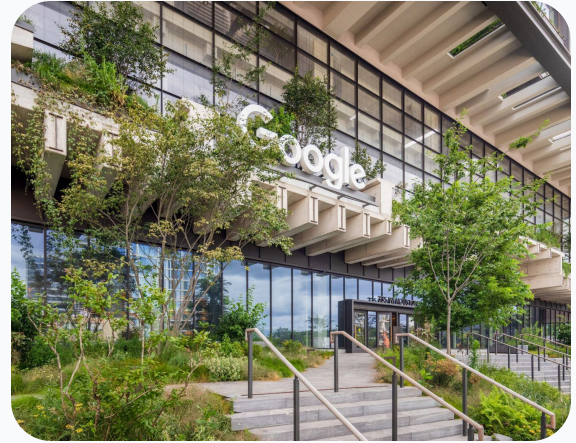


Designing Environments to Make Healthy and Sustainable Food The Easiest Choice

Chef Culinary Conference

June 9th, 2026

Chavanne Hanson, RD, MPH



My Goal: Make healthy eating simple

How we get there:



Understand human behavior

Understand why we behave the way we do



Acknowledge Complexity

Humans are unpredictable, irrational, impulsive



Behavioral Design

Design food spaces to make healthy choices easy



Complex underlayer

Problems To Solve



Employee Experience

- Frictionless, nourishing food experiences that fuel mind, body, social connection



Connection & Community

- Team Resilience
- Burnout Mitigation
- Employees that feel cared for



Financial Impact

- Business Growth
- Talent Acquisition & Retention
- Reduced Healthcare Costs

What's Becoming Clearer...

Strategic Infrastructure

Dining programs are shifting from **“amenity”** to **productivity infrastructure**.

Behavioral Design

A **cost-effective lever** for outsized wins in health, sustainability, and satisfaction.

Effortless Defaults

Reducing cognitive load to make **“good-for-you”** choices the default.



Our Strategic Inquiry



How can we help organizations create **workplace dining environments** that optimize employee wellbeing and health?

Unlocking peak productivity, innovation, and a sustainable business edge.

Beyond The Food



Nourishing Environments





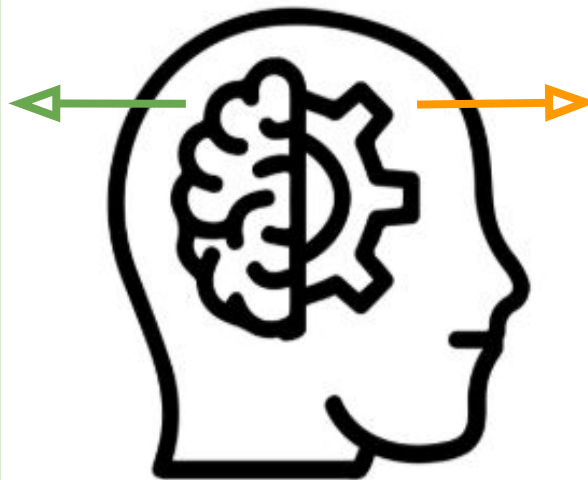
Science of Decision Making

How are choices made?

System 1 Thinking

"Fast" thinking
Quick
Instinctual
Often subconscious

FAST



System 2 Thinking:

