



## Marketing Munchies Podcast Transcript

### Season 2, Episode #4

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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 back to the Marketing Munchies Podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Bridget Behe. This week I would like to talk a little bit about the importance of marketing to senses. You know, we have got the five senses of sight, sound, touch, smell, and hearing. And really, it is the fragrance sense that I want to focus on today.

If you think back to Episode 16 when I talked about perceived value and pricing, I introduced you to the five elements of perceived value that Sheth, Newman, and Gross laid out in 1991 in their theory of consumptive values. Just as a refresher, those five elements of perceived value were: functional value (or how well it performs), the epistemic value (the novelty or the sensory characteristics that it has, and that is what I want to focus on today), conditional value (which is really the symbolism), social value (which helps you fit in with a group that you identify with), and emotional value (or the joy or the positive feeling).

But, today what I want to focus on is the epistemic value or the sensory value of plants. Now, we have done some research with plants that could be characterized as utilitarian or very useful or hedonic that are very sensory. When you look at the same plant and show it to consumers in two different conditions, what we find is that you can get a higher price for plants that are positioned as hedonic or sensory plants.

Now, this ties in nicely with an August 2018 article I read in *Nursery Management Magazine*. It was by Samantha Cottrill, and she interviewed David Johnson who is the president and general manager of Johnson Nursery. What he was talking about was a particular rose called "At Last." This is a spring meadow-proven winter offering. This rose, "At Last," has a beautiful kind of peachy apricot color, but what really sold David on marketing the plant was the fragrance that it has. It has a really amazing fragrance.

As we think about spring and pricing and merchandizing plants, I would like to ask you the question: do you think you could get a higher price for plants that have a great fragrance? I bet you might be able to, but you really will not know until you try it out. What would happen if you picked five plants that really have an outstanding fragrance? It does not really matter whether they are annuals, perennials, vines, or shrubs, but if you singled those out and merchandized them specifically, having an enjoyable or a pleasant aroma or fragrance, what would happen if you added 5percent to 5 plants that had a really amazing fragrance?

Now, you might say, “Wait a minute, Bridget, this is going to be really confusing for my employees or for my staff.” Well, it could be, but if you have a good point-of-sales system or you have a mechanism for singling out some items that you want to try to get a price increase from, I think fragrant plants really could be a sweet spot for you this spring. Landscapers, could you do the same thing? Could you get a premium price or markup plants that are fragrant an extra 5percent or so?

You know, as we think about trying to nudge up prices on a lot of things, it becomes really challenging when people can compare identical plants or plants that they perceive to be identical. But, we have got some good research-based evidence that shows that people are willing to pay more for plants that are characterized as hedonic or sensory. Why not start with a few plants including that “At Last” rose, and think about bumping up a premium on them, 5 or 10percent?

I would also encourage the retailers to think about signage that has “Smell Me” tag or sign in it that would encourage people to stop and smell the roses and some of the other fragrant plant material. We rely so much on color for merchandizing a lot of plant material, and yet there are these different elements of perceived value, particularly the epistemic value or the sensory value, that some plant material has.

I think it is about time that we consider singling out some of those plants, introducing a price premium, and seeing if we can garner just a little bit more profit.

Thanks for listening, and I will hope you join me again on the Marketing Munchies Podcast!

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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.

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