

unusual condiments—cloves, nutmeg, orange peel, anise, sweet paprika, and cardamom—for our coffee drinkers to add to their cups as they pleased.

After adding what they wanted (and none of our odd condiments were ever used) and tasting the coffee, the participants filled out a survey form. They indicated how much they liked the coffee, whether they would like it served in the cafeteria in the future, and the maximum price they would be willing to pay for this particular brew.

We kept handing out coffee for the next few days, but from time to time we changed the containers in which the odd condiments were displayed. Sometimes we placed them in beautiful glass-and-metal containers, set on a brushed metal tray with small silver spoons and nicely printed labels. At other times we placed the same odd condiments in white Styrofoam cups. The labels were handwritten in a red felt-tip pen. We went further and not only cut the Styrofoam cups shorter, but gave them jagged, hand-cut edges.

What were the results? No, the fancy containers didn't persuade any of the coffee drinkers to add the odd condiments (I guess we won't be seeing sweet paprika in coffee anytime soon). But the interesting thing was that when the odd condiments were offered in the fancy containers, the coffee drinkers were much more likely to tell us that they liked the coffee a lot, that they would be willing to pay well for it, and that they would recommend that we should start serving this new blend in the cafeteria. When the coffee ambience looked upscale, in other words, the coffee tasted upscale as well.

WHEN WE BELIEVE beforehand that something will be good, therefore, it generally will be good—and when we think it