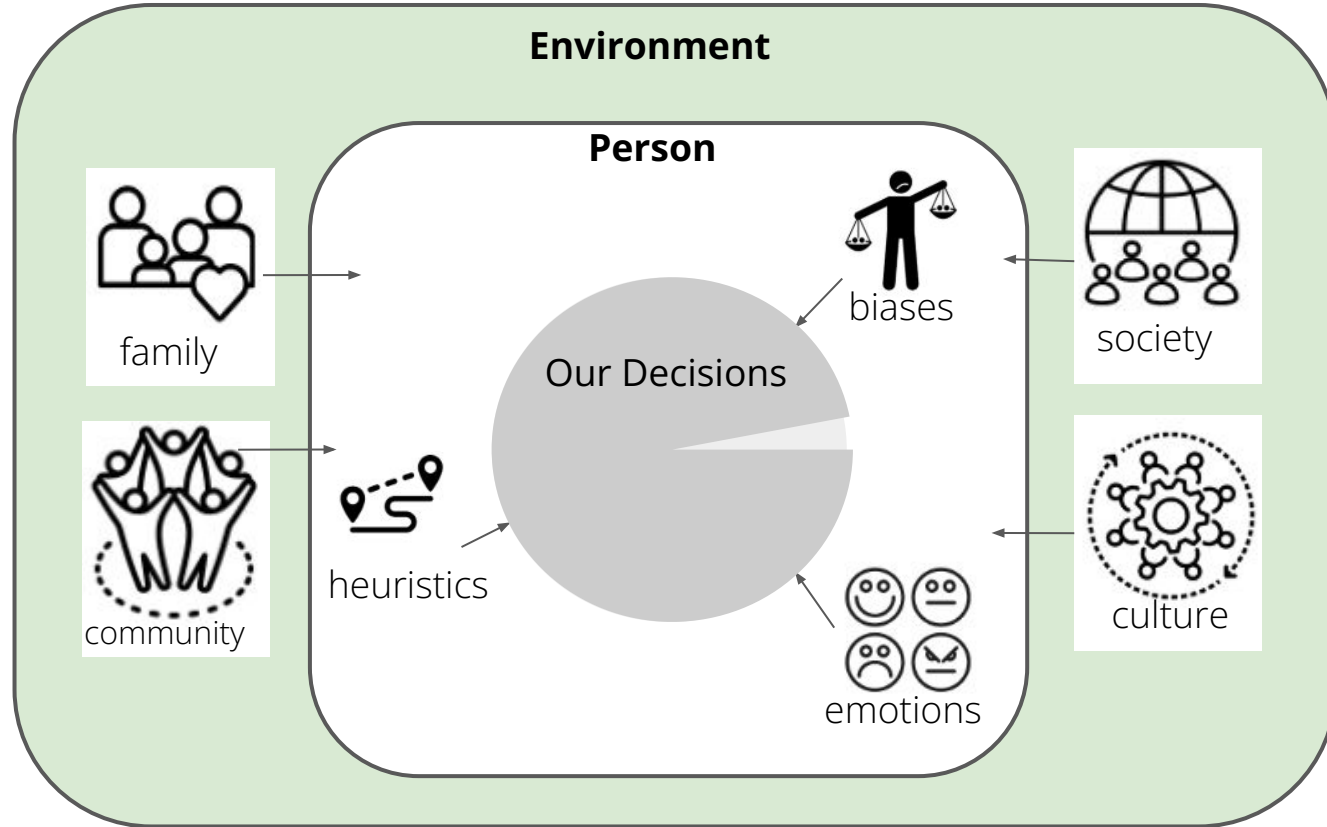
"Slow" thinking
Logical
Deliberate
Conscious

S L O W

A top-down view of a child's meal. On the left is a white ceramic bowl filled with a light brown liquid, likely milk. To its right is a white plate with a green rim. On the plate sits a single, irregularly shaped cookie covered in multi-colored sprinkles. Several sprinkles have fallen onto the plate around the cookie. The background is a light-colored, possibly marble, surface.

"Fast" thinking is in charge
of cognition the vast
majority of the time!

What influences our decisions?



The opportunity lies in the 95%

If we can create an environment where our brain subconsciously chooses to support our health goals, we can begin to make positive change.



What is Choice Architecture?

Food Choice Architecture

Food Choice Architecture (FCA) modifies the environment (ie. the cafe or retail space) to influence food behaviors.







