The Psychology of Eating Out

How to get people to come to your restaurant and spend more money

Capuchin
Behavioural Science

Spayne Lindsay,
June 2022

We practically apply
the science of the human mind
for hard, commercial results

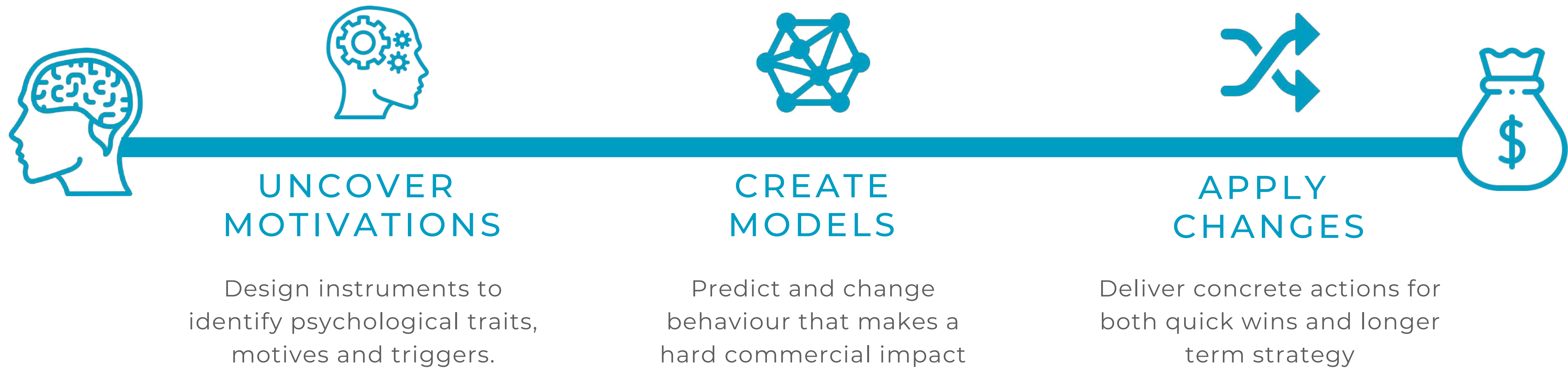# SCIENTIFIC THINKING
FOR IRRATIONAL MINDS

We make a more direct, scientific link, between minds and money.

To find opportunities that might otherwise be missed.
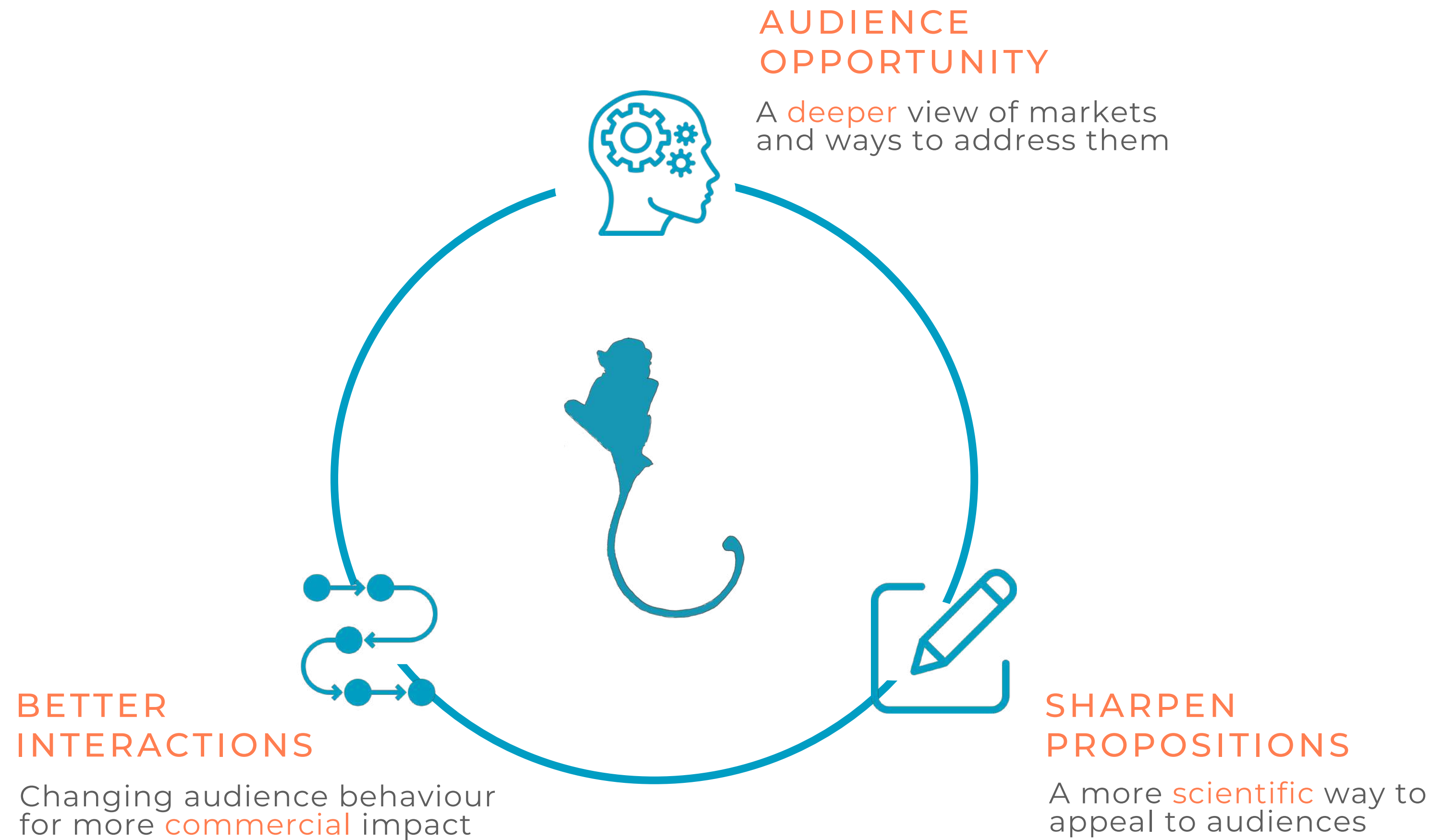And show how to address them.

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SCIENTIFIC THINKING
FOR IRRATIONAL MINDS

UNCOVER MOTIVATIONS

Design instruments to identify psychological traits, motives and triggers.

CREATE MODELS

Predict and change behaviour that makes a hard commercial impact

APPLY CHANGES

Deliver concrete actions for both quick wins and longer term strategy

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HOW IT WORKS

We construct psychological, behavioural and strategic methodologies supported by measurement tools and technologies such as implicit testing, eye-tracking, facial coding, image-based testing, EEG.

AUDIENCE OPPORTUNITY

A deeper view of markets and ways to address them

SHARPEN PROPOSITIONS

A more scientific way to appeal to audiences

BETTER INTERACTIONS

Changing audience behaviour for more commercial impact

RELEVANT PROJECTS

£ How do you maintain price premium using price psychology?

🍺 How do you make non-alcoholic beer cool around the world?

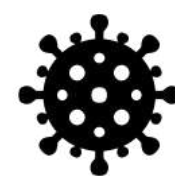🎄 How do you sell more of a "Christmas" drink at a new time of year?

🪙 How do you get people to adopt new ways of payment and other new behaviours?

💻 How do you apply the psychology of online ordering to persuade different groups of people?

🦠 How are behaviours really changing post-covid and what should you do to address them?

💎 How are the wealthy psychologically different?

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Practical
Behavioural Nudges

Psychological
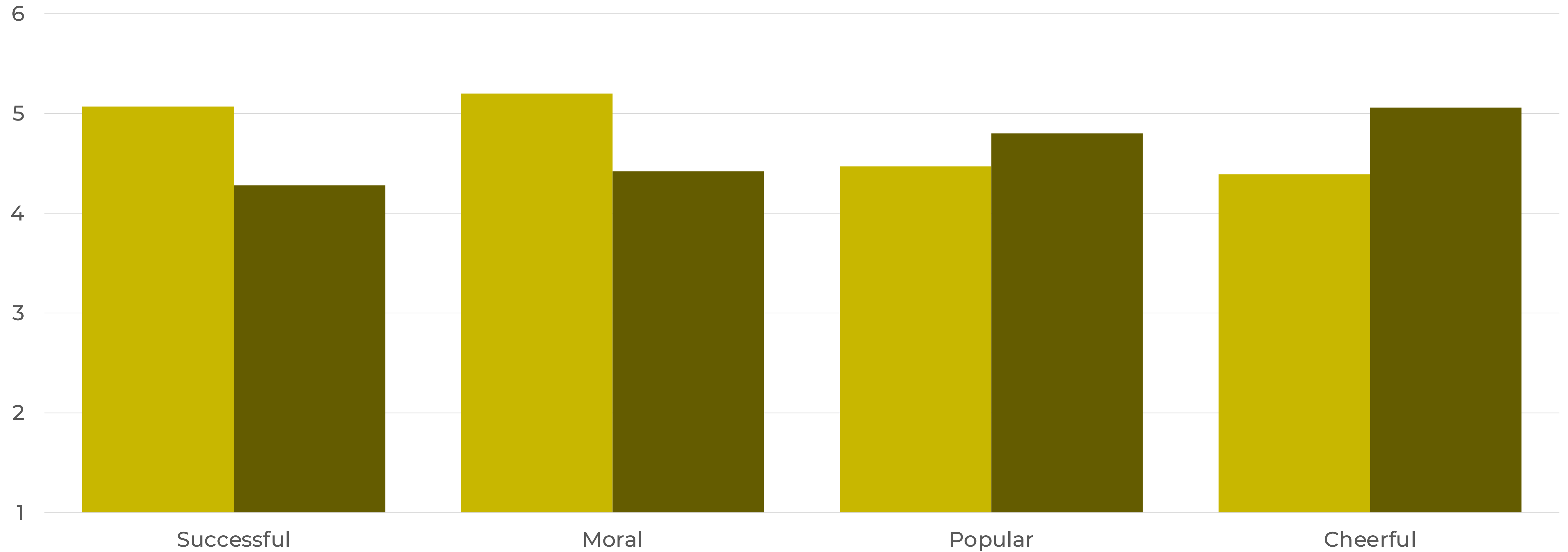Profiles

The Science of
Attention

The Psychology of
Money

HELLO!

