

Consumer Research 2009 Avocados

ANZAGC'09

23rd July 2009

Bread & Butter



Background

- The Avocado industry is carrying out consumer research in 2009 in order to:
 - Review Avocado Usage & Attitude (initially surveyed in 2005)
 - Measure the impact of the 'morphing' campaign so far. In terms of awareness and comprehension, as well as changes in consumption patterns
 - Provide direction for future marketing and communication strategies

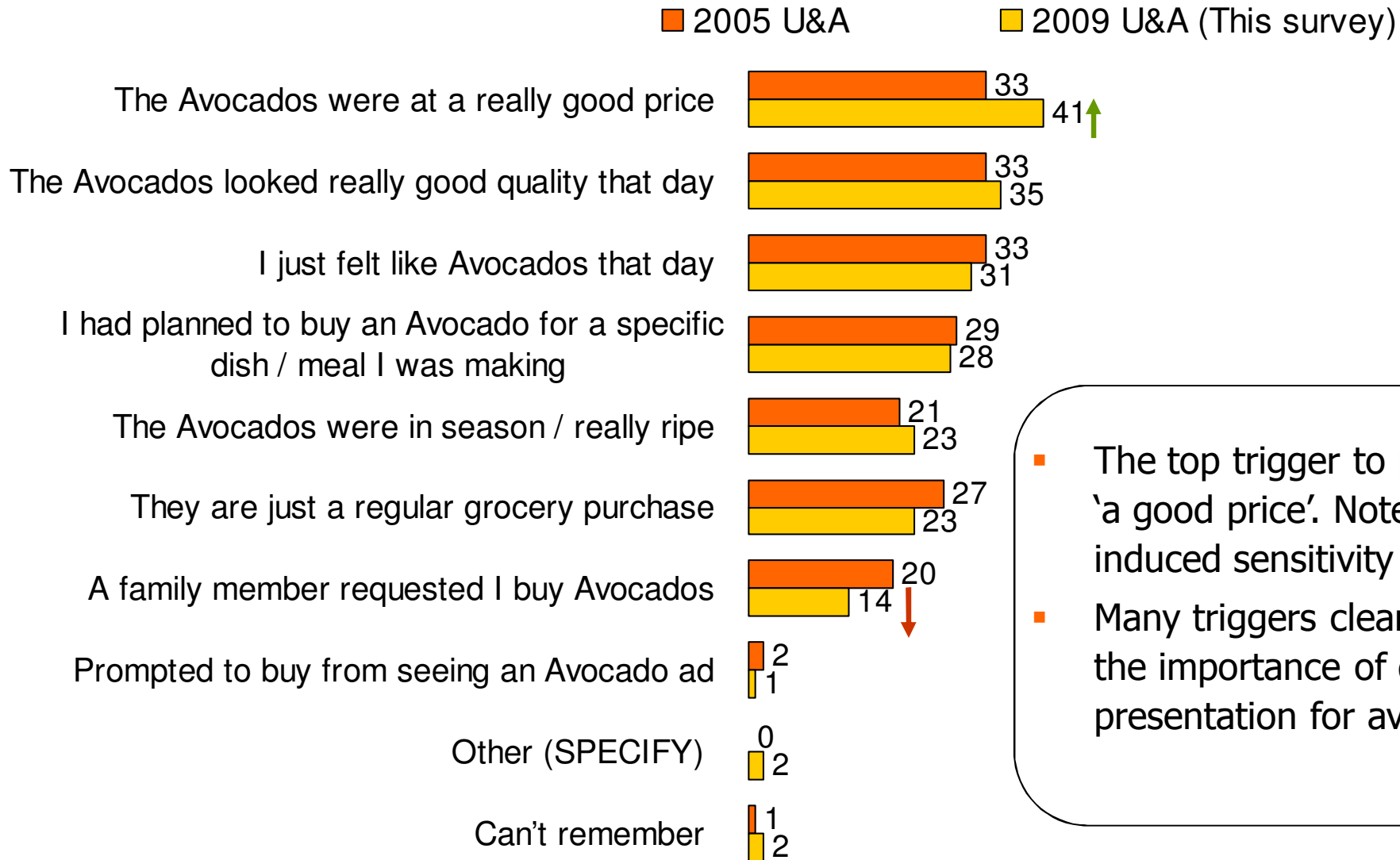
- Three linked stages of research are to be undertaken:
 1. On line quantitative survey among 1000 main grocery buyers across Australia
 2. Four x 2 hour focus groups among those who eat / serve Avocados at least monthly – to explore the key quantitative findings
 3. Five x 2 hour focus groups amongst light-medium users, evaluating future communication platforms

- The following charts address findings from the first two stages of research...