Workplace Food Environment

Influencers

Accessibility

Social Media

Likes/Dislikes

Appearance

Hunger

Emotions

What's "good" today

Smells

Friends

*Food service
staff*

**Social
Media**

MANAGERS

Co-Workers

Dining experience

Visibility

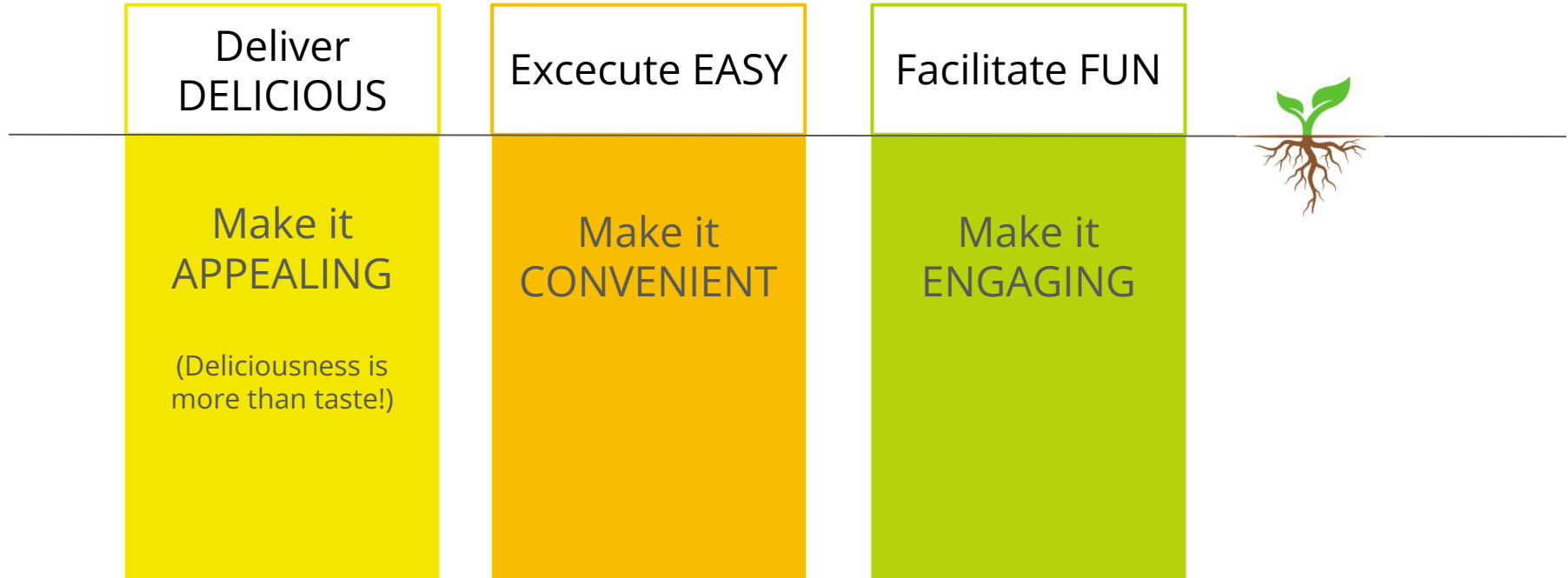
*Lunch
culture*

Our goal is to think about how can we make meals

- Appealing to the eye
- Satisfying
- Balanced
- Accessible
- Nutritious
- Sustainable
- Diverse

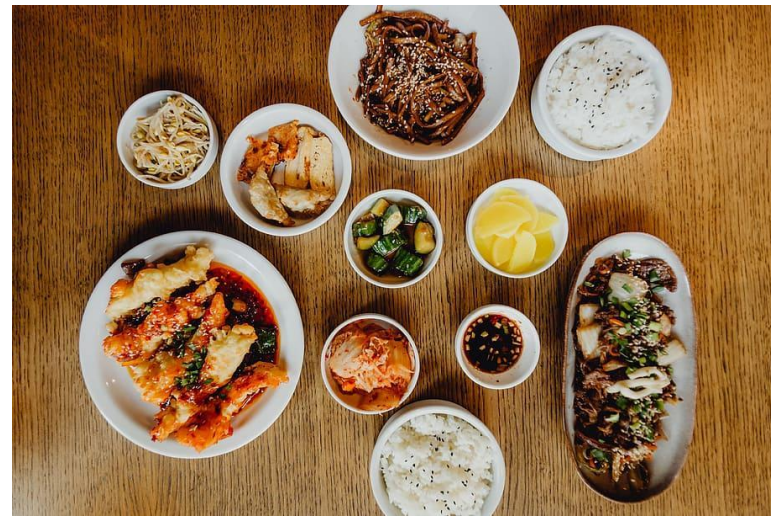


Pillars for delivering Healthy and Sustainable Food



What are you solving for?

- Fuel
- Hydration
- Productivity
- Connection
- Community
- Cultural Considerations





Food Choice Architecture Strategies



Food Choice Architecture Strategies



Preparation



Portion



Presentation



Placement



Messaging

Presentation

What makes a dish appealing?

- Accessibility
- Freshness
- Perceived flavor (indulgent ingredient)
- Vibrant colors and variety
- Unique displays create abundance



Presentation for Indulgent Offerings

- Color Influence
- Opaque Containers Influence



Preparation

- Pre-cut/Pre-Sliced
- Personalization
- Plated vegetables with Sandwich



Portions

- “Right” sizing
- Unit Bias: One unit of food is the appropriate amount. (NOT TRUE!)
- Half portions
- Smallwares



Placement

- Arranging vegetables first on a service line
- Proximity
- Visibility: “Out of sight, out of mind” and “in sight, in mind”
- Optimize “eye level” space
- Plate size