Average Rating on Each Trait (1-6)

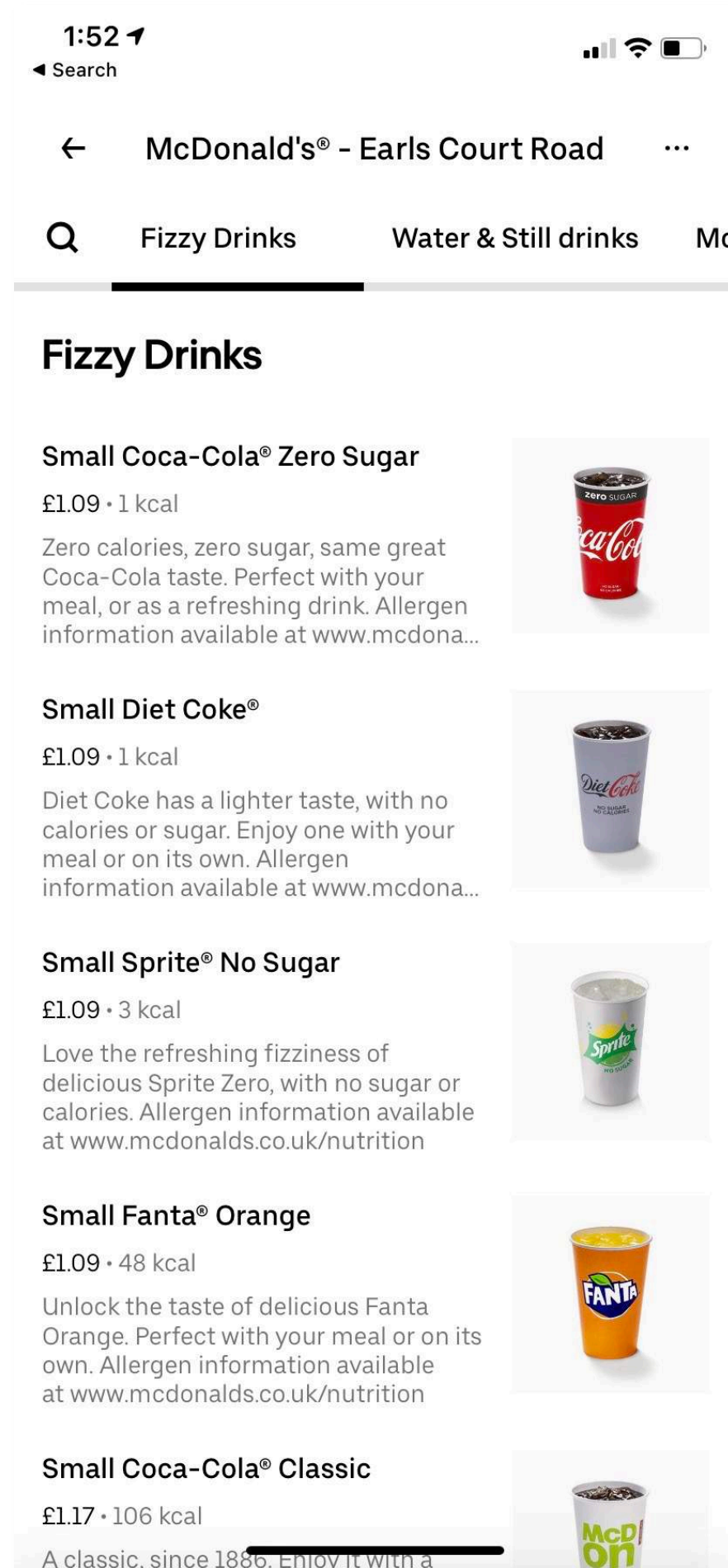■ Given name (e.g., Patrick) ■ Nickname (e.g., Pat)

Successful   Moral   Popular   Cheerful

Mehrabian & Piercy, 1993

HIDDEN PERSUADERS

I'm doing something else to influence you right now...

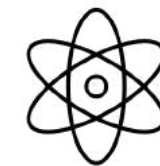Rated as more intelligent, industrious, honest, and dependable

Thornton, 1944

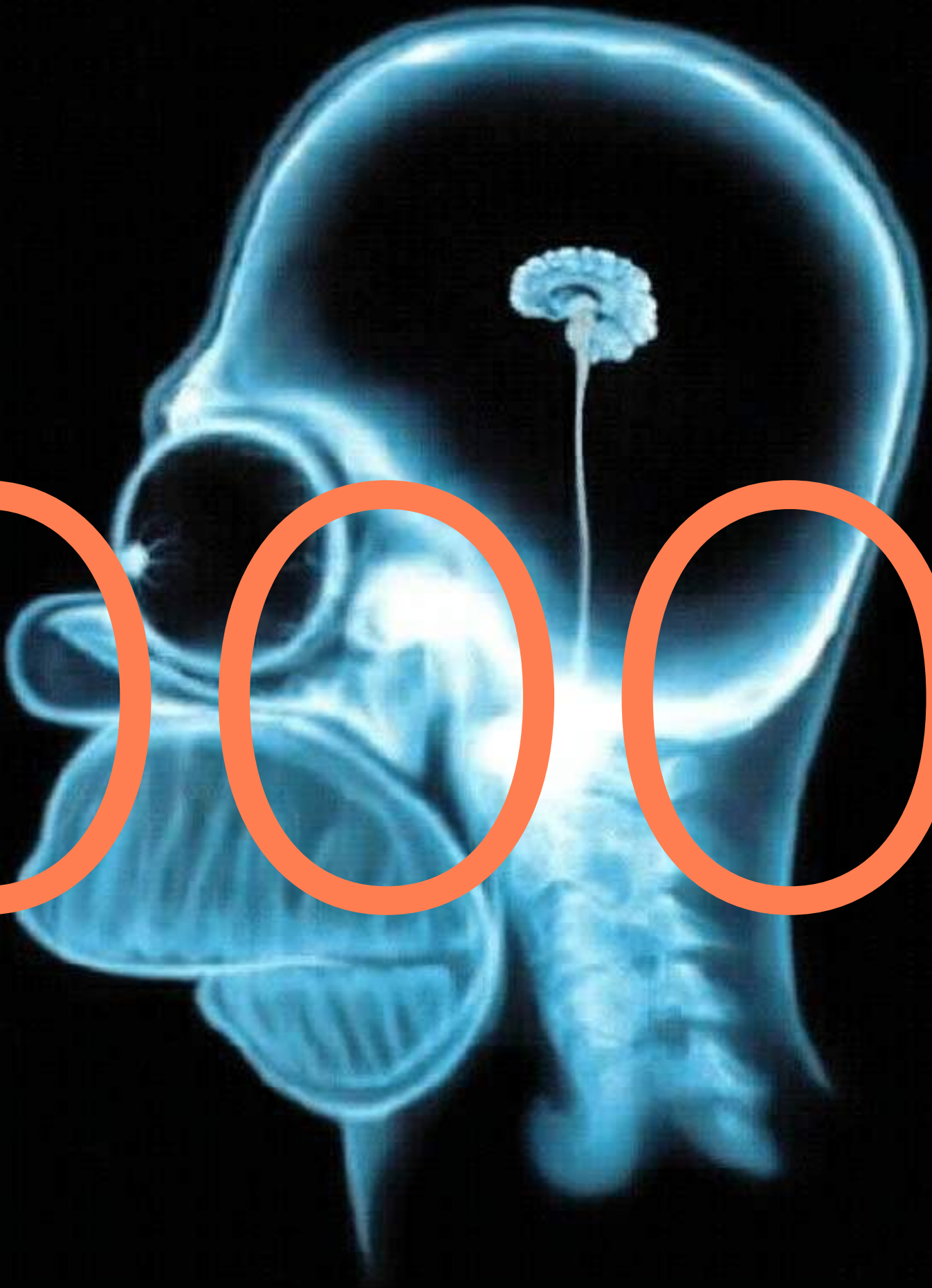# HIDDEN PERSUADERS

Sales of Coke Zero increased by 30% across 12 weeks

Sales of Coca-Cola decreased by 7% in that time

~25 million total calories removed from customers' diets

0.0004%

Wilson, 2009

EMOTION OFTEN TRUMPS REASON

" Where thought conflicts with emotion, the latter is designed by the neural circuitry in our brains to win. "

WHY DO PEOPLE GO TO RESTAURANTS?