Triggers & Barriers to Avocado purchase



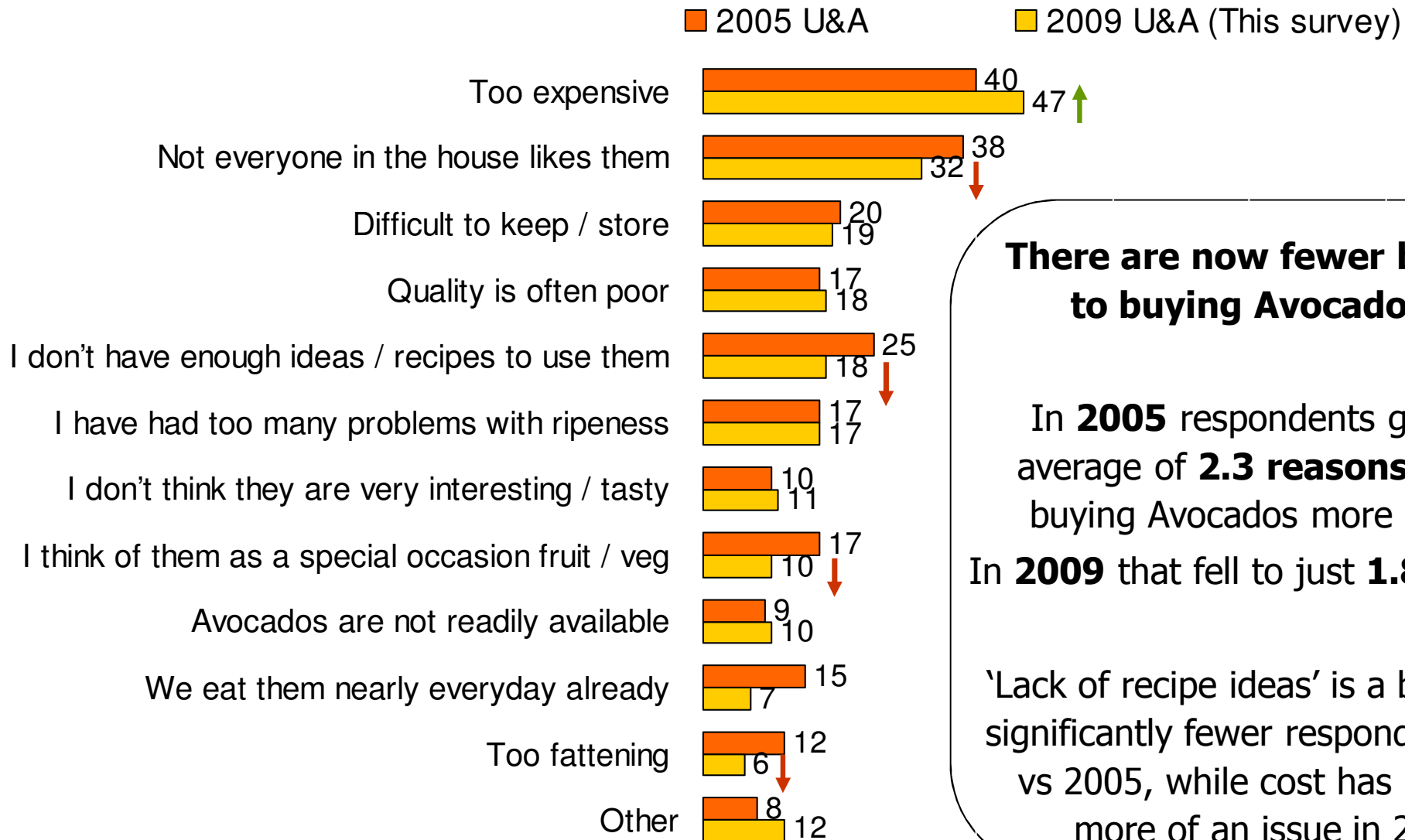
Purchase triggers: Reasons for buying Avocados last time



- The top trigger to purchase is 'a good price'. Note the 'GFC' induced sensitivity
- Many triggers clearly indicate the importance of quality and presentation for avocados

Prompted purchase barriers:

Reasons for not buying Avocados more often



There are now fewer barriers to buying Avocados...!

In **2005** respondents gave an average of **2.3 reasons** for not buying Avocados more often...
In **2009** that fell to just **1.8 reasons**

'Lack of recipe ideas' is a barrier for significantly fewer respondents now vs 2005, while cost has become more of an issue in 2009

In 2009, our consumers have become more price conscious



- They talked confidently of the typical price they pay for Avocados, what's a good deal and where to get it!
- They also noted frequent fluctuations on a week-by-week, or even day-by-day basis
 - *"One day they were \$1.40, the next day they were \$2.20. They can't have changed the whole batch over night?"*
- And appeared to have devised ways of finding a good price for Avocados!

1. 'Buying up' at a good price

- *"I rarely buy individually, unless it's an emergency. A bucket has maybe 5 in it and it's \$3-4 a bucket. I only buy a bucket"*

2. Delaying the purchase when the price is high

- *"When they went down to 89c at the fruit mart... I went mad!"*

3. Shopping around

- With several supermarkets / grocers often in the same mall, some will visit more than one store to get the best deal

However the broader perception, is that despite the 'GFC', avocado's are becoming more affordable

- Most felt the price of Avocados had probably fallen over the last decade, although this wasn't as obvious over the most recent couple of years
- And whilst these light – medium buyers were feeling more price conscious in general, they were keen to limit the impact on their Avocado purchases...
 - Some were cutting back on other grocery items, rather than Avocados
 - Especially more expensive packaged & snack foods
 - *"I may spend less on some things, but Avocado's are a part of your diet ~ a big vitamin tablet"*
- Although this varied by buyer segment – for example, the SINK / DINK's were more likely to report that the 'GFC' was restricting their usage....
 - *"I don't have to have them....so I only get them if they are at a good price"*

Buying Avocados is *still* something of a minefield (consistent with 2005)

- Across all the groups we constantly hear language that reflects the **lack of predictability** they find in choosing Avocados

"You take a risk"

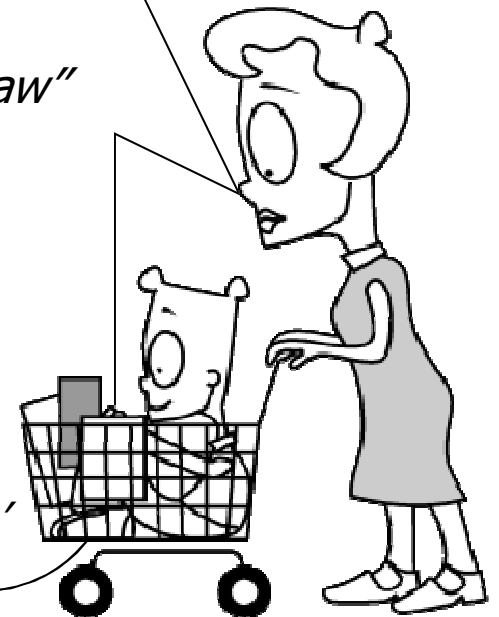
"It's hit & miss"

"It's a gamble"

"It's pot luck"

"It's luck of the draw"

- This was based upon estimating ripeness
 - "Sometimes I think it's ripe, but when I cut in to it, I was wrong!"*
 - "I think it's an art you need to learn"*
- And judging quality
 - 'avocados don't give away what they're like inside (like other fruits)'*
 - 'and you know the time you really need one, it will be stringy or brown'*

