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Let readers imagine smell for your food ad!



New York, March 1 (DIM News) :How does your brain react when you look at a picture of a mouth-watering chocolate pastry or a freshly baked double-cheese pizza? You almost smell it, right?

In fact, you tasted it too, literally.

According to an Indian-origin professor Aradhna Krishna, merely asking consumers to imagine what the food smells like, along with a strong visual, can be very effective.

Her research has important implications for the burgeoning food advertising industry as the imagined smells can trigger an increased desire for the food.

"Scents are used for personal hygiene products such as perfume or deodorant, but food marketers are missing out on its potential," said Krishna, an expert on sensory marketing from University of Michigan in the US.

Food advertisers can make better use of real and imagined scents, she added.

Krishna and co-authors Eda Sayin, a doctoral student at Koc University in Istanbul and Maureen Morrin of Temple University, performed four controlled experiments to see if and how ads could trigger smell memories, a process they call 'smellizing'.

In one experiment, they found that test subjects who were prompted to imagine the smell of a cookie while looking at a picture of the treat salivated more heavily than those who were not prompted.

"We decided to measure physiological responses, because self-reporting can be fraught with credibility issues," Krishna said.

They also measured the effect of these types of ads on consumption.

Test subjects were given cookies after the advertising portion and asked to evaluate them.

They were told to put any unfinished cookies back into the bag provided and were asked questions about their hunger level and mood.

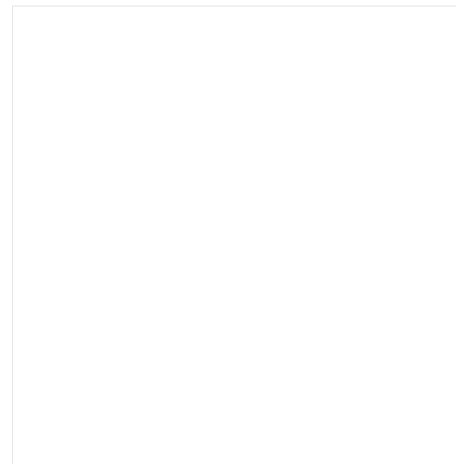
Those prompted to imagine the scent of cookies consumed more only when the ad also had a picture.

"Smell is a powerful sense that triggers images and memories," Krishna said.

But it's not always possible to present scent to consumers, especially in advertising.

"We show a way you can get similar benefits with an imagined smell, but you have to accompany that with a strong visual image," Krishna stressed.

This may be why a picture is so important in activating the effects of smell, said the study appeared in the Journal of Consumer Research.



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