- 🍎 Sustenance
- ⛅ Mood Regulation
- 👫 Socialising
- 👩‍🚀 Adventure
- 👑 Status
- 🐹 Habit

LIMITED CONSCIOUS MINDS

Had to Memorise...
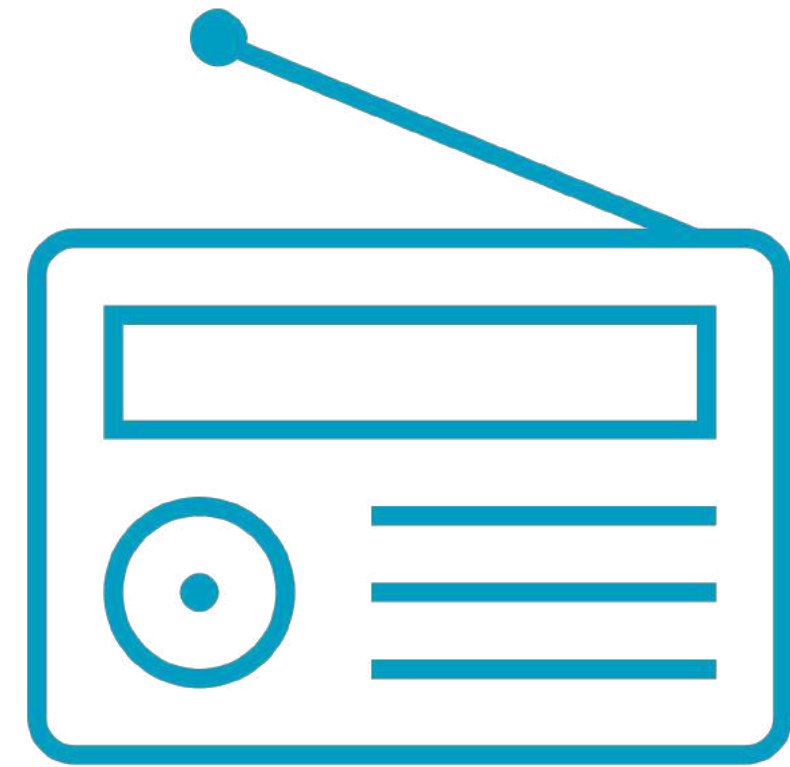
2-digit no. (e.g. 62)

7-digit no. (e.g. 4811505)
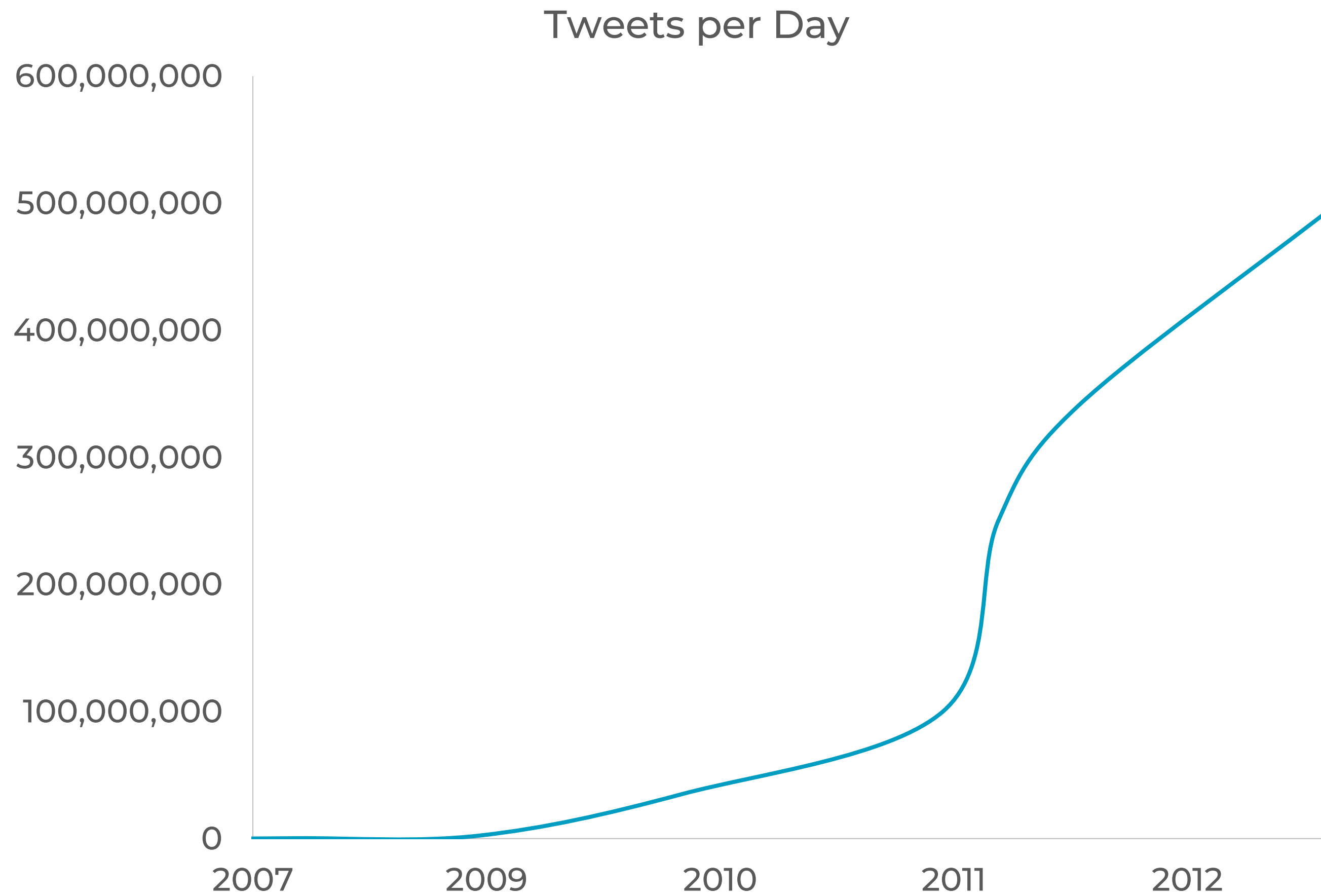
Chose Cake

Chose Fruit Salad

Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999

MINDLESS EATING

15%

Increase in energy consumption when listening to a detective story during lunch

Bellisle & Dalix, 2001

Over 200 food related
decisions a day alone

HOW DO WE COPE?

