



Going for Gold: How Competitions Can Elevate Kombucha

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CRAFT MALTSTERS GUILD



**GREAT AMERICAN
BEER FESTIVAL®**



**WORLD
BEER
CUP**



Purpose of Competitions



Elevate a Product Category



Challenge Producers



Spur on Discussion



Elevate Products



The image is a composite graphic. On the left, there is a photograph of a coastal cityscape. In the foreground, a lush green lawn slopes down towards a rocky shoreline. The water is a deep blue, and a marina is filled with numerous white yachts and boats. In the background, several tall, modern skyscrapers rise against a clear blue sky. A large palm tree is visible on the far left. The right side of the image is a solid red background. Overlaid on this red background is a faint, white molecular structure pattern consisting of interconnected circles and lines, resembling a network or a chemical structure. The text "Determining a Winner" is written in a clean, white, sans-serif font across the middle of the red area.

Determining a Winner

Criteria for a Medal

Adapted from GABF Criteria

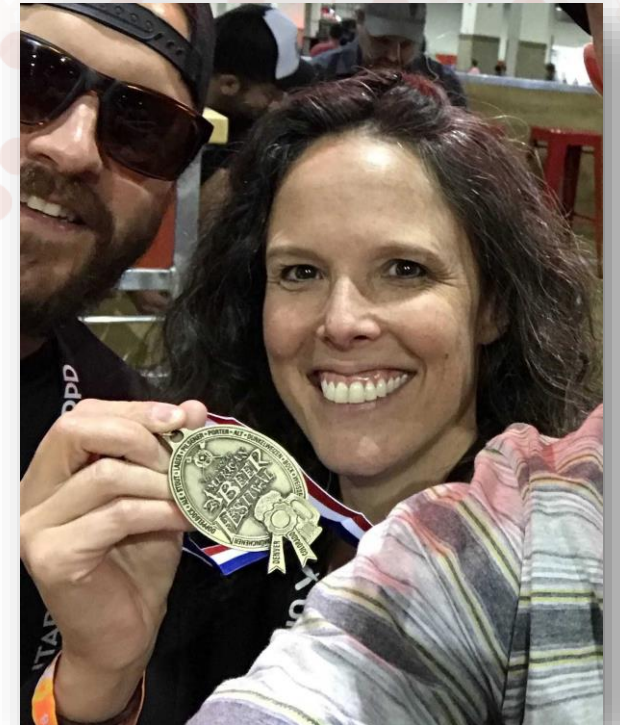
- Gold – World-class product that accurately exemplifies the specified style, displaying the proper balance of sensory characteristics.
- Silver – Excellent product that may vary slightly from the style parameters while maintaining close adherence to the style and displaying excellent sensory characteristics.
- Bronze – Fine example of the style that may vary slightly from the style parameters and/or have minor deviations in sensory characteristics.



Factors that Demine Winners

Integrity of the competition is *everything*

- Guidelines – Robust with affordances
- Method – Fast and accurate
- Judges – Courteous and committed
- Process – Vetted and achievable



Guidelines

- First step: Create agreed-upon criteria for overall product quality
 - What is the acceptable range of variability?
- Determining this acceptable range
 - Consensus from expert body
 - Accurately reflects the current flavor space
 - Taste and describe multiple products using a standard lexicon

13. Honey Beer

Color: Very light to black depending on underlying style

Clarity: Clear to hazy is acceptable

Perceived Malt Aroma & Flavor: Varies depending on intention of brewer

Perceived Hop Aroma & Flavor: Very low to very high

Perceived Bitterness: Very low to very high

Fermentation Characteristics: Honey Beers may be brewed to a traditional style or may be experimental. Honey Beers incorporate honey as a fermentable sugar in addition to malted barley. Honey character should be present in aroma and flavor but should not be overpowering.

Body: Varies with underlying style

To allow for accurate judging the brewer must indicate the classic or experimental ale or lager style of the underlying base beer; the brewer may indicate "no classic style" in instances where the base beer does not hew to a category within these competition guidelines. The brewer may also list the type of honey used and information about processing if desired ("orange blossom honey in whirlpool" for example). Beer entries not accompanied by this information will be at a disadvantage during judging.

