has different genera, different types of plants, that can be grown together in the same light and water conditions, really helped increase a consumer's likelihood to buy (as opposed to those big swaths of color).

Dr. Patricia Huddleston: ...of the same plant. That tells you that variety is important. Another interesting thing: we actually didn't find a difference in terms of the amount of time it took consumers to decide. If you have 3 or 4 different genera of plants in a display with 24 items, it takes about the same time as it took for the consumer to look at a display of 24 plants with just 1 or 2 genera. From the stand point of constructing displays, in this case, more genera were better.

Dr. Bridget Behe: There probably is an upper limit to how many genera you should put in any one display. We didn't test that, but we're not really advocating 100 different genera in one display.

Dr. Patricia Huddleston: Yes, that's correct. In perhaps our next study we will look at what that tipping point is and when is too many too much for the consumer to absorb.

Dr. Bridget Behe: I think we also found that when there were more plants (more different types of plants) that it took the same amount of time for them to think about or cognitively process all those plants. That was interesting to me, because we thought it might take longer for a consumer to look at and visually process the display that had 4 different kinds of plants as opposed to a display with 1 type of plant. I think that gets back to their time pressure—that they're really not willing to invest anymore time. Here we're talking about a couple of seconds to think about the merchandise in that display. It really has to be compelling from the get-go.

Dr. Patricia Huddleston: That's a good observation. The other interesting thing that we found is that when a display has the same variety of plant, but has more items, it actually takes consumers longer. The display with 24 of the same plant took consumers longer to make a decision than the display with 6. We believe that that relates to consumer's search for quality, although, we did not test that in this particular study.

Dr. Bridget Behe: I think the take-home message is we can put some of those simple displays up front that have 1 type of plant (those big swaths of color), but as people get further into the store where they're probably making more purchase decisions, the garden retailer should probably have displays that are more complex, that have several different types of genera. And, although we didn't include hard goods in our study, cross merchandising—integrating fertilizers or hand tools or different other products along with the plant material—probably is going to increase the likelihood of purchase of all of those things together.

Dr. Patricia Huddleston: Yes, and I think that that's a good suggestion.

Dr. Bridget Behe: Well, thanks, Pat. It was great having you on the Marketing Munchies Podcast, and I hope to have you back as a guest again soon.

Dr. Patricia Huddleston: Thanks, Bridget. It was fun.

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Announcer: Thank you for joining us on this week's Marketing Munchies Podcast. For more information or to download the transcript of this podcast, please visit, connect-2-consumer.org. That's C-O-N-N-E-C-T, dash, the number two, dash, C-O-N-S-U-M-E-R, dot, C-O-M.