Tweets per Day

The Social Cortex

As brain size increases, so does group size. Human group size as predicted by Dunbar's model comes out to about 150.
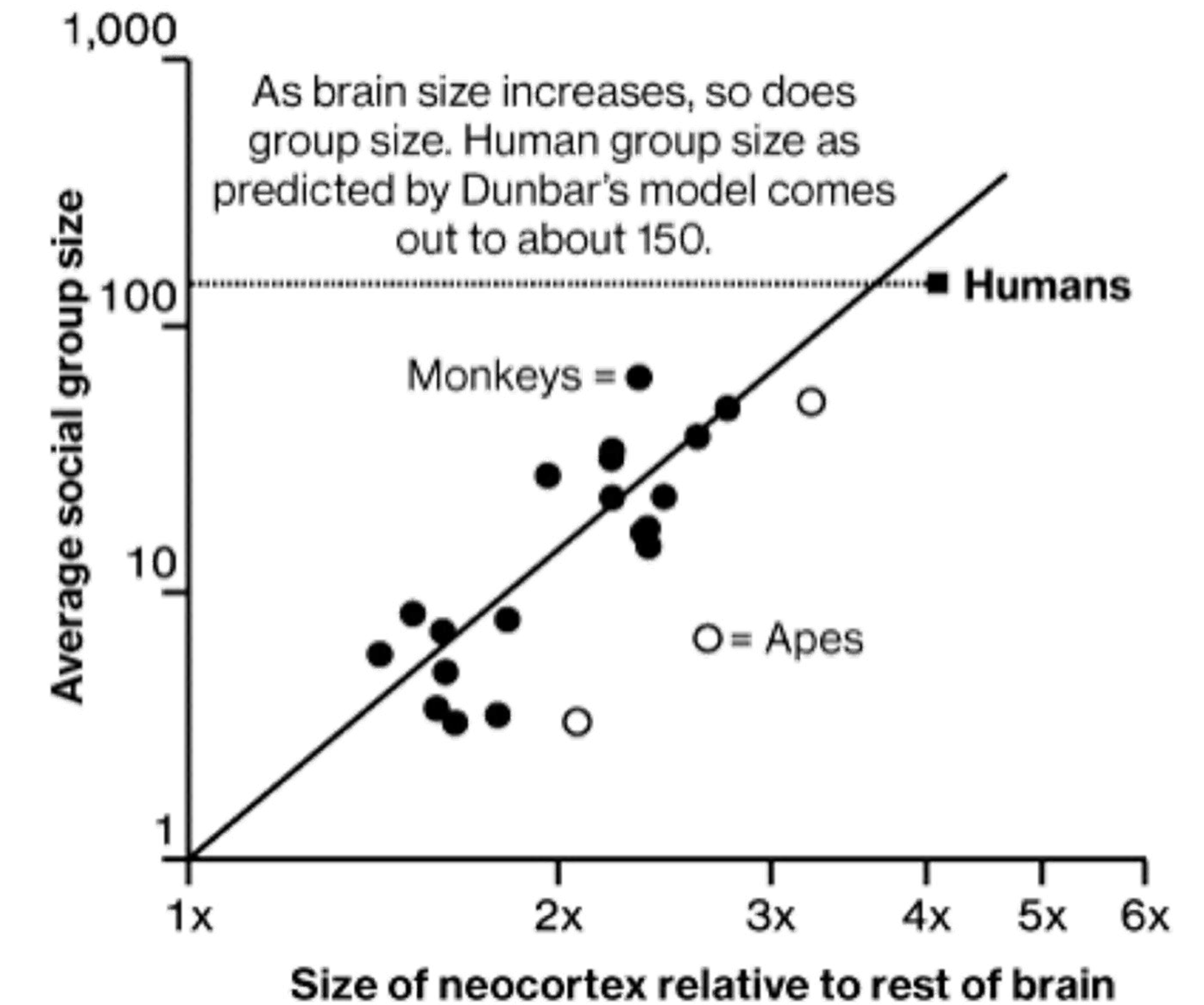
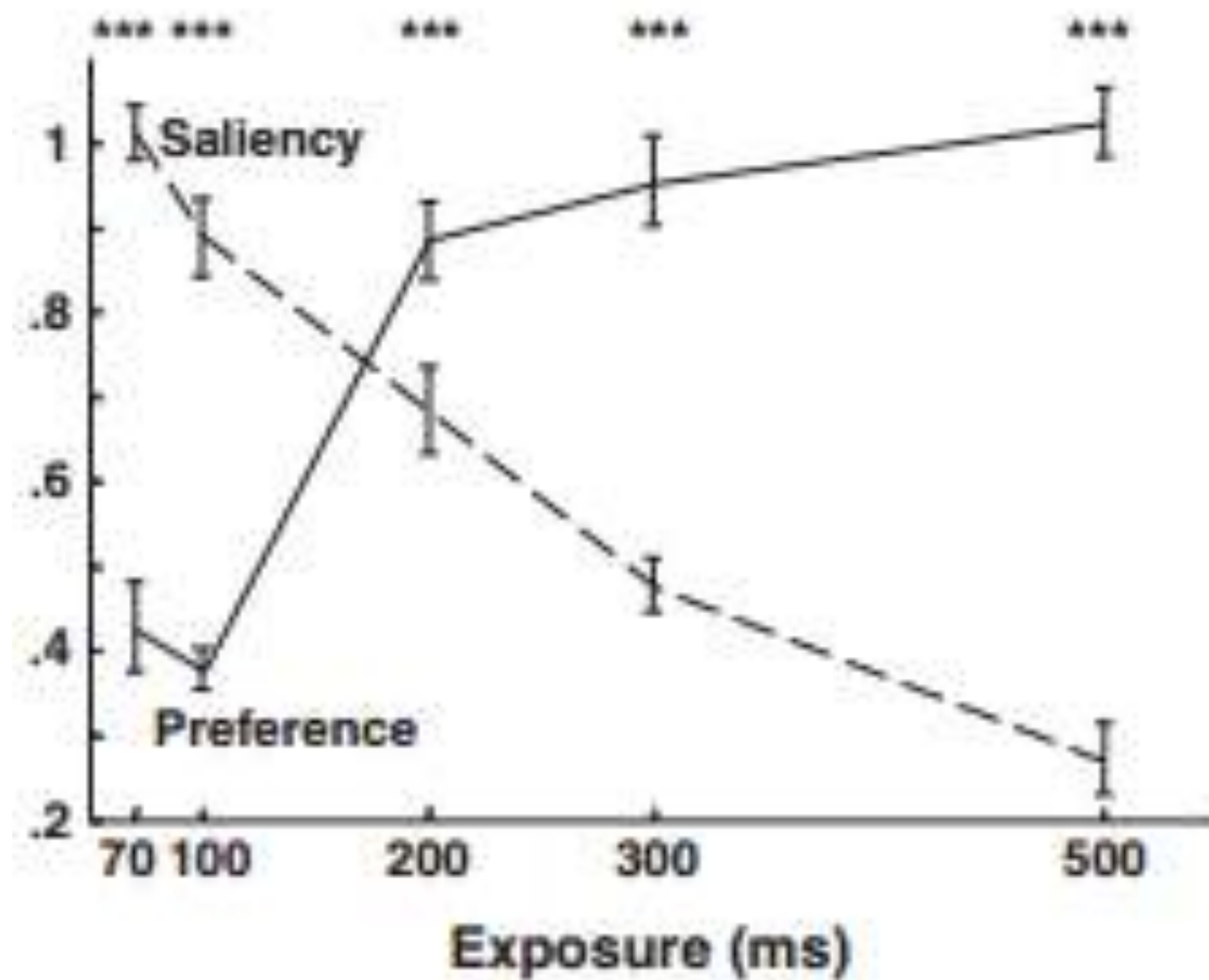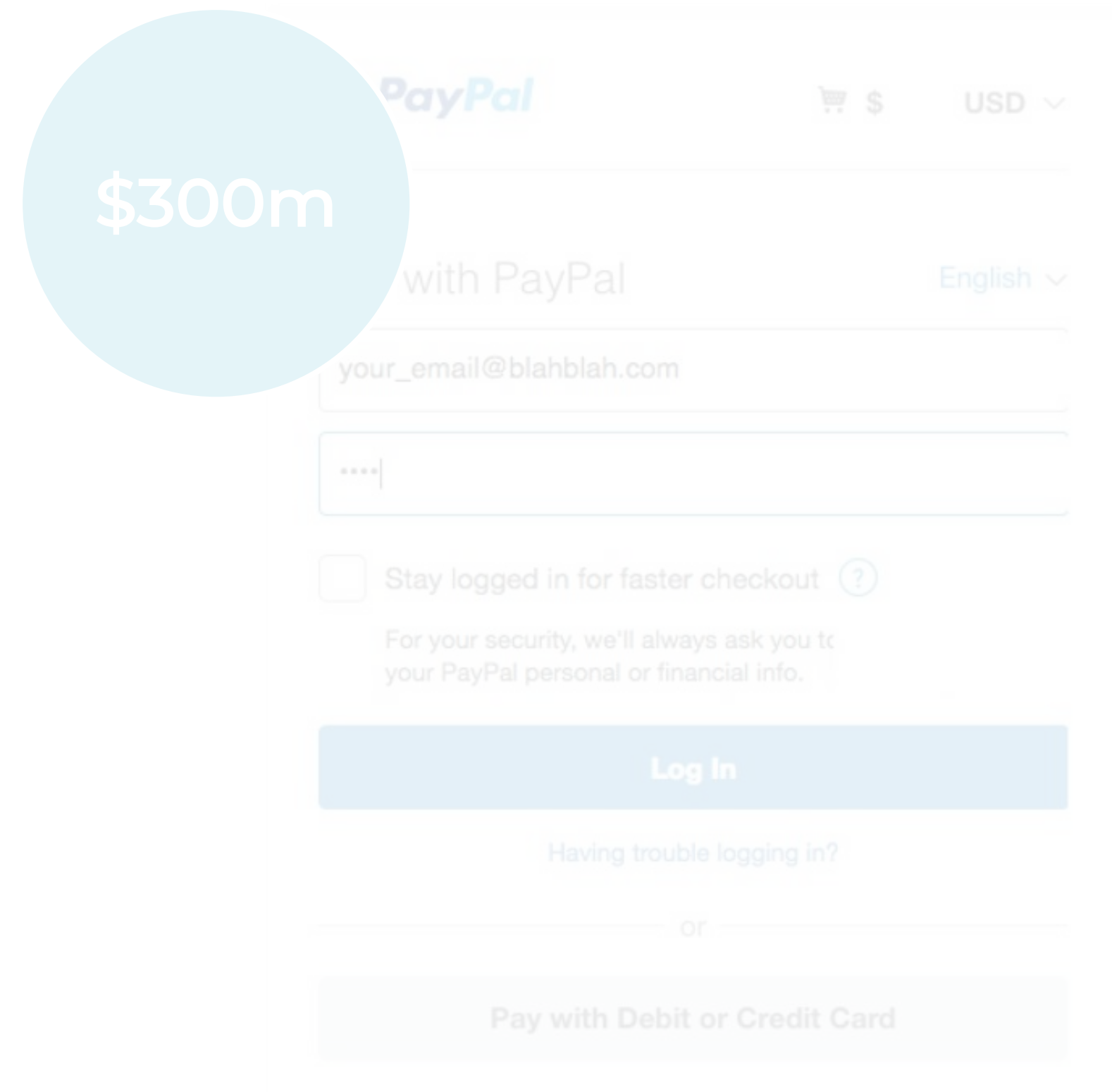DATA: THE SOCIAL BRAIN HYPOTHESIS, DUNBAR 1998

HEURISTICS

TURNING MINDS INTO MONEY

Mind

Money

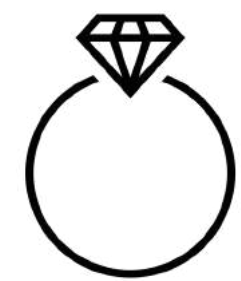

$300m

A MASTERCLASS IN NUDGING

Commitment
Make people feel invested so they are more likely to follow through

Scarcity
Make the resource feel scarce so people feel an urgency to obtain it

Authority
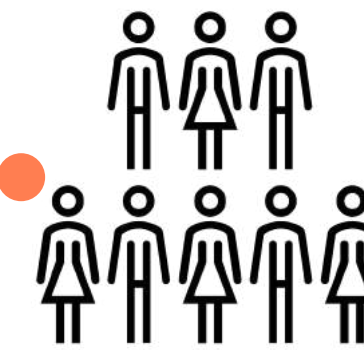Use a credible or liked messenger so people accept the message

You have reached the top of the queue and are a priority for getting a free NHS COVID-19 vaccine. Please book yours now at https://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination or by calling 119.