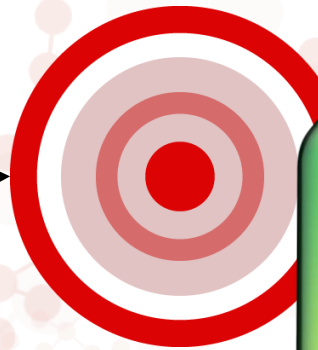
Original Gravity (°Plato) 1.030-1.110 (7.6-25.9 °Plato)

• **Apparent Extract/Final Gravity (°Plato)** 1.006-1.030 (1.5-7.6 °Plato) • **Alcohol by Weight (Volume)** 2.0%-9.5% (2.5%-12.0%) • **Hop Bitterness (IBU)** 1-100 •

Color SRM (EBC) 1-100 (2-200 EBC)

Creating Guidelines

Create specifications for each sensory modality: Visual, Aroma, Taste, Mouthfeel



MALT EXAMPLE:

Visual: Light orange to light brown color; no particulate or haze

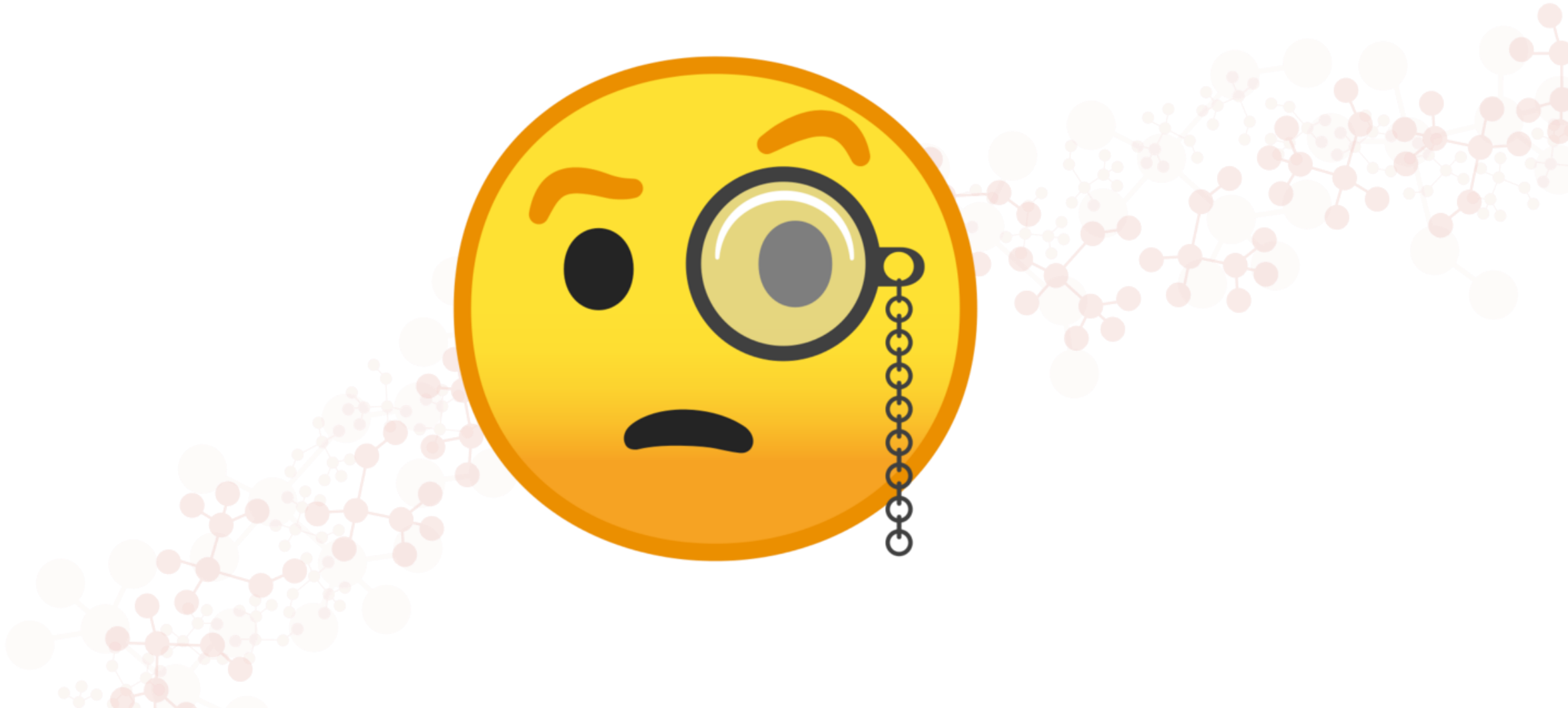
Aroma: Moderate to strong caramel, honey, bread crust, and toast aroma; slight to moderate nutty, cracker and cereal; very slight hay and woody

