



# Decoding Taste

How Sensory Lexicons Drive Alignment  
and Innovation

PREPARED FOR

**The Quirk's Event - Chicago**

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE

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# Overview

- Context
- Creating a Lexicon
- Applying the Principles





# Life at Imbibe

We are a flavor and ingredient supplier powered by product development.



# Building the Sensory and Insights Capability at Imbibe

## What you expect

- Create sensory programs for innovation, shelf-life, and customer feedback
- Conduct primary and secondary research to generate insights

## What happens

- Reapply research techniques in unexpected places
- Help develop frameworks to drive faster internal and customer alignment



# What is a Sensory Lexicon?

## Shared meaning

- ✓ Draft a list of terms
- ✓ Align on their definitions
- ✓ Have a shared understanding



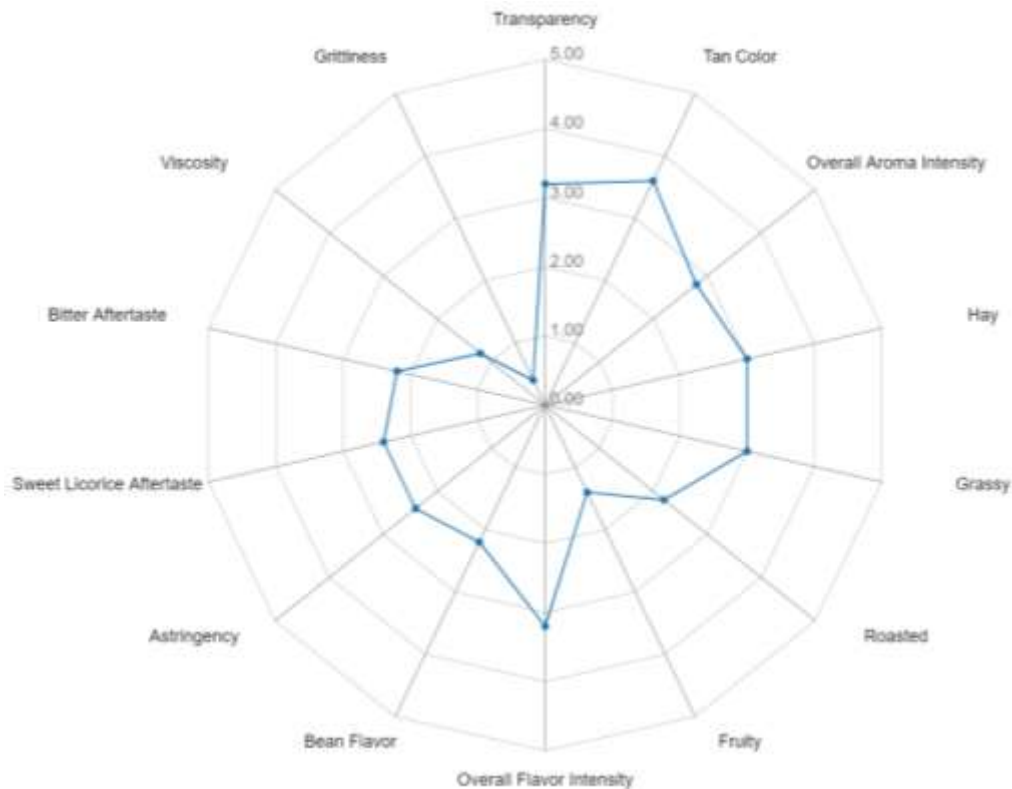


# How is a Lexicon Typically Used?

For specific sensory methodologies measuring product attributes or quality

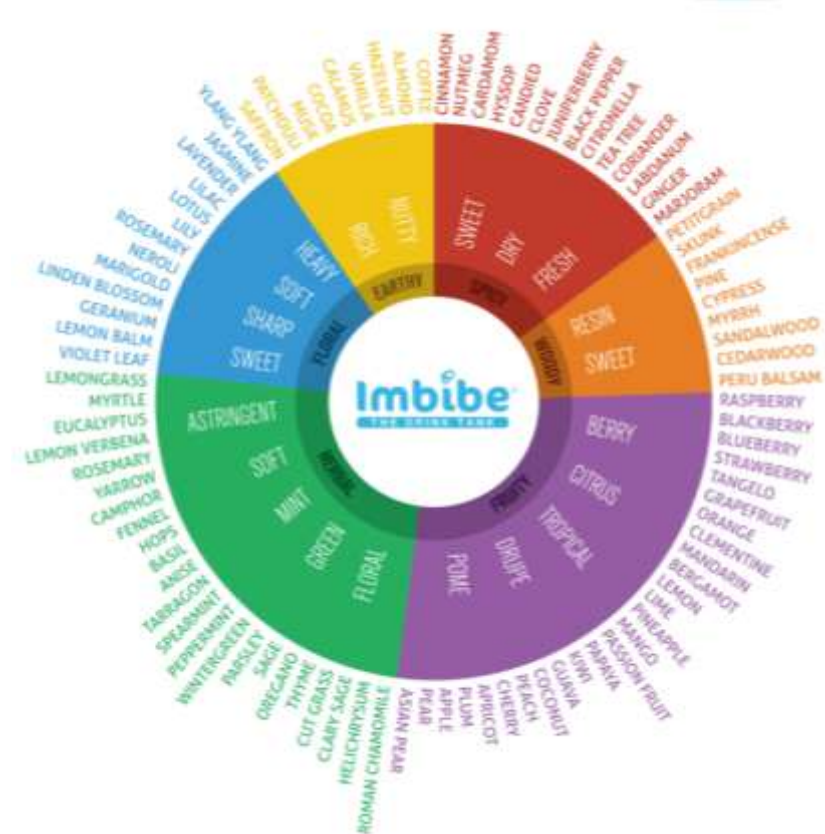
## Descriptive Analysis

Aligned attributes to measure and visualize



## Guided/Expert Tastings

Visually appealing, organized terms to define a taste experience





# What Principles Can We Reapply Elsewhere?

Taking from the practice to use  
for other purposes.