Ego
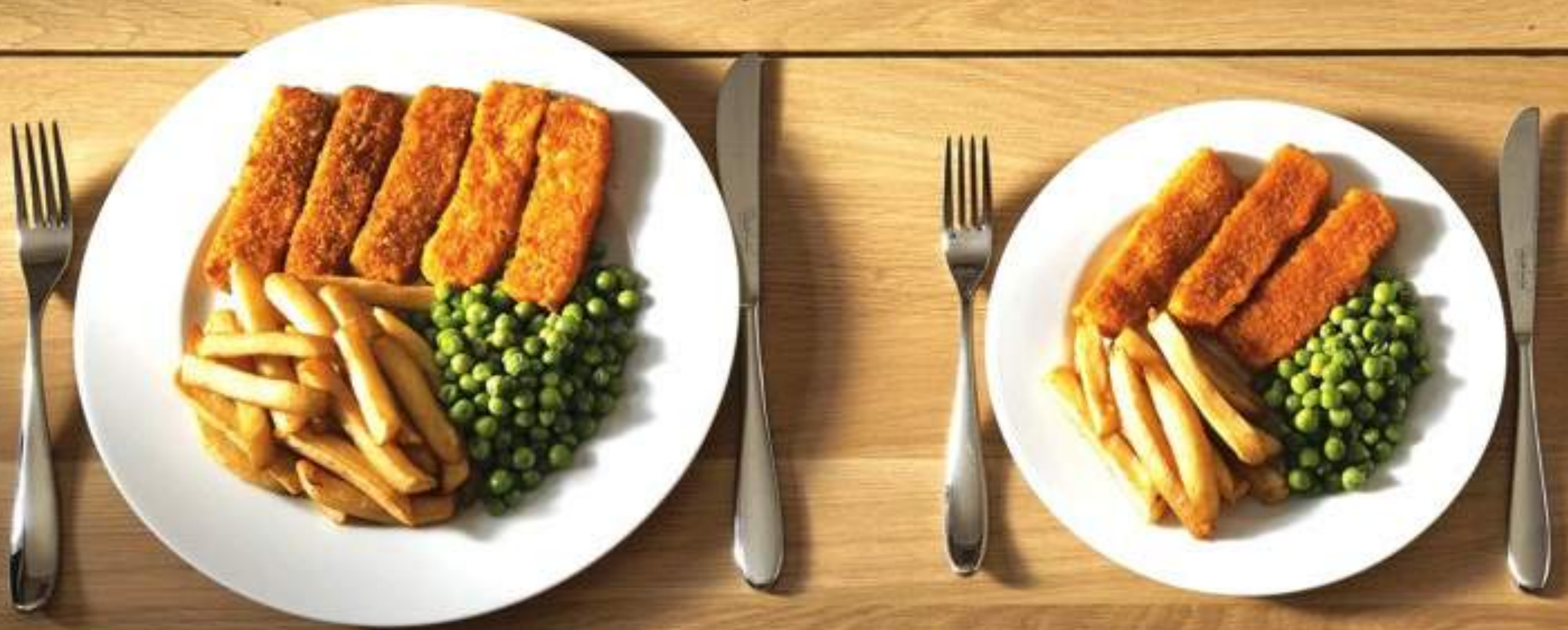Motivate behaviour by tapping into the need for social status

Social Proof
Make the behaviour seem popular so people assume it must be good

Reciprocity
Make people feel indebted so they are more likely to comply

Hotel restaurants reduced
food waste by up to 22%

PHYSICAL AVAILABILITY

	One queue only	Candy in a separate queue to the other food
Proportion of observed diners selecting candy	39%	3%

Meiselman et al., 1994

COLOUR TO GET PEOPLE TO EAT LESS (OR MORE)

Participants were given 10 pretzels on a plate...

1.6

2.9

3.0

Genschow, Reutner & Wanke, 2012

THE POWER OF PERCEPTIONS
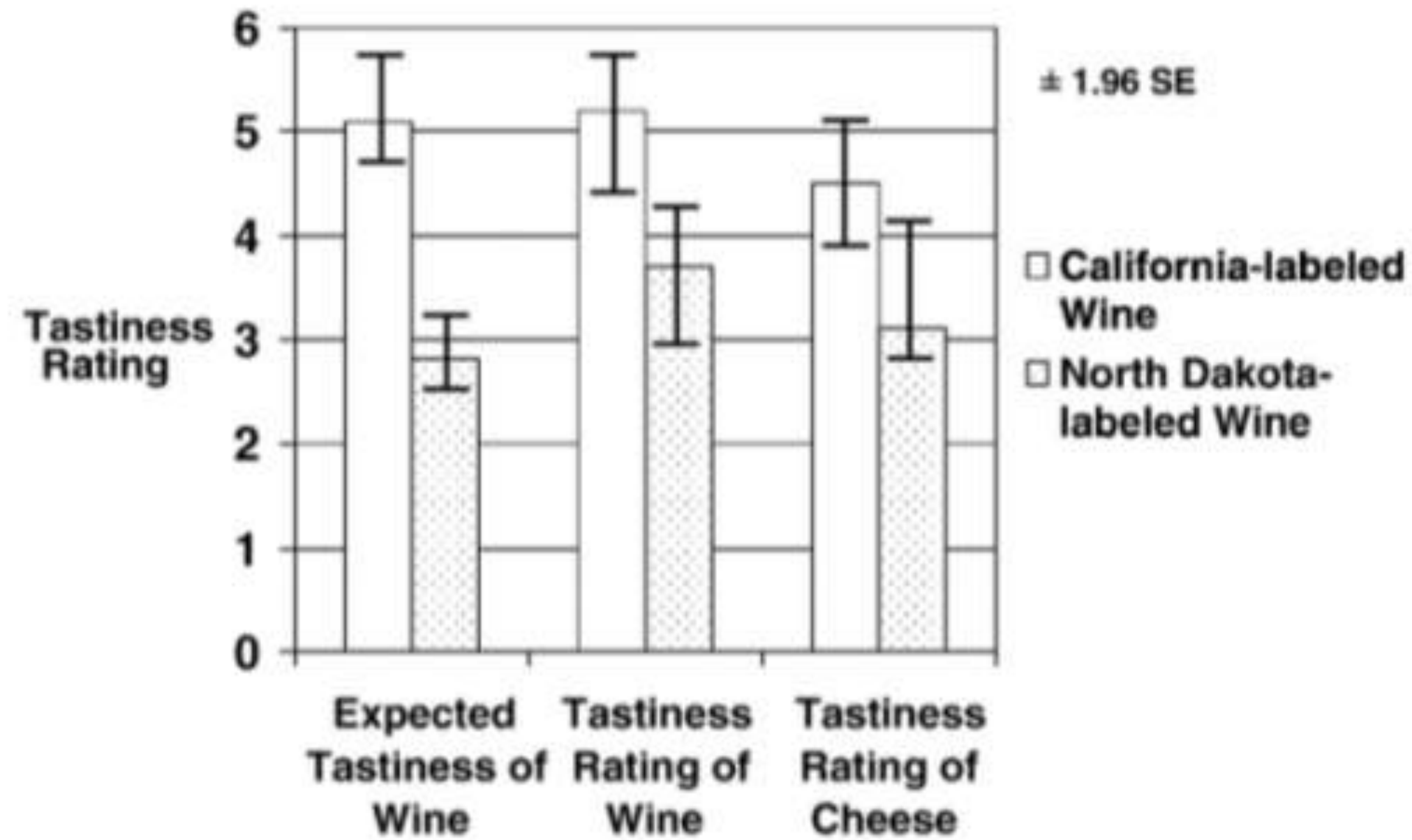
"Californian" wine caused diners to eat 11% more food and stay 10 mins longer.

Wansink et al., 2007

DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE

	Original	Descriptive
Description	Red Beans with Rice	Traditional Cajun Red Beans with Rice
	Seafood Filet	Succulent Italian Seafood Filet
	Grilled Chicken	Tender Grilled Chicken
	Chicken Parmesan	Homestyle Chicken Parmesan
	Chocolate Pudding	Satin Chocolate Pudding
	Zucchini Cookies	Grandma's Zucchini Cookies
Looks (1-9)	5.9	6.7
Taste (1-9)	6.8	7.3