Taste: Low to moderate sweetness; no bitter, sour or salty

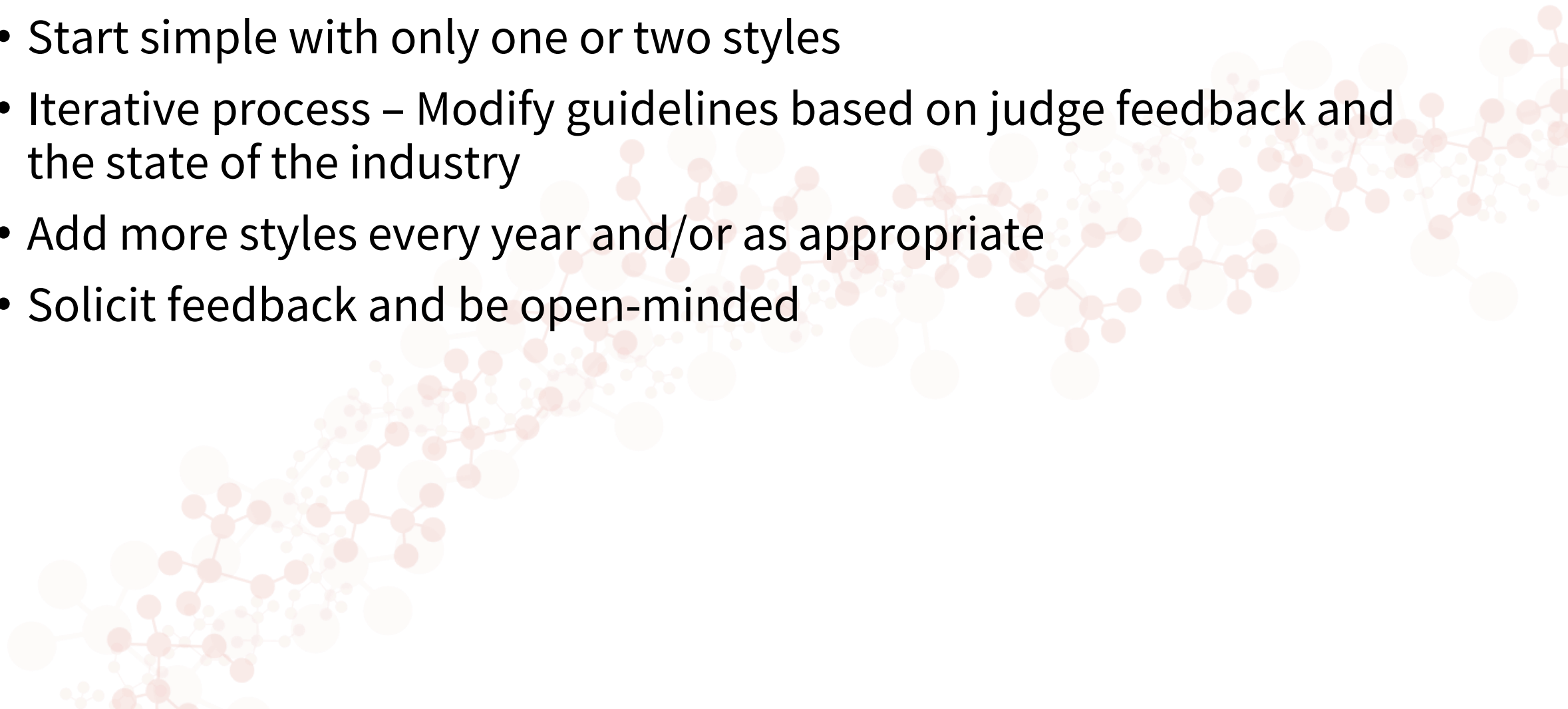
Mouthfeel: Thin to medium body, low coating, cloying and mouthwatering; no to low astringency



Let's see some real data...