Messaging

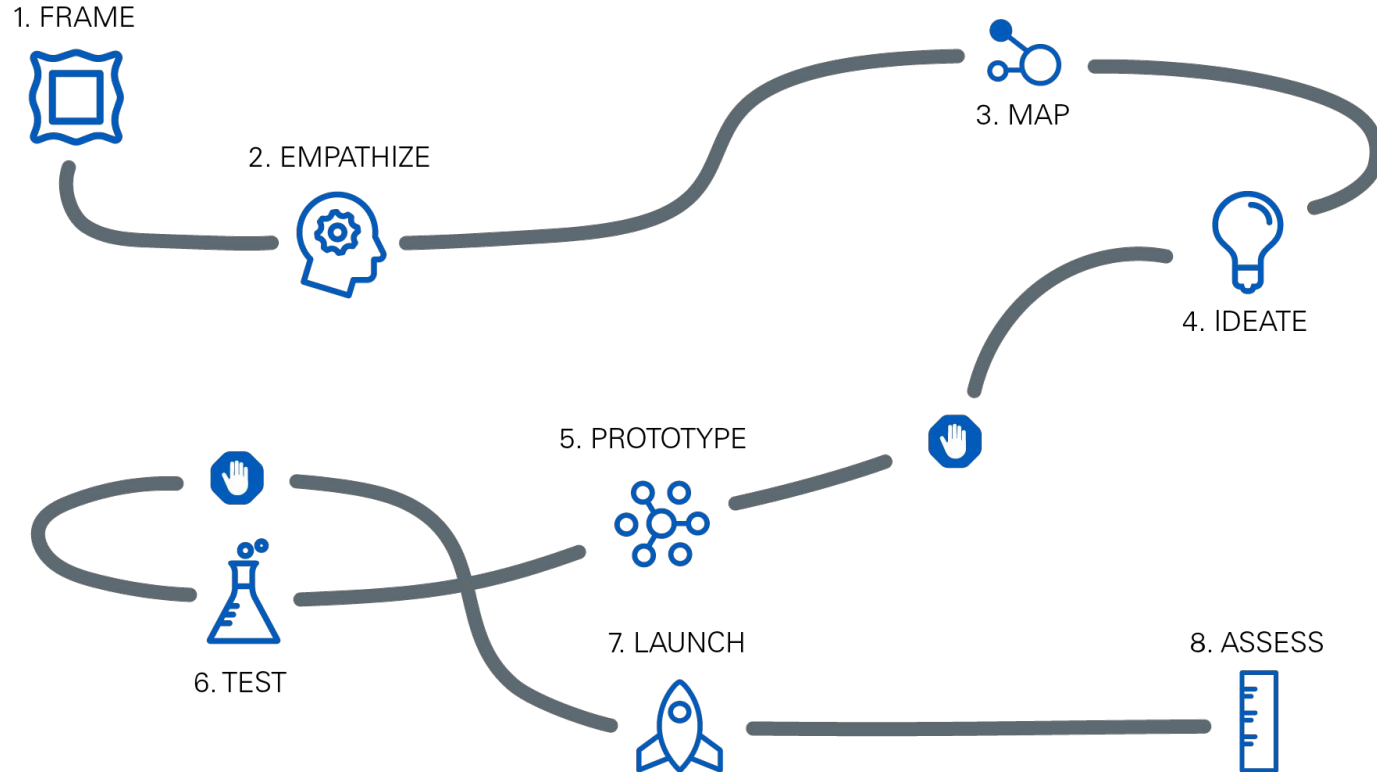
- Descriptive Dish Titles: Highlight flavor, origin, crowd favorite ingredients, texture boosts the flavor expectation
- “Carrots” or “Crunchy Carrot Coins?”
- Campaigns



Research



The Eight Steps for a Behavior-Centered Design Journey



Proximity of snacks to beverages increases food consumption in the workplace: A field study



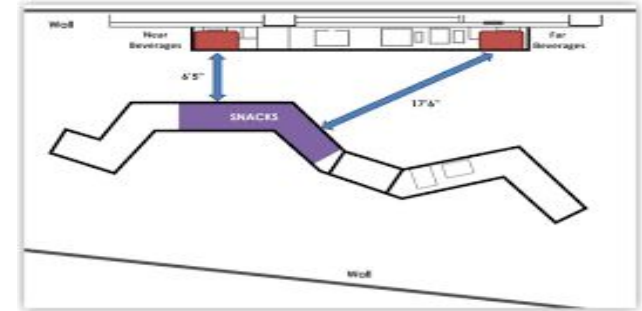
Appetite

Volume 103, 1 August 2016, Pages 244-248



Proximity of snacks to beverages increases food consumption in the workplace: A field study