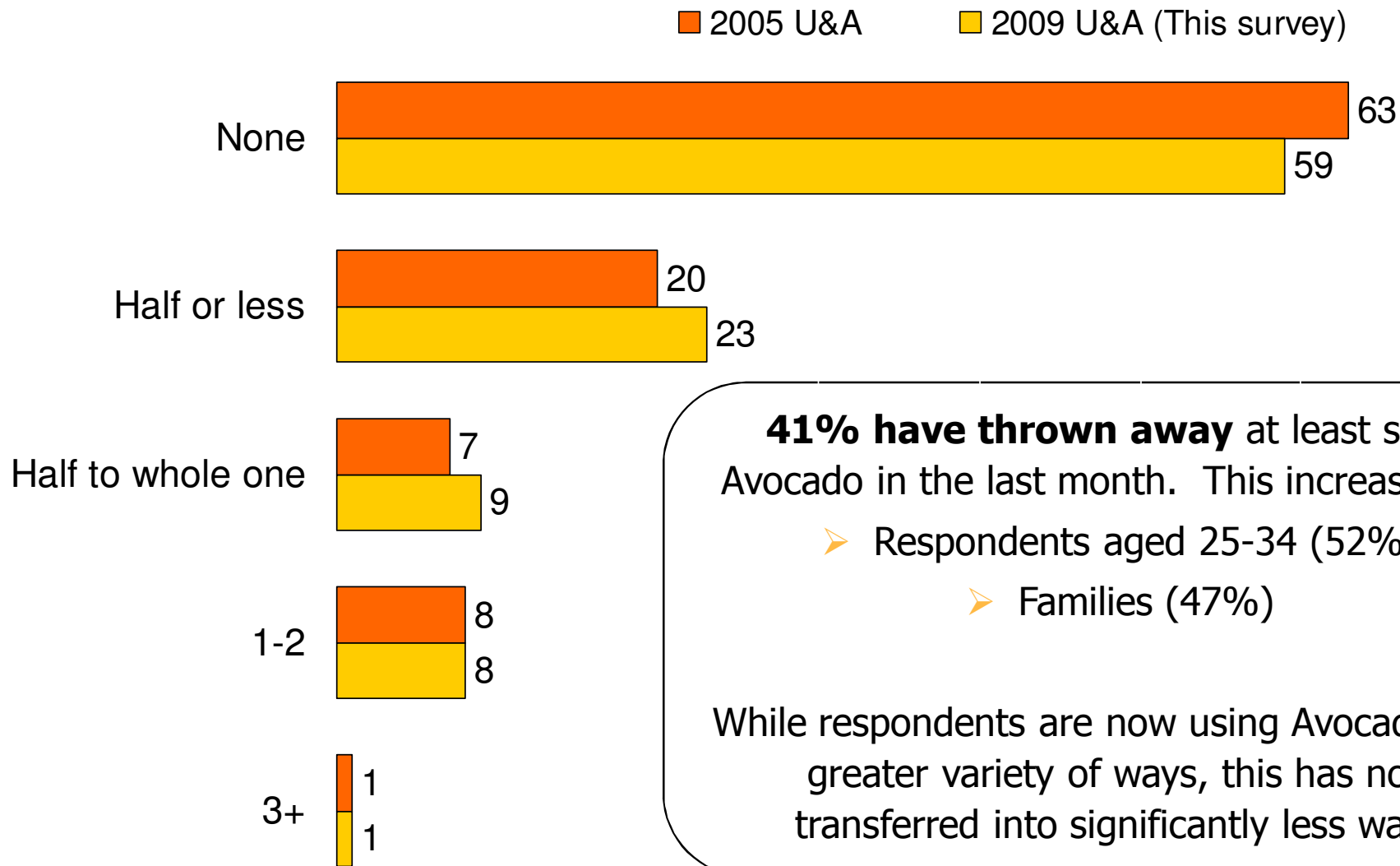


'Ripeness' is perhaps the greatest challenge



- Many mentioned that they often find the Avocados '**rock hard**' in the stores
 - Some will still purchase them, expecting them to ripen
 - Others will not, knowing that when they have purchased hard Avocado's in the past, they have not ripened
- When they do buy hard Avocados and need to ripen them for a few days, most have to employ **special 'ripening' tactics**
 - In a paper bag (in the microwave!), next to bananas, on the window ledge
 - But there is always the risk that they will forget about it, and then it will be past a usable state!
- In a few cases respondents were finding **over-ripe**, or 'mushy' Avocados in store, and consequently not making a purchase
- Whilst Quality issues also remain.
 - We heard complaints of brown patches / bruising, stringiness, 'stones' under the skin, bland taste or lack of creaminess