Final Guideline Thoughts

- Start simple with only one or two styles
 - Iterative process – Modify guidelines based on judge feedback and the state of the industry
 - Add more styles every year and/or as appropriate
 - Solicit feedback and be open-minded
- 

Ballot

- Fast and intuitive
- Guided by objectivity – Point towards guidelines
- Room for subjectivity – Must guide discussion
- Space for comments – This is where the producer gets the most value

Judging is Unlike any other Sensory Test

GABF Judge Tasting Notes

Category _____ Beer Number _____
Subcategory Letter _____ Judge Number _____

• Appearance – color, clarity, foam

Too Light |-----| Appropriate |-----| Too Dark Too Clear |-----| Appropriate |-----| Too Hazy
Low foam |-----| Appropriate |-----| High foam

comments: _____

• Aroma

Appropriate |-----| Not Appropriate

comments: _____

• Taste – sweetness, bitterness, sourness

Sweetness: Too Low |-----| Appropriate |-----| Too High
Bitterness: Too Low |-----| Appropriate |-----| Too High
Sourness: Too Low |-----| Appropriate |-----| Too High

comments: _____

• Mouthfeel – alcohol, carbonation, body

Alcohol: Too Low |-----| Appropriate |-----| Too High
Carbonation: Too Low |-----| Appropriate |-----| Too High
Body: Too Low |-----| Appropriate |-----| Too High

comments: _____

• Aftertaste and Finish

Appropriate |-----| Not Appropriate

comments: _____

• Technical Quality

Excellent Very Good Good Acceptable Needs Improvement
|-----|

comments: _____

• Style

Very Representative of Style |-----| Somewhat Representative of Style |-----| Not Representative of Style

comments: _____

Other Comments:

Final Ballot Thoughts

- Point systems are seldom appropriate and can be misleading
- Sensory should be the *only* focus
- Geared toward guiding discussion
- Must provide useful feedback for the producer
- If multiple rounds are to be performed, ballots should be used in the first round only
- Digital is better
 - Judges will comment more
 - Sending results to producers is much faster

Judges

- What makes a good judge?
 - Committed – They like and care about the product
 - Courteous – Collaborative spirit and respectful demeanor
 - Available – Must be able to devote the time
 - Talented – Proven ability to describe products and identify variations
- What is a well-rounded table?
 - Cultural considerations
 - Experiential considerations
 - This is a community: no jerks allowed
 - Odd numbers can help



Final Judge Thoughts

- Cannot judge product categories in which they submitted
- Incentivize judges (doesn't take much)
- Continue to foster and protect the community



Process

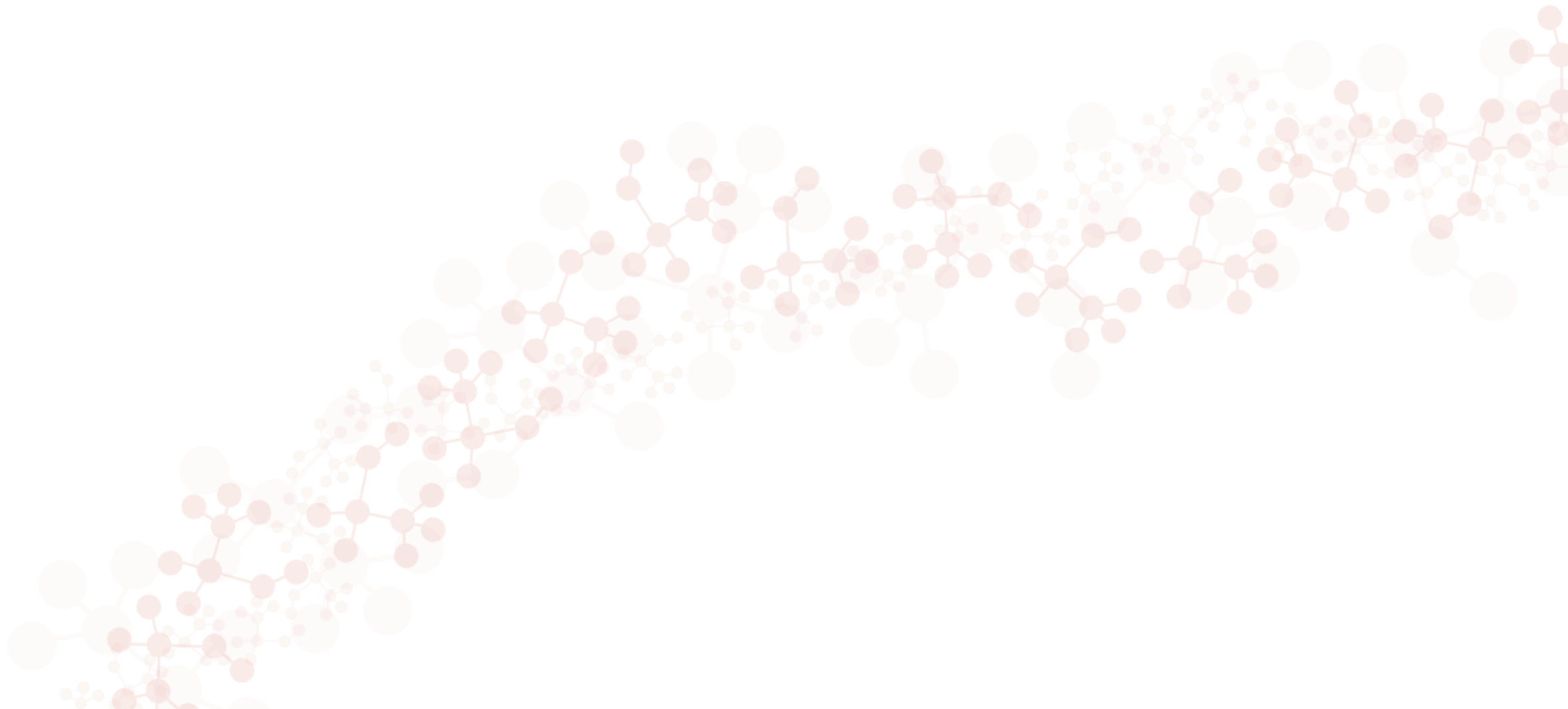
- Management
- Round Tables
- Sample Considerations