+27% sales

Wansink, Van Ittersum & Painter, 2005

PRIMING FOOD CHOICE VIA DECORATIONS

Gueguen, Jacob & Ardiccioni, 2012
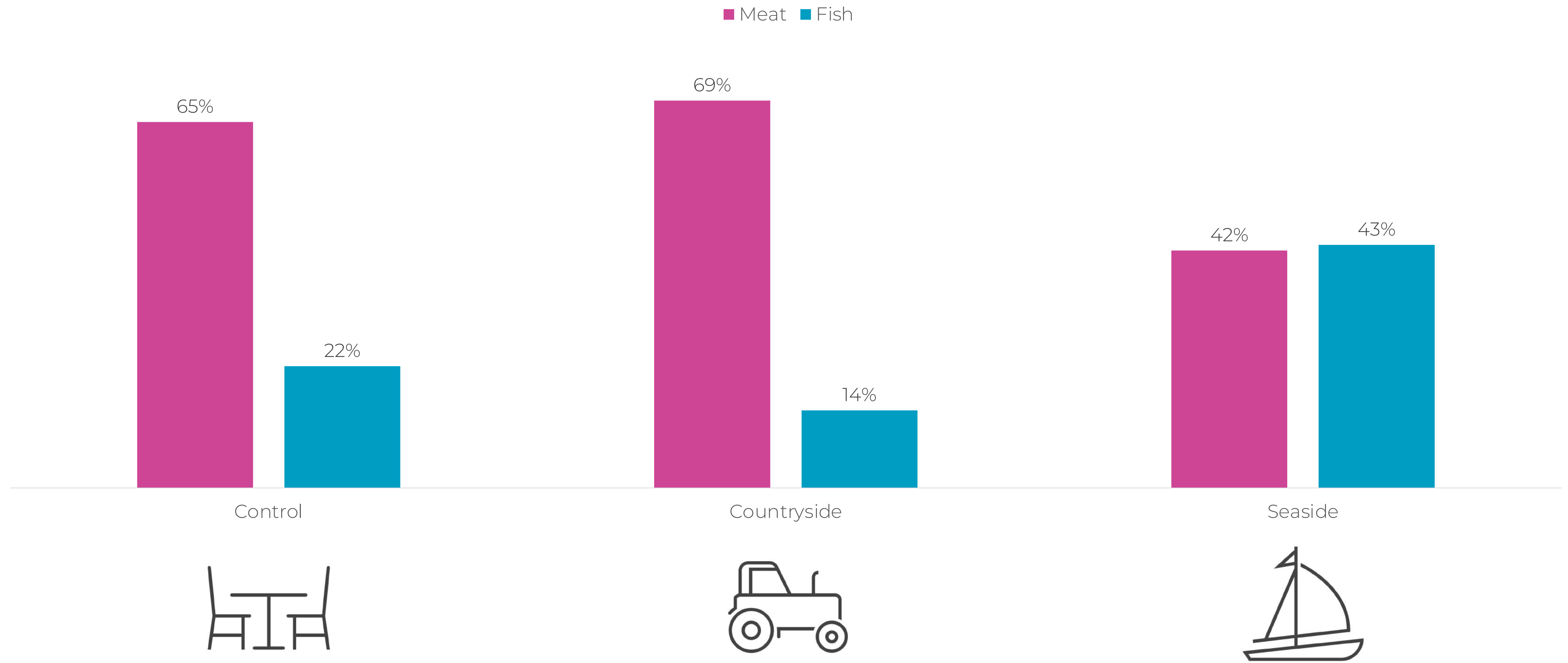
THE HEALTH HALO

STUDY 1: LOW-FAT LABELS INCREASE SNACK-FOOD CONSUMPTION

Wansink & Chandon, 2006
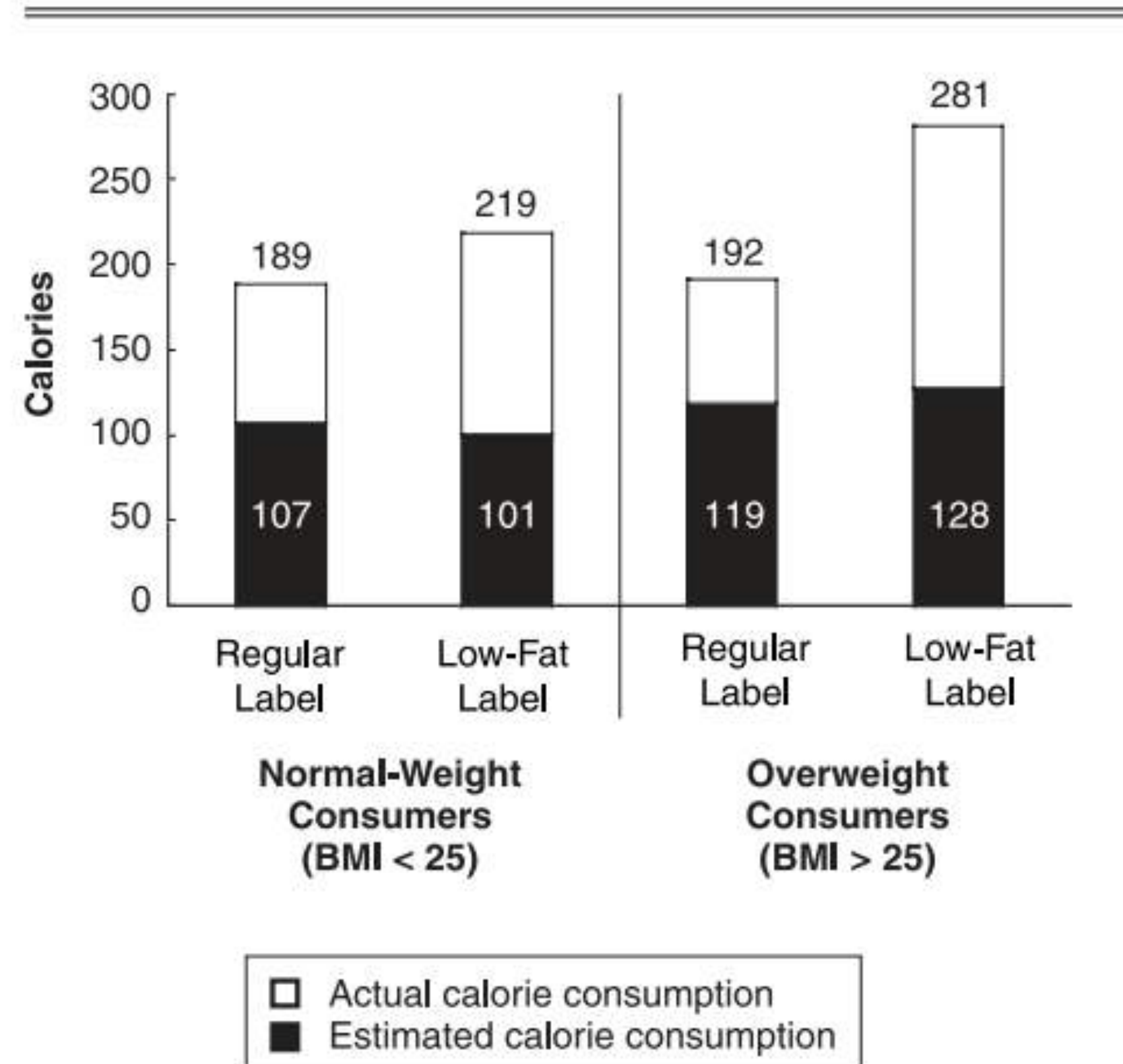
WHY TAPAS IS SUCH A MONEY MAKER

Megson & Gunary, 1981
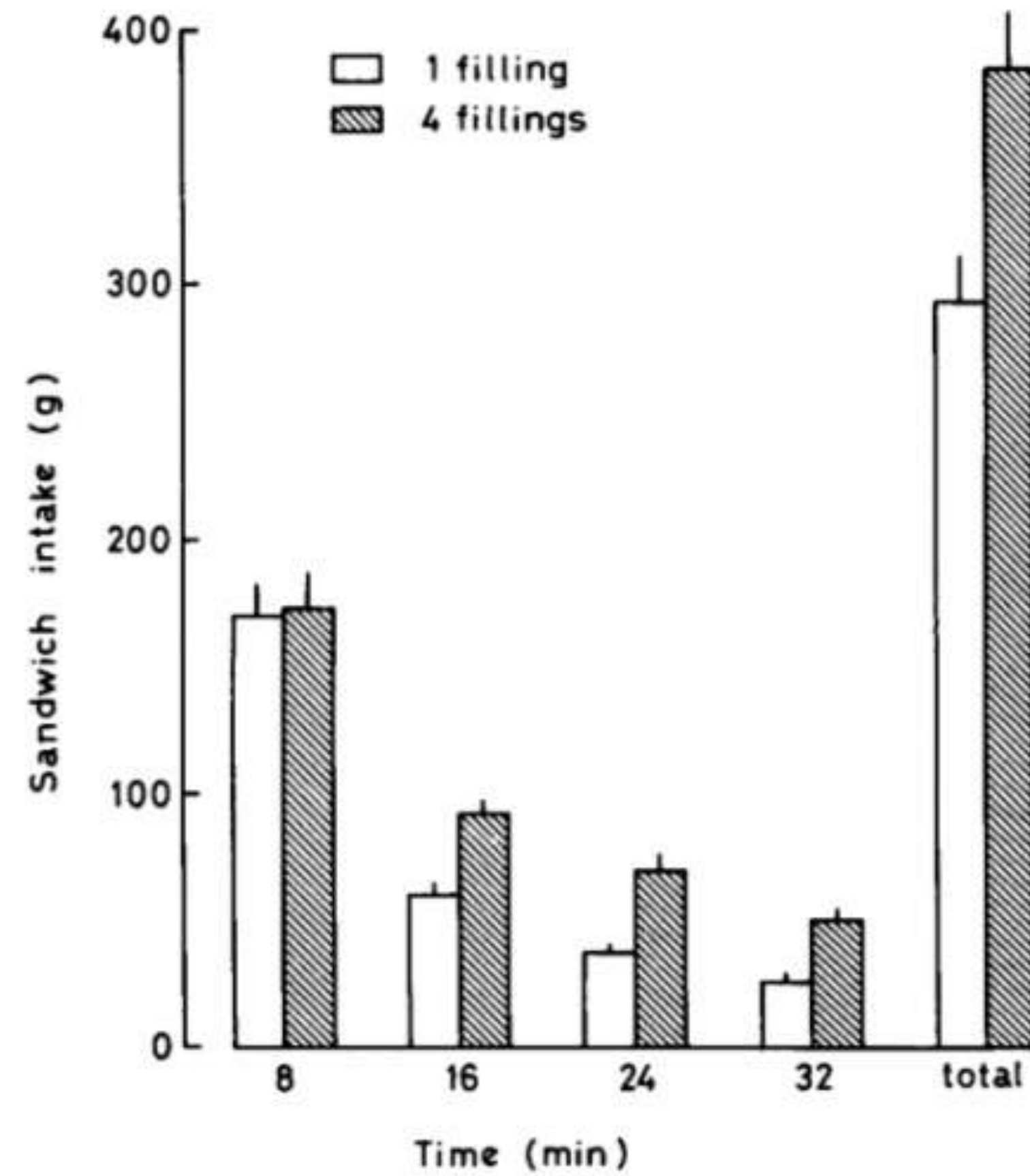
HOW TO INCREASE TIPS

LIKING

- repeating the customers' orders after they have said them;
- addressing customers by name (e.g. "Mr. Smith");
- servers introducing themselves by name;
- using large, open-mouthed smiles, as opposed to small, closed ones;
- subtly touching customers on the shoulder and hand during interactions;
- mimicking verbal behaviour and posture, by squatting to the customer's level;
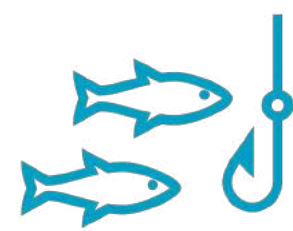- waitresses wearing a flower in their hair or wearing make-up (for men only).