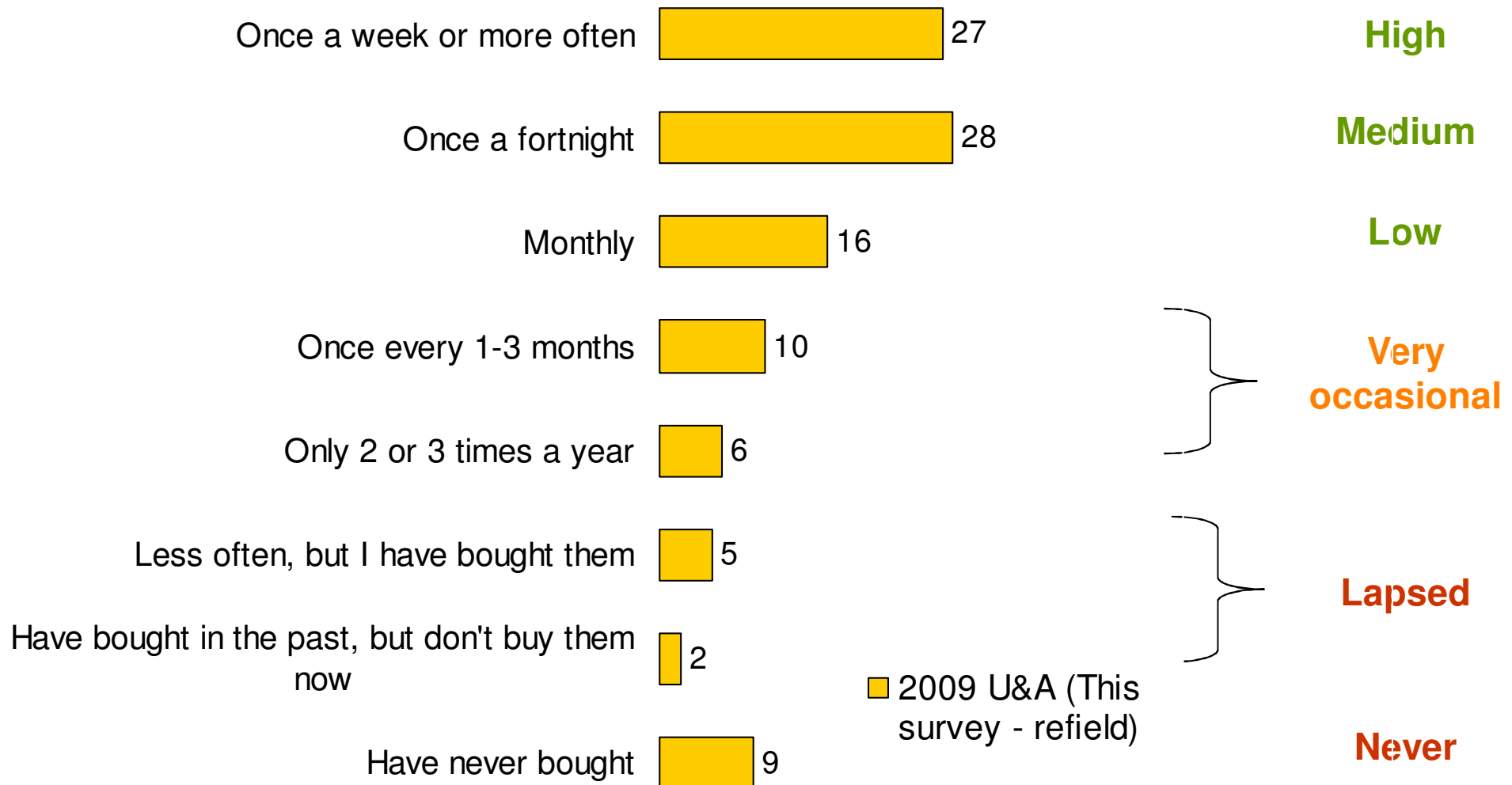
Eg – the number of Avocados 'thrown away' in last month



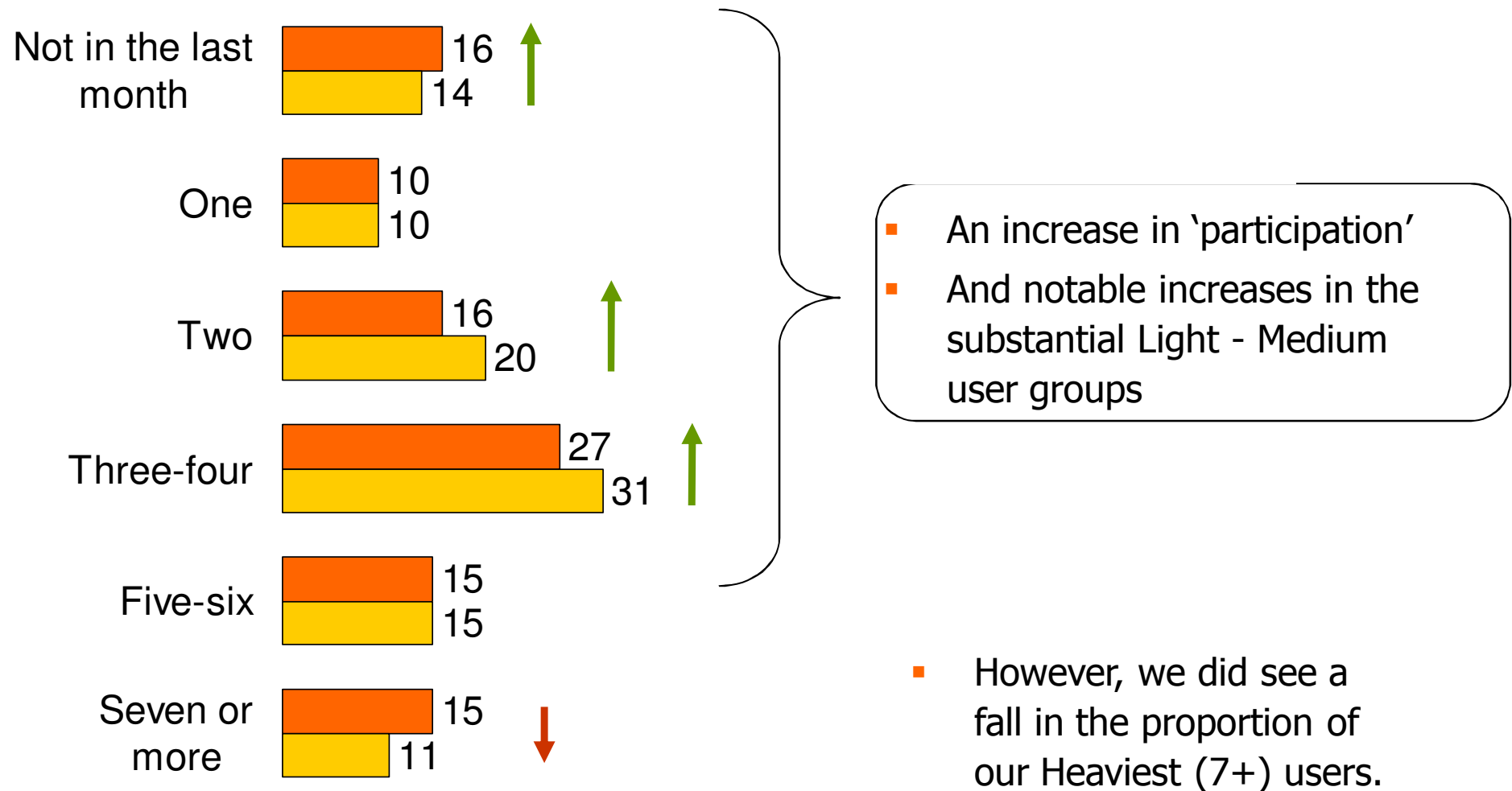
Despite these problems, we see a surprisingly level of acceptance!

