

## SUSTAINING INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP IN SENSORY AND CONSUMER TESTING

**ABOUT J.R. SIMPLOT COMPANY - TECHNICAL CENTER.** In the 1930's, J.R. Simplot started developing sorting mechanisms for potatoes to more effectively feed the troops in World War II, and he introduced the world's first marketable frozen french fry. Today, Simplot is privately held and headquartered in Boise, Idaho. Simplot has grown into an international food and agriculture company with more than 13,000 employees worldwide. Their vertically-integrated supply chain includes farming, ranching and cattle production, food processing, food brands, phosphate mining, fertilizer manufacturing, and other agriculture-related enterprises. Major operations in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Australia, Argentina, and China provide diverse products and services to people worldwide. The food group within Simplot has six plants in the U.S., including three in Washington, one in Idaho, one in Oregon and one in North Dakota.

**THE CHALLENGE.** The J.R. Simplot Company has a well-known and respected sensory department in the foodservice side of the industry. Within its primary customer accounts, the program is highly respected by its largest customer, McDonalds. After some attrition within the department, the team began the challenging job of backfilling its global sensory manager position. Recruiting for a specialist in sensory and consumer science can be difficult because there are so few of them nationally.

While recruiting efforts were underway, the team was falling behind on research project deliverables and training of quality managers in their domestic and international production facilities. They wanted to hire a temporary professional who would continue to provide high-quality training to factories and technical insights to its customers around the world while completing their recruiting and hiring processes. This included direct project support with data analysis, report writing, shelf life testing, competitive analysis, train-the-trainer program management, and onboarding/training of new employees.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** The company leveraged a sensory and consumer science specialist at TechHelp, part of the MEP National Network™, to bridge a gap in its internal capability. This individual helped develop trained panelist training exercises, resume shelf life testing, execute competitive assessments, and issue data insights to key product developers and marketing specialists in the company. They also developed a crash course in the technical skills needed to execute research on the product categories sold by Simplot.

**"TechHelp was key to ensuring that we could meet all of our customer needs while transitioning as a department. The continuity kept Simplot competitive and put us in a strong position as we validated product performance in the foodservice market."**

-Jolene Pharaoh, Sensory Manager, North America/Latin America

## RESULTS



13 jobs created or retained



\$20,000 in cost savings



Addressed overdue project deliverables



Workplace burnout due to understaffing was mitigated



A fully staffed and trained sensory and consumer science team successfully launched new products

## CONTACT US



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