**Listing Terms**



**Definition  
Alignment**



**References  
and Training**



**Visualization**

# Challenges and Lexicon-Based Solutions

Stealing principles from lexicon creation and training to advance projects



## Innovation Alignment

Lexicon wheel with references



## Category Exploration

Guided tasting and visualization



## Quality Assessments

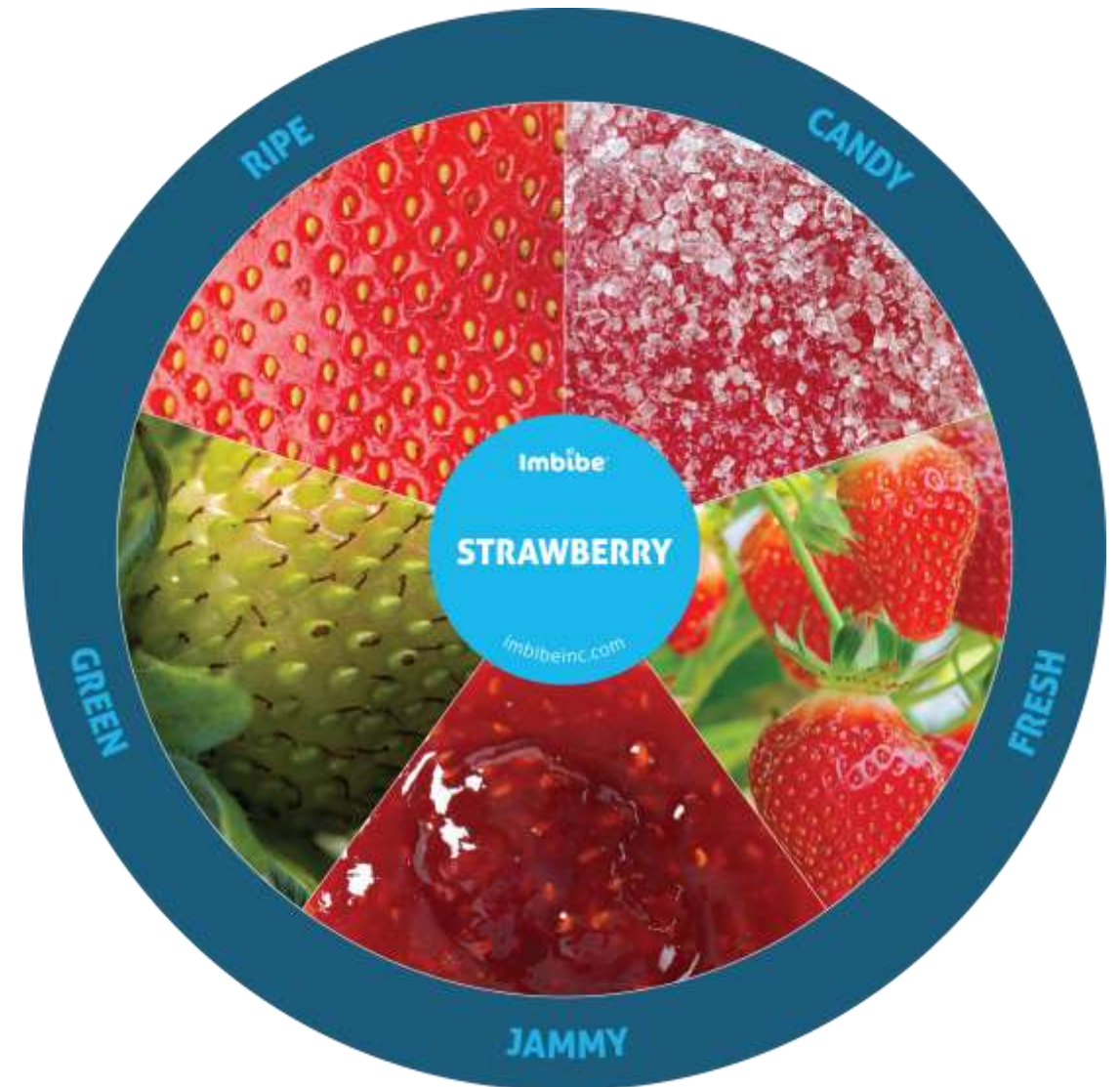
Terminology alignment and training



# Innovation Alignment

## Strawberry character alignment

- ✓ Define each term
- ✓ Have an example or reference for each
- ✓ Mix, match, blend, and align on the combination and ratios desired