- While respondents did spend considerable time complaining about ripeness and quality, there appeared to be relatively little frustration
- This acceptance was often explained by the nature of the Avocado
 - It's a natural fruit ~ Thus it will get bruises, be inconsistent
 - It's probably out of season ~ *"So they are probably imported...?"*
- Indeed, if anyone gets the blame, it tends to be the supermarkets
 - *"Most supermarkets keep them in fridges for nine months before putting them on shelf"*
- Ripeness / quality appears to be as much of a problem as in 2005, but many now have ways to deal with this (how to ripen, how to store, how to find a good Avocado at a good price), or they are just more selective

Estimated frequency of buying whole Avocados



Estimated number of Avocados bought in last month (amongst all who buy now)

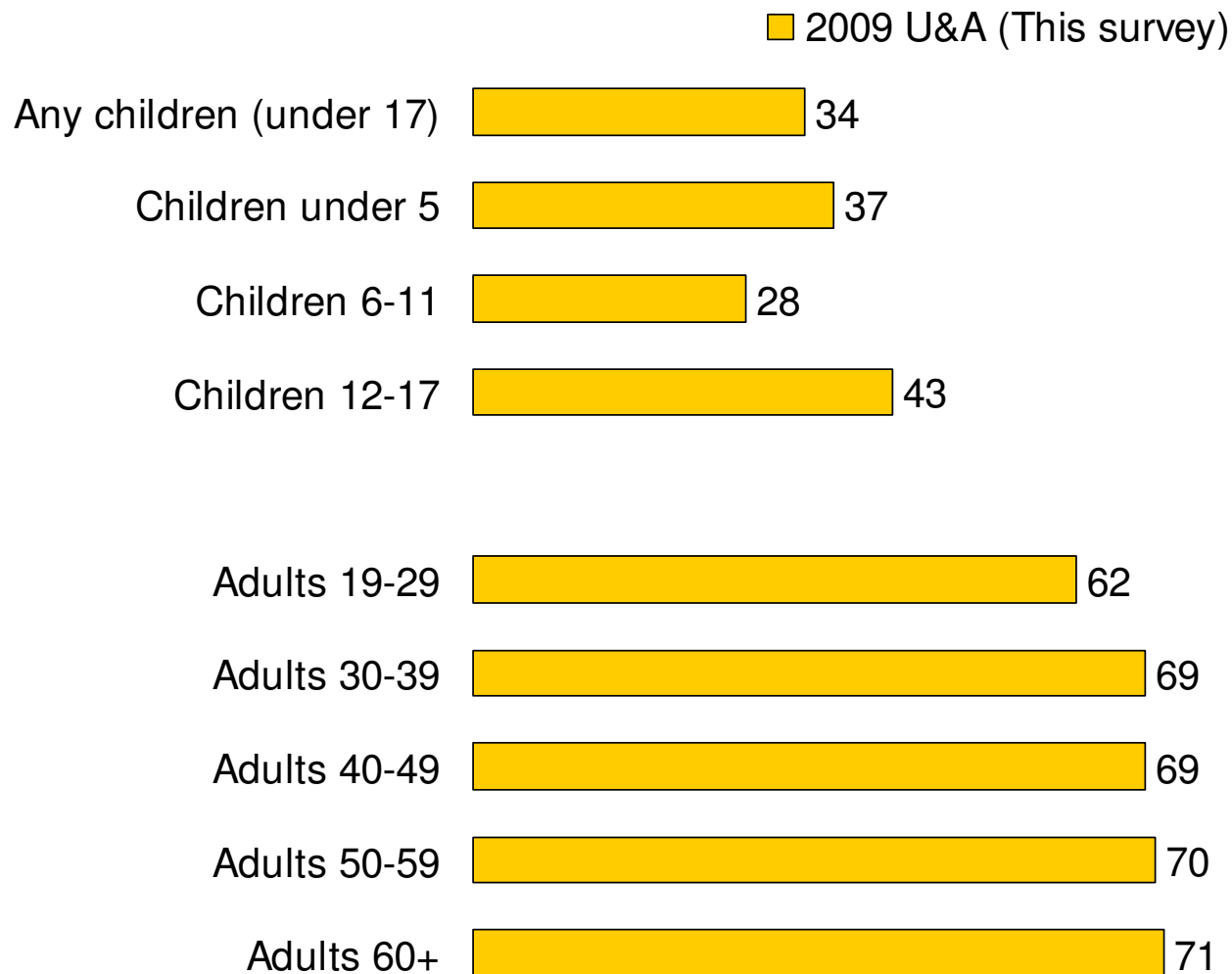


Avocado usage



Who eats Avocados?

The table below shows the proportion of each age group across all households who eat Avocados...



About a third of children eat Avocados. However this falls between the ages of 6-11 (the picky years?)

