

## Marketing Munchies Podcast Transcript

## Episode #24

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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:** Hi, and welcome to this week's edition of Marketing Munchies Podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Bridget Behe. This week I'd like to continue our discussion of some of the results that Dr. Pat Huddleston and I presented at the World Marketing Congress in Portugal.

One of the topics we presented on was "Horizontal Product Merchandising." We see a lot of horizontal product merchandising in the horticulture industry. Especially in the greenhouse, because a lot of plant material is merchandized on the bench top—in a very horizontal manner. It's interesting to note that when we look at how our vision works, that horizontal scanning for us is much easier compared to vertical scanning because of our binocular vision or having both of our eyes side-by-side rather than one on top of the other.

One of the reasons that Pat and I wanted to study how people visually processed plant material that was merchandised in a horizontal manner was because we thought it might be easier for them to do that compared to merchandising product up and down. We put together a series of studies and most of these looked at a number of plants either 6/12 or 24 plants merchandised in a horizontal manner. We have these basically in three rows. We have a front, middle, and a back row.

When you think about the shopping process you would naturally think that most people would be able to look at the front row faster. Because our culture reads from left to right, we also figured that people would see plant material on the left faster than plant material on the right. This was, in fact, true. When we looked at how fast or the time to choice (how fast it took people to choose product), it happened about 3 or 4 seconds faster in the front row compared to the middle or to the back row. When we compared to choice left to right, what we saw was people made a choice of plants on the left side of the display a couple of seconds faster than the right side of the display.

The practical implication of this is: we really need to put our best foot forward or literally put our best plant material towards the front of the display. Especially to the left side, because this is where people are visually going to go first. If they see empty spaces or less than ideal plant material, they may pretty quickly dismiss a purchase decision if they don't see the "good stuff" upfront and to the left of the display.

Now this was further indicated when we looked at our consumers' likeliness to buy. We asked them to rate likeliness to buy on a 0-10 scale. What we saw was a greater propensity to buy from

the right side of the display compared to the left. Remember, I just said that people saw plant material on the left side faster than the right, but because most people are right-handed, they were more likely to buy from the right side of the display. That may also be because that was where their gaze ended as we gaze across the display from left to right.

We also noticed that there was a greater likelihood to purchase from the front of the display compared to the middle or the back. About 46% of our subjects picked a plant that was in the front row of the display compared to the middle or back rows. The back row was only half of that. Again, we have to think about putting out best foot forward—literally putting our best plants toward the front of the display. We see the “good stuff” to the left faster, but we’re more likely to buy from the right side of the display.

We also see some differences in the left side and the right side when we talk about signs and the position of signs. We did another eye tracking study several years ago where we varied the price of plants from a low price to a medium price to a high price. And, we also varied whether the price was located on the left side of the display compared to the right side of the display. In a practical reality, we probably wouldn’t have separate signs for price and other product information. We did this, because we wanted to see whether consumers reacted more favorably to high, medium, or low prices depending on which side of the display, or which sign the price was located on. We were actually able to demonstrate that people saw prices on the left side of the display faster than on a right side of the display.

When we delved into it a little bit more, we were able to demonstrate that people physiologically saw higher prices faster compared to lower prices. This was especially true when the high price was on the left side of the display. Visually, people saw high prices to the left faster than moderate prices to the right.

What does this horizontal processing mean for us practically in the horticulture? We need to put the really good plant material up front. We need to make sure displays are refreshed as often as possible. In addition, we have to think about where we locate price in the display. You want to make sure that that price, especially if it is a moderate or high-priced point, is located on the right side. As people visually scan that, that they get to that high price later in the process, and get an opportunity to see additional information or the quality of the plant material before they get to the high price.

Now, if you have a sale price, a low price, and you really want to make that emerge, put it on the left side of the display. This work shows that putting those low prices on the left side of the display is going to get them seen faster.

Well that’s it for this week. Thanks for listening!

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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](http://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.