# Why It Works

## Innovation Alignment

**Engages the entire team**

**Allows for exploration, creativity,  
and ownership**

**Provides references and training**

**Creates a shared understanding**



## Cherry Cola Balance and Character



# Why It Works

## Category Exploration

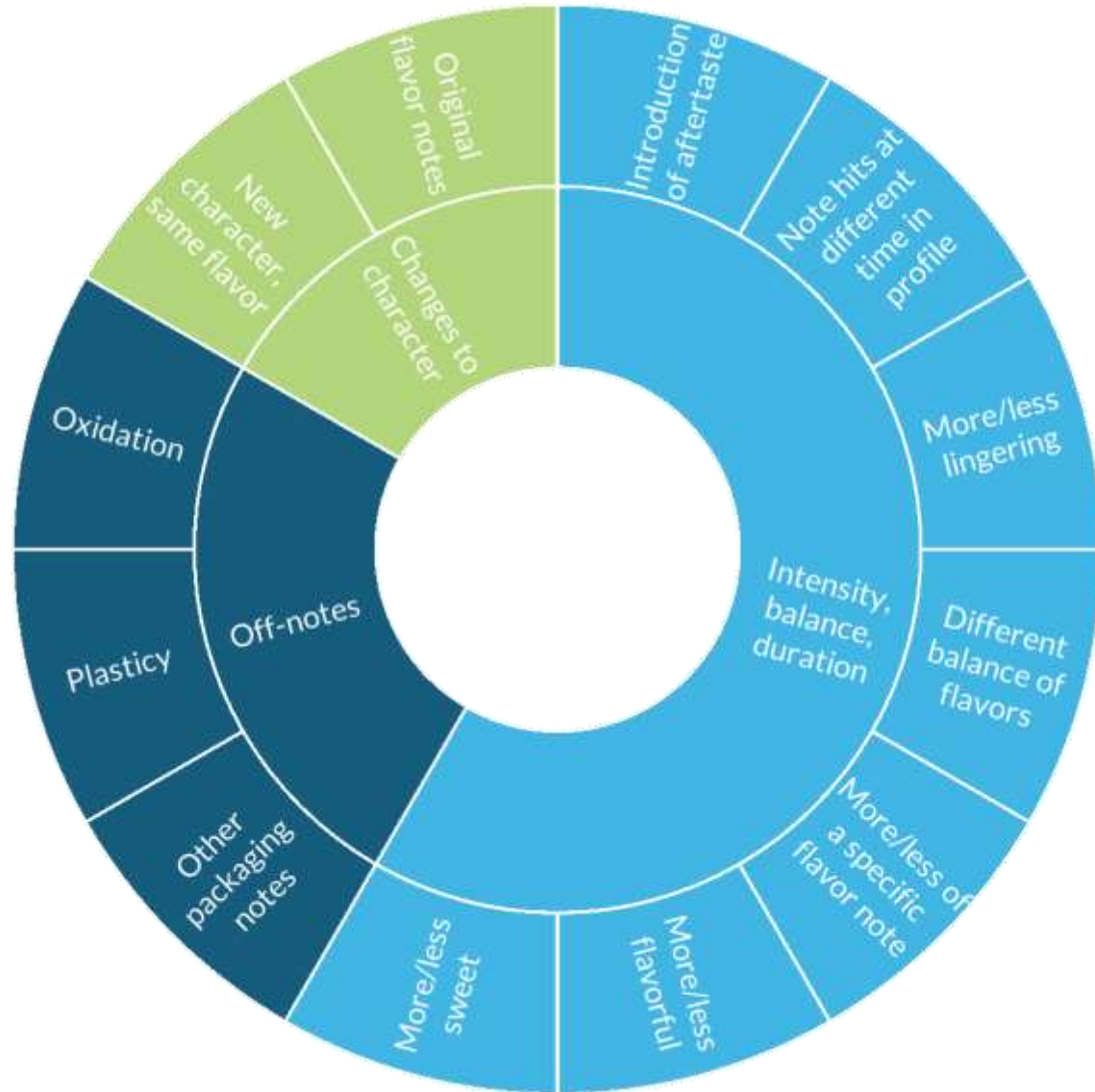
**Shows range of variation...or  
similarity**

**Illuminates defining  
characteristics**

**Simply displays complex  
information**

**Makes product differences  
more tangible**

# Quality Assessments



## Areas of change

- ✓ Give broad overview of areas of observation
- ✓ Train on detail of specific changes within each area that are likely to occur over shelf-life



# Why It Works

## Quality Assessments

**Provides an easy visual aid**

**Gives tasters areas of focus**

**Gives tasters more confidence to describe changes**

**Can be re-worked, customized, or trained on for any project**

**Research  
frameworks can  
have broader use  
with internal  
project teams.**

**Alignment on terms  
and definitions can  
drive project clarity.**

**Visualizing lexicon  
can make  
something abstract  
more tangible.**



# Q&A

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