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- Exploring the need for sensory and consumer training in SMEs from 5 countries

SP Technical Research Institute of Sweden

Cecilia Norman and Heléne Widén

SP Technical Research Institute of Sweden - Food and Bioscience, Box 5401, SE-402 29, Göteborg, Sweden

Contact: cecilia.norman@sp.se

Aim of project

To create:
an innovative and efficient e-learning course,
in Sensory Analysis and Consumer Sciences,
specifically designed for the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the food & drink sector

Background

- Innovations and new product developments are vital for food & drink companies
- Sensory and Consumer research plays an important role in the whole product development procedure
- It is thus crucial for SMEs to have trained professionals in this field, and SMEs have special needs

The INNSENS project



An online course designed for SMEs in 5 countries

Step 1 - Exploration of SME needs

In total, 100 questionnaires and 50 interviews was used to explore the needs of Food & Drink SMEs in 5 European countries.

Results showed

- for all 5 countries there was a need for training on sensory and consumer analysis techniques.

Main demands and preferences

- Local language
- Flexibility in time and place (at home or at work)
- Flexibility in topics (free management for the scheduling of topics was preferred)
- Course not too long (may conflict with normal company activities)

Most interesting topics according to the SMEs were

- application of sensory and consumer science in product development,
- how to plan a sensory study,
- sensory shelf life and fast sensory methods.

Step 2 & 3 – The course

The course consists of 10 modules, representing 80 hours of learning material, and runs for 10-12 weeks.

The modules contains

- Lessons (narrated powerpoints)
- Assignments
- Self-evaluation tests
- Useful videos and links

The training program will be evaluated by means of interviews and satisfaction questionnaires. The participants' ideas on how the training program can be improved will be collected.

In June 2015, the course pilot was finished and more than 50 SME professionals from 5 European countries had successfully finalized the course.

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ainia (Spain), IBA Bucuresti (Rumania), UCPH (Denmark), SSICA (Italy), and SP (Sweden).