



How Ahold Delhaize USA's Sensory Quality Team Helps Own Brands Deliver on Customer Expectations

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Every time customers bring home an Own Brands product from one of Ahold Delhaize USA's local brands, they are making a decision about whether it earns a place in their shopping routine again. Behind the scenes, ADUSA's Sensory Quality team helps shape that experience by evaluating products, gathering shopper feedback and monitoring quality to help ensure Own Brands products deliver on customer expectations.

Part of the Product Excellence team within Own Brands, the Sensory Quality team reviews products throughout their lifecycle, including during development, reformulations, packaging updates and sourcing events. The team compares products against established benchmarks and brand standards to help ensure they align with customer expectations and the distinct guardrails of Own Brands, including Taste of Inspirations, Nature's Promise and First Label.

For Christina White, Manager of Sensory Quality, the team's work is ultimately about protecting the customer experience.

"It's hugely important because if a customer opens a package and has a poor experience, they're likely not going to buy it again, and it can affect the overall brand image as well," White said. "Our team plays a big part beyond the in-store experience."

The team's work extends beyond evaluating products before they reach store shelves. It also helps investigate quality concerns, review customer feedback and partner with suppliers to identify solutions when issues arise.

"The most important thing is to know there is a group that exists that is paying attention to this and working on it," White said.

Another key part of the team's work happens directly with shoppers. Through sensory panels and blind taste tests conducted in stores, the team gathers feedback from customers and uses those insights to help inform product decisions.

"I think that's one of the coolest data types we have," White said. "It's a larger sample size of people who are actually shopping within our stores. We're able to analyze that data to help further support the direction we're trying to go in."

Whether evaluating a new product, reviewing customer feedback or monitoring quality over time, Ahold Delhaize USA's Sensory Quality team helps Own Brands products continue to deliver the experience customers expect and the trust that keeps them coming back.