

REVIEW OF MAIN ACTION POINTS RESULTING FROM THE VISIT OF
H. ROUBICEK (I.T. COMPANY, MONTREAL) - JUNE 1979

The following points were derived from discussions of the proceedings of the Panel Assessment Seminar on 19th June, 1979 between the participants below:

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1. Actions proposed for new assessment panel

The establishment of a "Flavour Profile" panel within GR&DC is seen to be necessary. The volunteer panelists would be initially screened by various psycho physical techniques e.g. discriminatory tests, threshold level perception etc. This process would enable the use of a fully functional group right from the beginning rather than rely on screening of panelists during the assessments. Various organoleptic exercises would be undertaken by the panel to allow individual "flavour memory" development.

The assessment activities of the "trained" group would be divided into two approaches:-

- (a) Delta-panel type format - e.g. repertory grid interviews and processing of data.
- (b) Open-forum format e.g. full-group discussion of merits, characters etc., of test samples.

It is considered that if approach (b) is to be successful then the provision of a panel room, catering for the motivation of panelists and elevation of panel status, is required. This would

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require the redesigning of some existing areas but is considered to be of prime importance for the environment required for the panelists' cooperation and participation.

The activity of this panel would be aimed at low-delivery cigarettes but some work in the full-flavoured area would still be required.

2. Synopsis of H. Roubicek panel assessment method as viewed by the above group.

- (a) Perhaps the main point of the whole I.T.Co. method is that it is heavily leader oriented and almost totally dependent upon group dynamics. Thus some bias could occur in the final analysis. The group's view was that during H. Roubicek's visit it became evident that what information was available was only a very small component of a very complex activity. It is felt necessary that a visit of a member of staff from GR&DC to Montreal could quickly establish a formative view of the overall aims, operation and results of this technique. It is also felt that the participation of the delegated member in some of the panel sessions could elucidate the degree of effect of leader/participant views within the panels.
- (b) In analysing the structure of the technique it is obvious that I.T.Co. do rely primarily on assessment of the mechanics of the cigarettes. Having established the required profile they begin to manipulate the taste and aroma of the product. This approach, viewed by the group, does produce conflicts between blend types and given mechanised factors. This method therefore depends upon the identification of the principal criterion i.e. mechanics.

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- (c) The I.T.Co. method is extremely time consuming viz., 1/3rd of working week per panelist. This amount of time is considered to be, with the information received so far, excessive. However, not until the group at GR&DC attempt to examine this style of approach, can an absolute judgement be made. It is felt that if this allocation of time is necessary a positive statement will have to be made by senior management, on general circulation to all staff, as to the real requirements for any panel participants to be freed for this type of panel work. This would neutralise any personal conflicts incurred by the panelists due to their participation in this style of assessment.
- (d) A range of "standard" tobacco grades/blends would be constructed to provide a reference for various flavour types used in the assessment. This would follow similar lines to the I.T.Co. approach but would not limit itself to flue-cured areas.

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