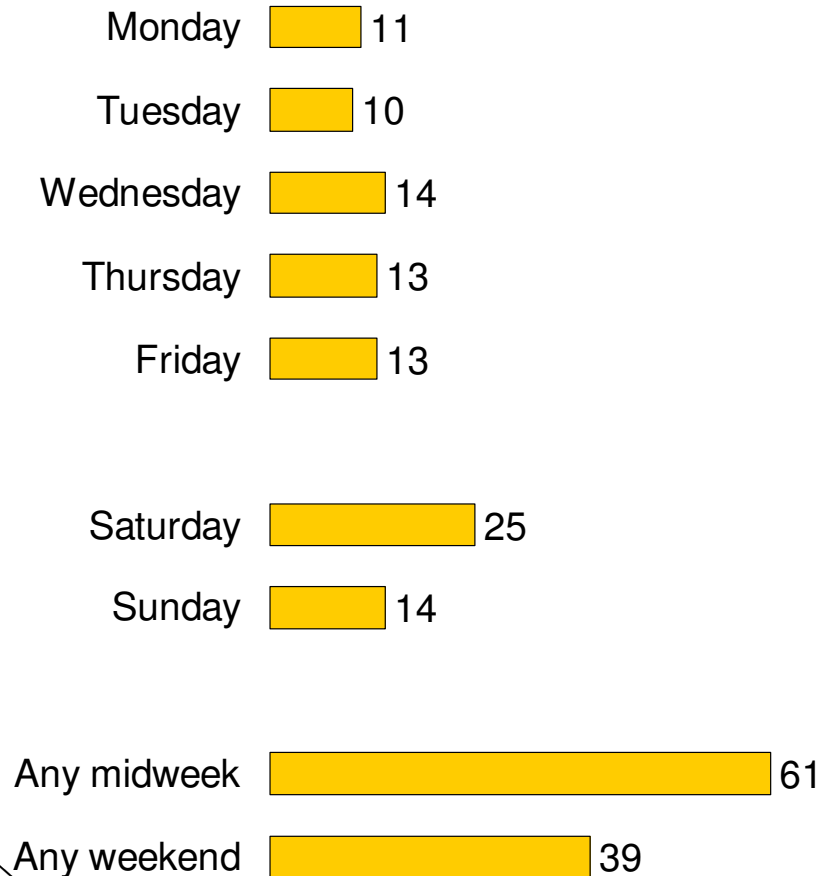
Consumption across adult age brackets is remarkably consistent

When last Avocado was eaten?

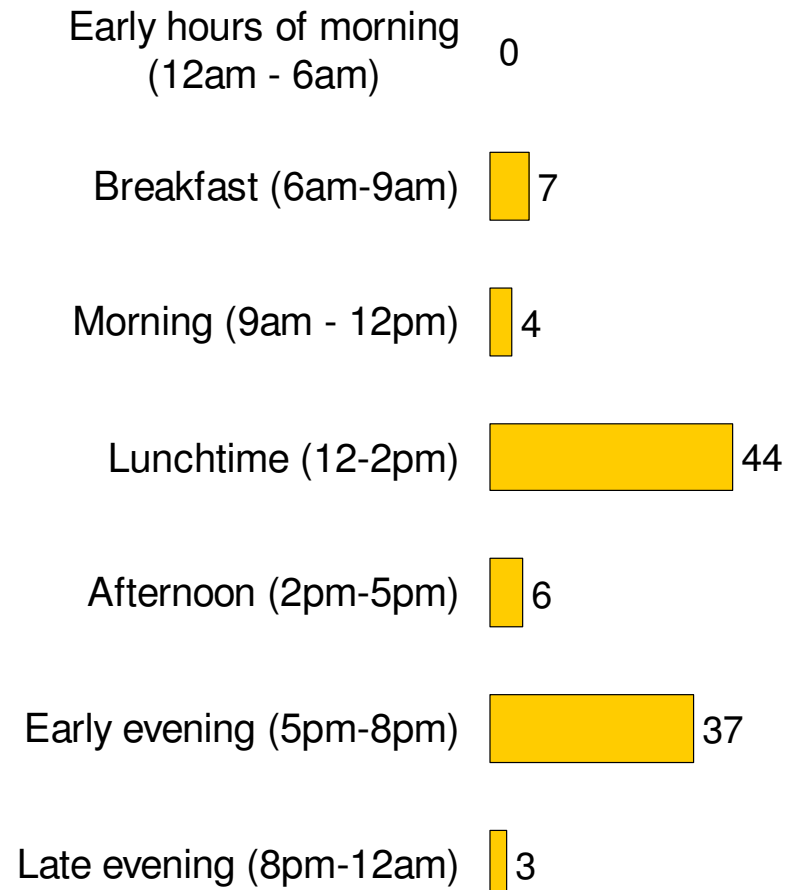


Avocados are eaten throughout the week (with a slight peak on Saturday). They are mainly eaten at a lunchtime or evening meal

Day of the week



Time of day



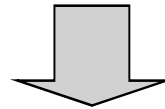
Well suited to entertaining, but slowly becoming a more regular family food

- In past research respondents often had a lingering perception of Avocado being just for entertaining or for special occasions
- In these groups, many respondents increasingly considered avocados to be an everyday part of their meals and snacks
 - It is certainly not saved for special occasions or guests
- Many were habitually purchasing Avocado as part of their grocery shop, knowing that it would be eaten in the general course of the week
- Only some of the lighter users were limited to planned purchases, with specific meals or occasions in mind

Avocado is often the 'star' of the dish, or at least a valuable co-star!