Management

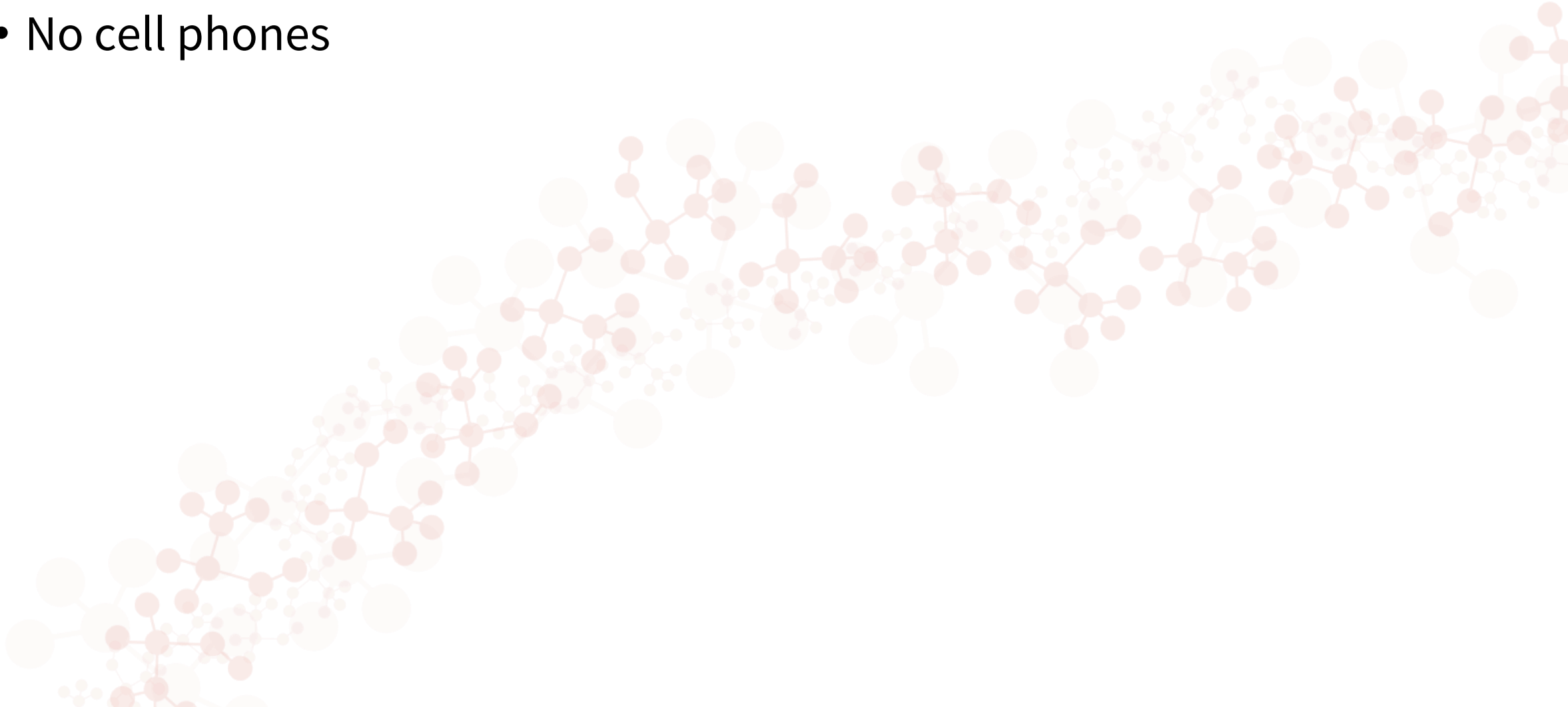


Round Table Best Practices



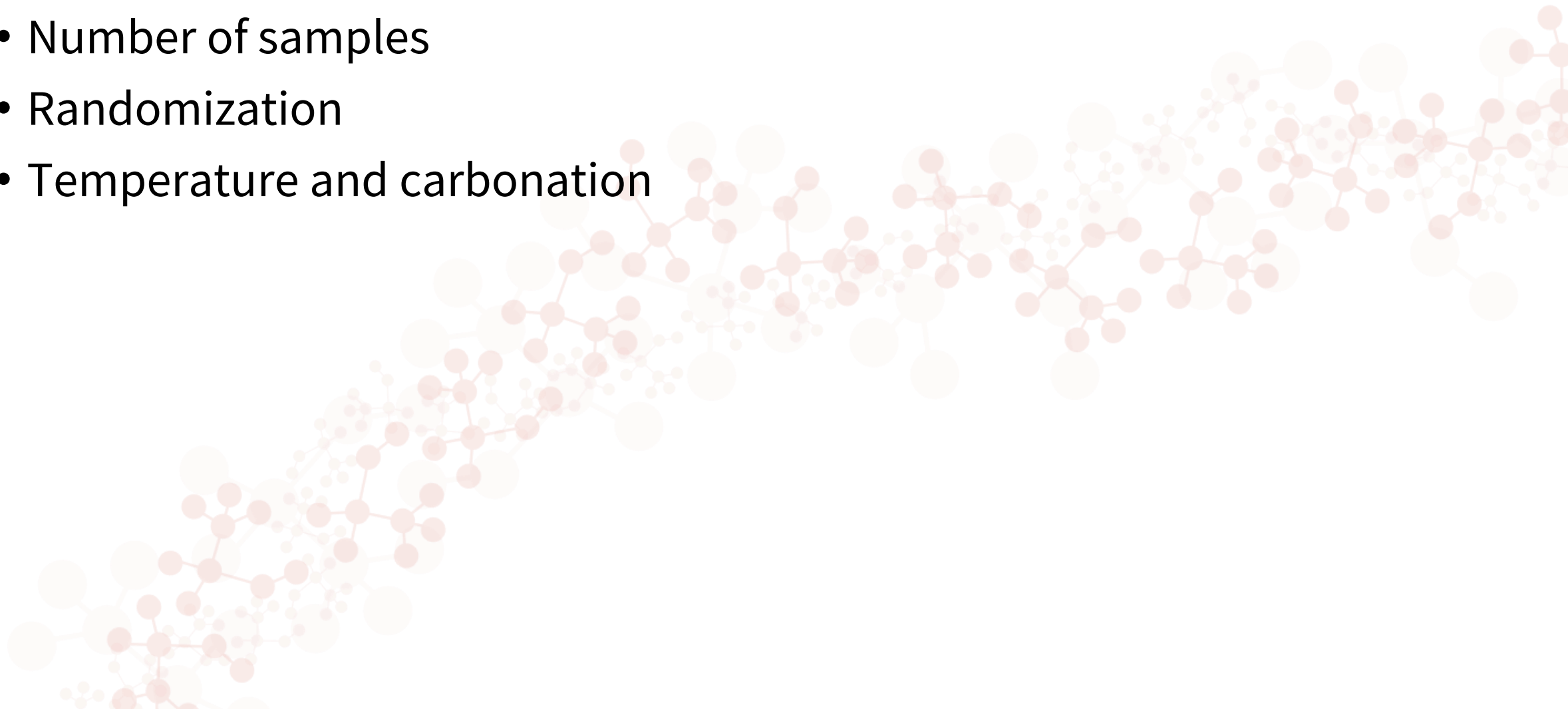
Etiquette

- No cell phones



Sample Considerations

- Number of samples
- Randomization
- Temperature and carbonation



Final Process Thoughts

- Volunteers are your besties





Stay in Touch

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