RECIPROCITY

- giving customers a puzzle, joke or interesting fact with the receipt;
- giving customers a hand written message forecasting the weather or saying "thank you";
- waitresses drawing a smiley face on the receipt, though waiters can get the same result by drawing the sun;
- giving customers a sweet, though giving them two is better, and giving them two at different times is even more effective than that.

Crusco & Wetzel, 1984; Garrity & Degelman, 1990; Jacob et al., 2010; Lynn & Mynier, 1993; Rodrigue, 1999; Stillman & Hensley, 1980; Tidd & Lockard, 1978; van Baaren et al., 2003; Gueguen, 2002; Rind & Bordia, 1995; Rind & Strohmetz, 2001a; Strohmetz et al., 2002

HOW TO OPTIMISE MENUS

The decoy effect - "bracketing" - is where the larger, more expensive size acts as a decoy and makes the smaller size (i.e. the original item the restaurateur wants to sell) look more attractive.

Bundling items together (e.g. a burger and fries) increases sales because multiple painful losses are bundled into one, and the exact costs of items are not clear.

Price obfuscation tactics include: not putting prices in a single column; not using "leader dots"; not using pound signs; removing decimal places; and using precise numbers.

Salient items are more likely to be noticed and bought – so highlight high-profit items using boxes or text-descriptions, or placing them on the top-right of the menu.

NUMERICAL COGNITION

❌ $3,500,000

✅ $3,617,265

Thomas et al., 2007; Yang et al., 2009

IT'S NOT ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL

Bertrand, M., Karlan, D., Mullainathan, S., Shafir, E., & Zinman, J. (2005).
What's psychology worth? A field experiment in the consumer credit market.

DIFFERENT PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPES EXIST

What type of person lives in this bedroom…?

Gosling, S. D., Ko, S. J., Mannarelli, T., & Morris, M. E. (2002). A room with a cue: personality judgments based on offices and bedrooms. Journal of personality and social psychology, 82(3), 379.

PERSONALITY IS OBSERVABLE THROUGH CUES

Correlation with Liberalism-Conservatism
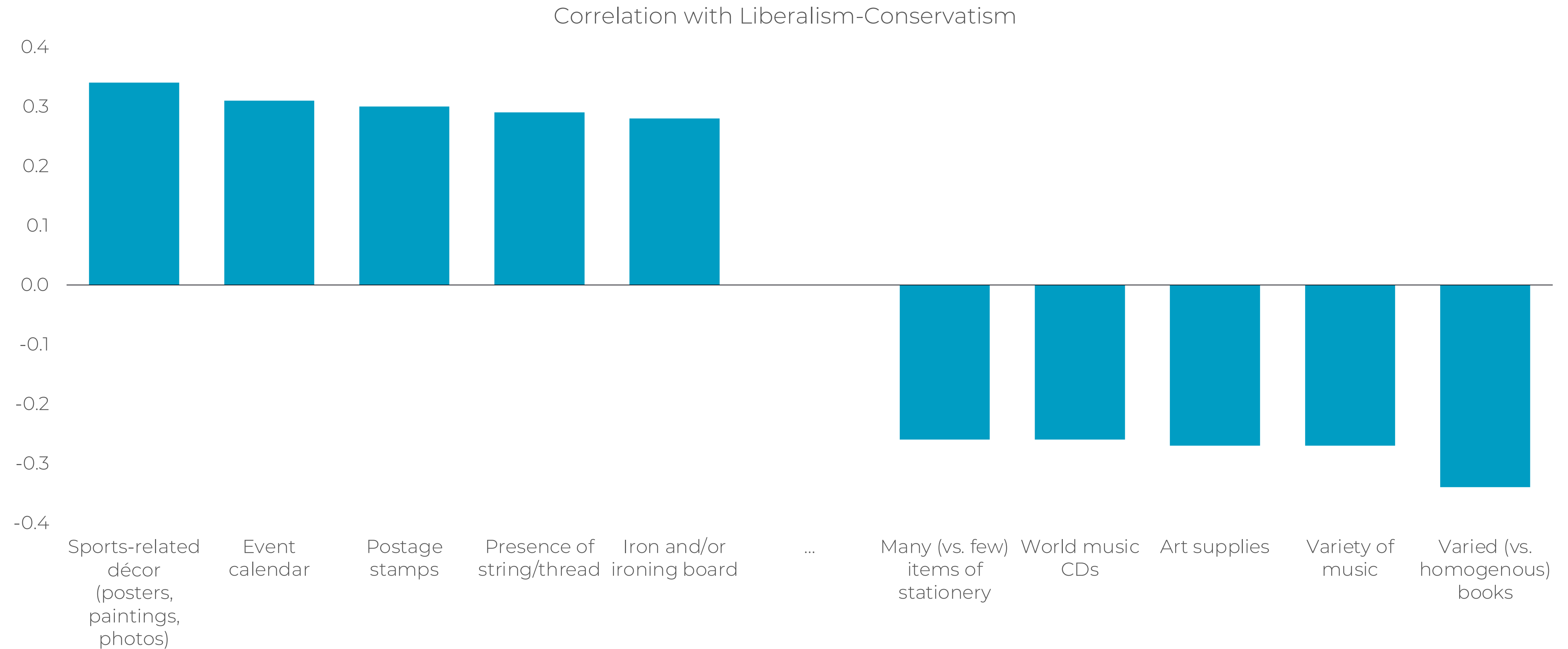
Carney, D. R., Jost, J. T., Gosling, S. D., & Potter, J. (2008). The secret lives of liberals and conservatives: Personality profiles, interaction styles, and the things they leave behind. Political Psychology, 29(6), 807-840.

RESONANT AESTHETICS

Openness
(r=.354, r=.301)

Conscientiousness
(r=.242, r=.157)

Extraversion
(r=.285, r=.261)

Disagreeableness
(r=.261, r=.210)

Neuroticism
(r=.184, r=.173)

RESONANT NUDGES

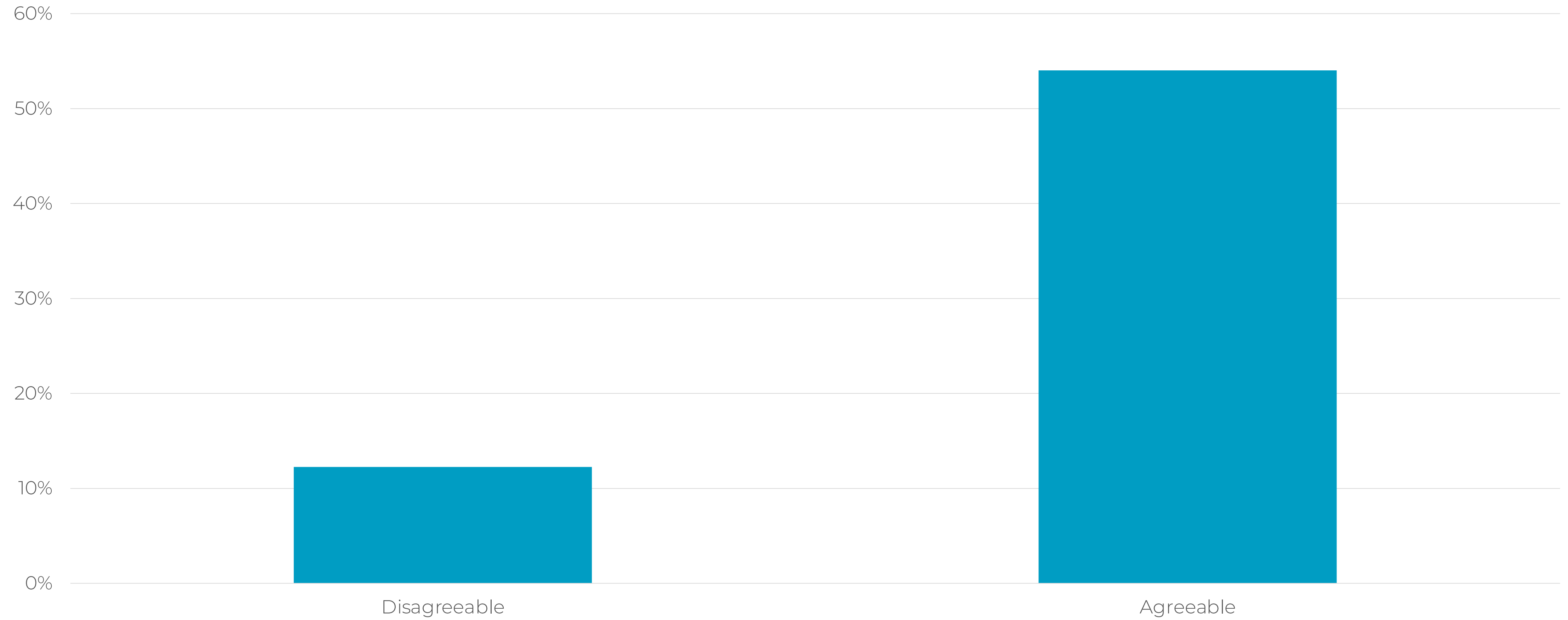Change in Likelihood of Visiting a Restaurant if it has Many Reviews (vs. No Reviews)

THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME...