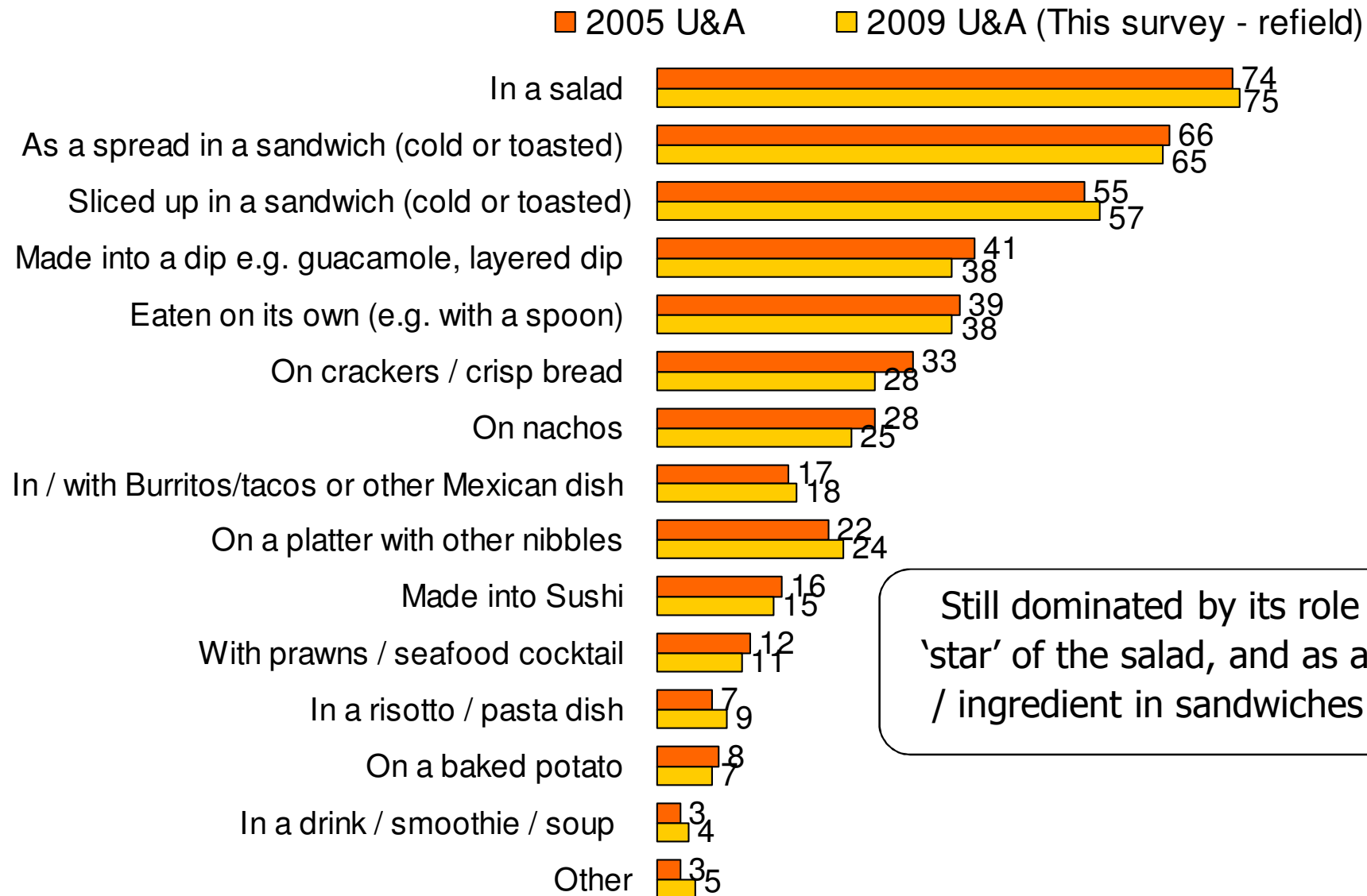
- It's the bit they look forward to!
- It's a 'treat' ~ they particularly enjoy the creamy, smooth texture
- It's adds the 'wow' and the 'yum' (to salads especially)
- In some cases it's the whole point of the dish!



In Avocado's absence...?

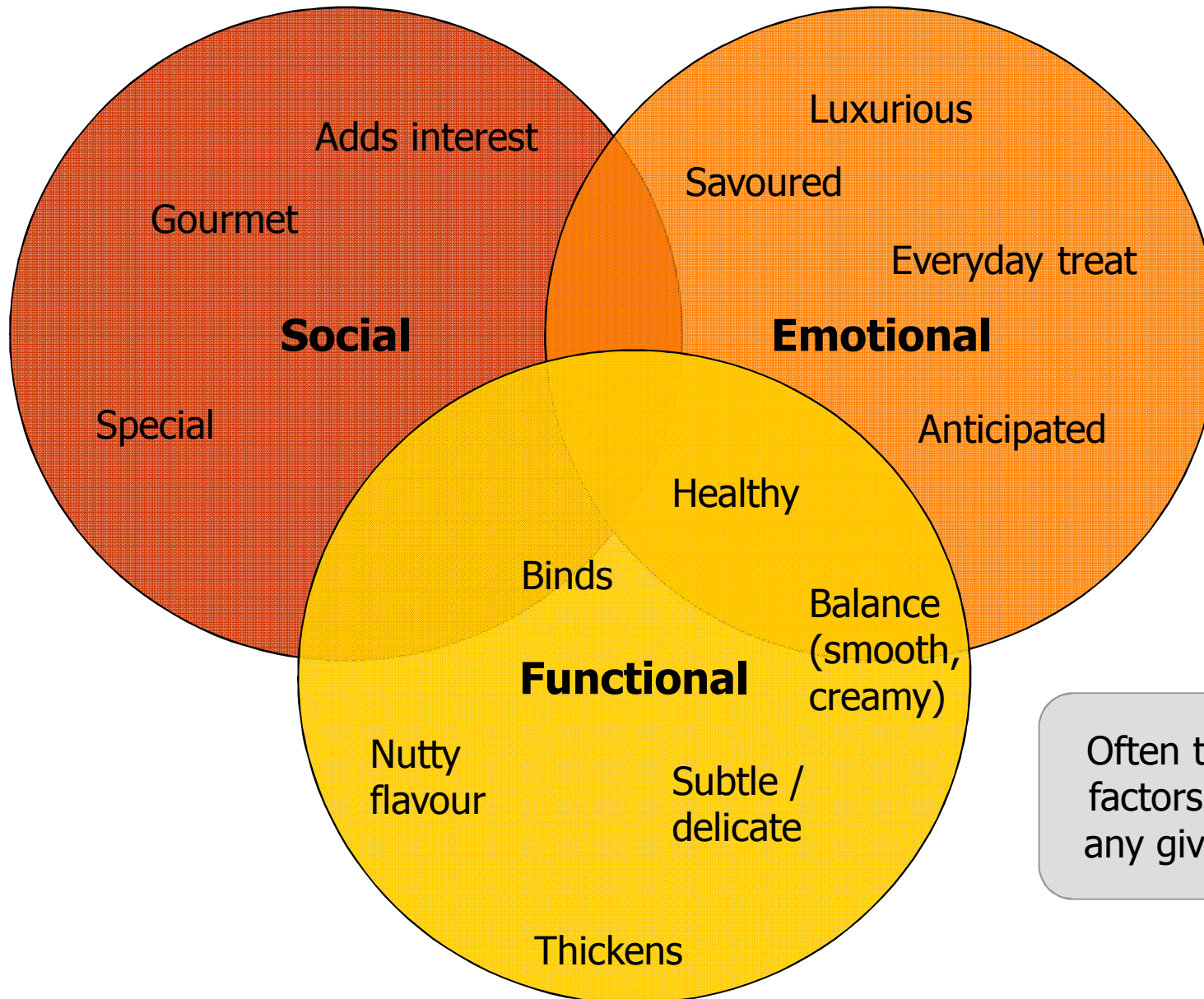
- In salads other 'substantial' / filling ingredients can be used, e.g. egg, feta, tuna
- In sandwiches butter or cream cheese were used by some for lubricant / binding
- But for many Avocado dishes, they struggled to identify an ingredient which could fulfill its role
- They simply go without, but enjoy the dish less/ change the nature of the dish