Ernest Baskin ^{a 1}  , Margarita Gorlin ^{b 1}, Zoë Chance ^b, Nathan Novemsky ^b, Ravi Dhar ^b,
Kim Huskey ^c, Michelle Hatzis ^c



Google's Food Program Deploys a Variety of Tactics to make Healthier Eating Easier

Behind the Scenes at Google's Cafeteria

The tech behemoth engineered its corporate cafeterias to improve employees' diets. We learned how it can improve yours, too

BY MELINDA WENNER MOYER

February 19, 2013



Descriptive Dish Titles

Making the best choice more salient to shift diets

Gavrieli et al. *BMC Public Health* (2022) 22:2229
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-14683-8>

BMC Public Health

RESEARCH

Open Access

Appealing dish names to nudge diners to more sustainable food choices: a quasi-experimental study



Anna Gavrieli^{1*}, Sophie Attwood², Jonathan Wise², Eleanor Putnam-Farr³, Paul Stillman⁴, Scott Giambastiani⁵, Jane Upritchard¹, Chavanne Hanson⁵ and Michiel Bakker⁵



Standard (Before)

Main: Bean and Veggies Stew

Side: Taro with Herbs

Soup: Collard Greens Vegetable Soup

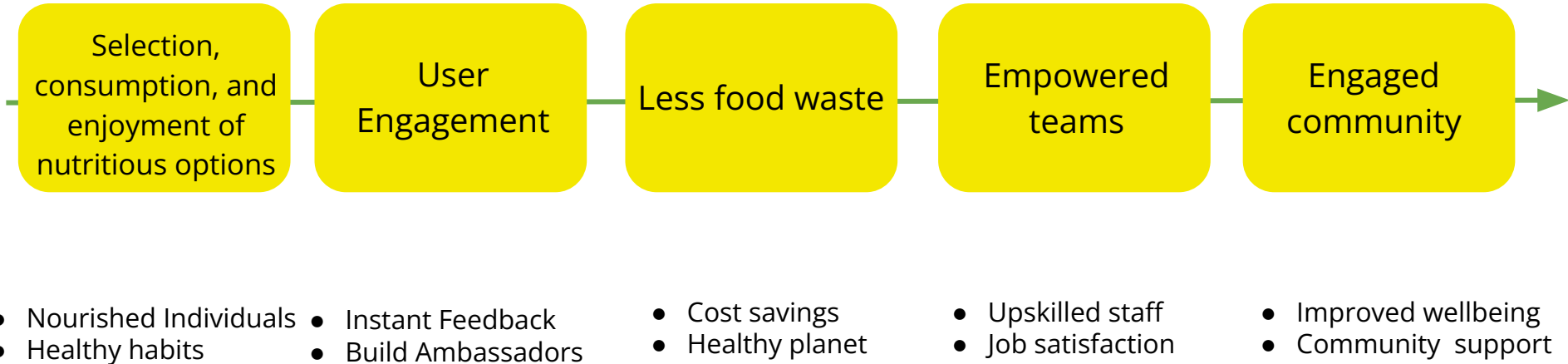
Descriptive (After)

Main: French Slow-Cooked Mushrooms and Beans Cassoulet

Side: Herb Roasted Tropical Potatoes

Soup: Sweet Velvety Soup with Collard Greens

Outcomes & Impact





So, Now What?

What are your next steps?

Nourish By Design:



Identify Your Approach



Identify Your Goal



Take Your First Step



Summary

Choice architecture

is a powerful tool that is underutilized in foodservice operations.

Food + Environment

Offering nourishing options is only half of the equation; the other half is enabling individuals to choose, consume, and enjoy them.

FCA Strategies

Portion, placement, presentation, messaging, and preparation.

TEAM

From suppliers to culinary and design teams, every part of the experience makes a difference.



Resources:

**RARE Behavior Centered
Design**
Framework



WRI: The Food Service Playbook
Promoting Sustainable Food Choices



Edgy Veggie Toolkit



EDGY VEGGIES TOOLKIT
HOW TO INCORPORATE TASTE-FOCUSED LABELING
TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHIER EATING

BITE
Building Impact Through Eaters



**Portion Balance
Coalition**



Contact

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Connect on LinkedIn

Let's work together

If you would like to learn more or work together on incorporating choice architecture into your organization, please reach out!