A — High Extraversion

Dance like no one's watching
(but they totally are)

Low Extraversion

Beauty doesn't have to shout

Introverted Audience — Extroverted Audience

OR = 1.40* [1.05,1.85]

OR = 1.77*** [1.29,2.44]

Conversion Rate (in %)

Introverted Ads — Extroverted Ads

Matz, S. C., Kosinski, M., Nave, G., & Stillwell, D. J. (2017). Psychological targeting as an effective approach to digital mass persuasion. Proceedings of the national academy of sciences, 114(48), 12714-12719.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DINER SEGMENTS

Segment Overview

Bubble sizes indicate the monetary value of each segment (the product of segment size, visit frequency, and average spend).
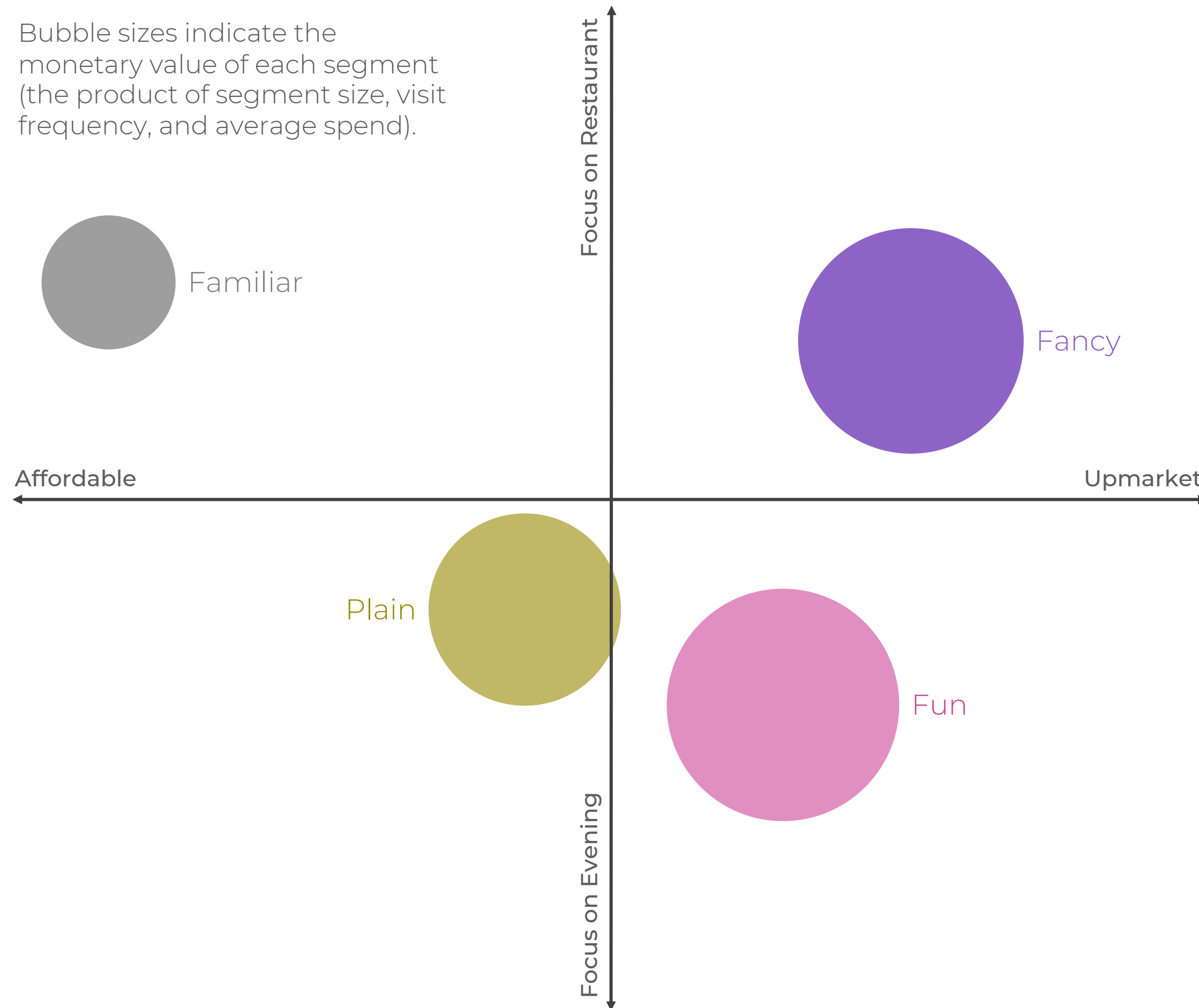
Fun (e.g., La Bodegra Negra)
These people are more sensation-seeking, risk-taking, extraverted and calm. When they go to a restaurant, the restaurant is the focus. They are much more likely to enjoy Chinese cuisine – and somewhat more likely to like American or Italian. They like restaurants to be daring and cool; they appreciate a good view, live entertainment, and a good drinks menu.

Familiar (e.g., Toby Carvery)
These people don't go to restaurants very often. They are introverted, neurotic and self-conscious. They might go for a special occasion or a treat. They like British and Indian cuisine. They like restaurants to be down-to-earth and natural; local and healthy food is important. They prefer somewhere familiar, affordable, quiet, and laid back.

Plain (e.g., Nandos)
These people are more disagreeable, conservative and disorganised. They are not very adventurous. They go to restaurants with friends or dates as part of a wider night out. They prefer British or American food, with beer, juice or water – they like it plain and local. They are more open to self-service and to an unstructured, busy and untidy ambience.

Fancy (e.g., Roka)
These people are very extraverted and emotionally stable; they like art and are very adventurous. They go to restaurants later in the day, often with a partner, and spend more time there. They do it to socialise or 'just because'. They are more likely to drink wine or cocktails, and to like Thai or Japanese. They like restaurants to be new, unusual, elegant, and boutique.
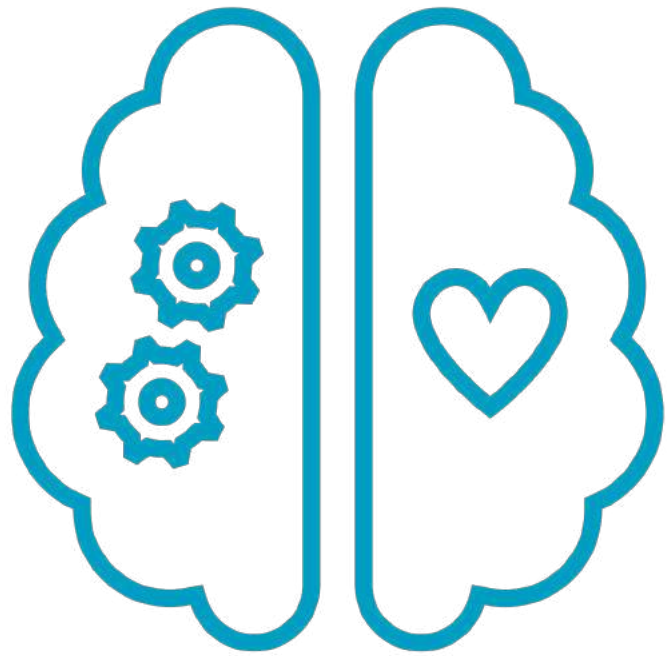
BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE FOR RESTAURANTS

Diner
Acquisition

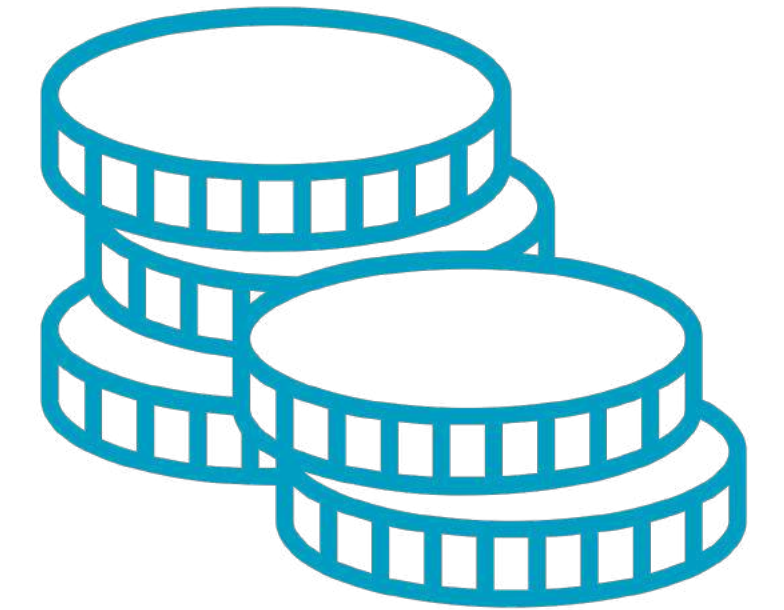Diner
Spend

Diner/Staff
'Compliance'

MINDS → MONEY

Q&A

INSIGHT@CAPUCHIN.CC