The ways Avocado was used in the last month



Still dominated by its role as the 'star' of the salad, and as a spread / ingredient in sandwiches & rolls

Avocado's role increasingly spans all three areas



Often two or more factors operate on any given occasion

Advertising awareness and evaluation



Avocado Advertising review: The key measures

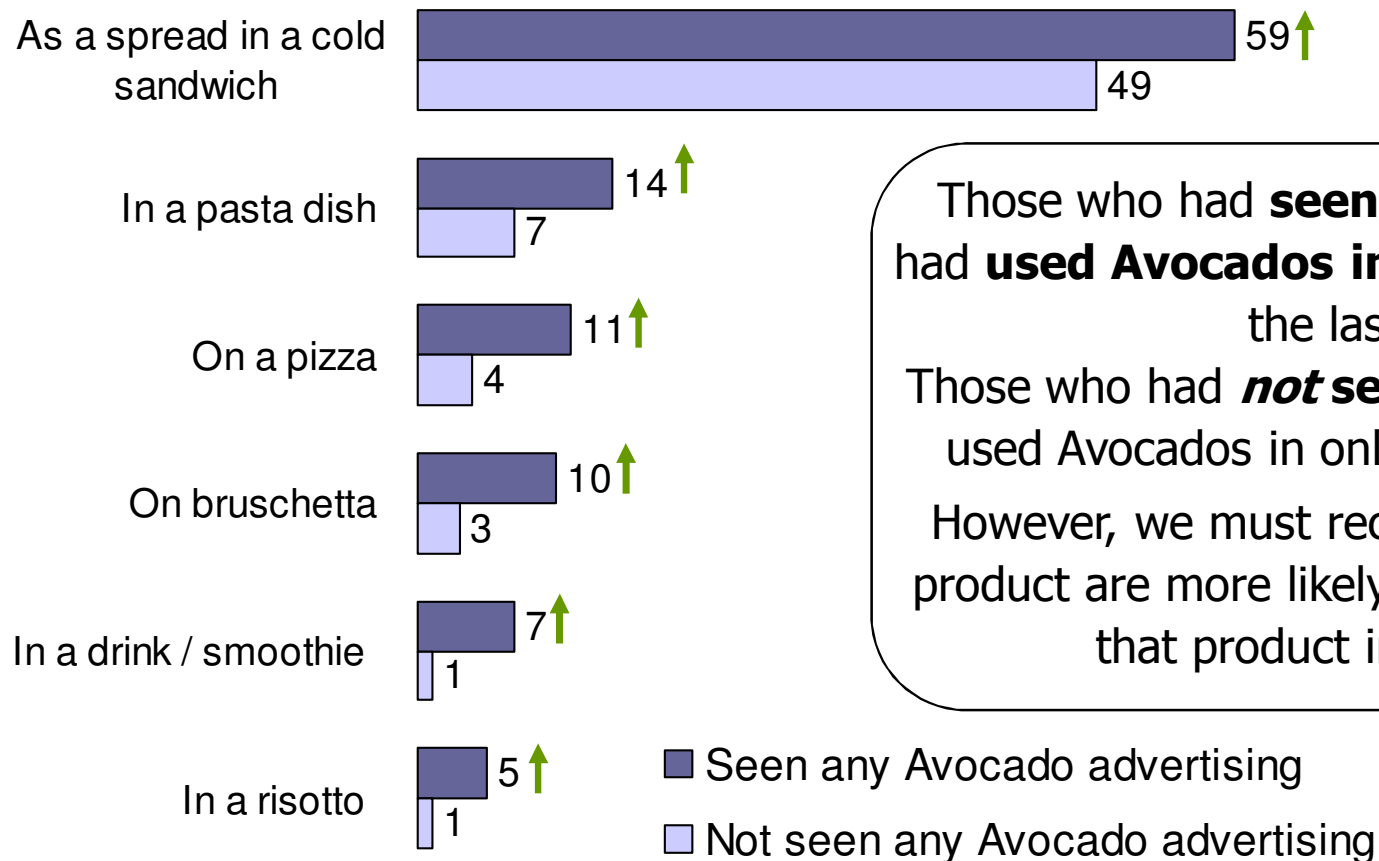


	Total sample	Core target audience#
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spontaneous awareness 	9%	7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prompted awareness 	26%	26%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prompted recognition 	18%	22%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Primary prompted message take out (versatility) 	98%	90%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Secondary prompted message take out (health) 	49%	51%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Likeability of campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Fans — Ambivalents — Critics 	34%	44%
	64%	56%
	2%	1%

Urban / suburban females aged 25-39

Ways Avocado used in the last month by whether they have seen Avocado advertising

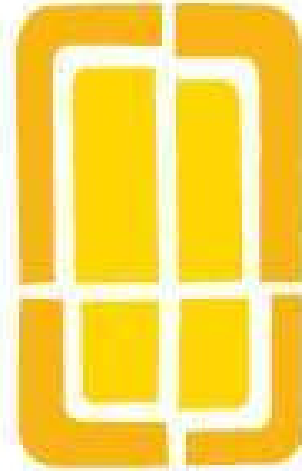
Those who have seen the Avocado advertising are significantly more likely to have used Avocado in the following ways in the last month...



Those who had **seen Avocado advertising** had **used Avocados in 5.5 ways** on average in the last month.

Those who had **not seen the advertising** had used Avocados in only **4.2 different ways**.

However, we must recognise heavy users of a product are more likely to notice advertising for that product in the first place!



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RESEARCH AND STRATEGY

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