Biography
Professor Charles Spence is a world-famous experimental psychologist with a specialization in neuroscience-inspired multisensory marketing and design. He has worked with many of the world’s largest companies across the globe since establishing the Crossmodal Research Laboratory (CRL) at the Department of Experimental Psychology, Oxford University in 1997. Prof. Spence is currently head of Sensory Marketing at JWT. He has published over 650 articles and edited or authored, 8 academic volumes including, in 2014, “In touch with the future“ and the prize-winning “The perfect meal”.

Abstract
What is the perfect meal? We can probably all think of at least one especially memorable dinner that we have had. For some, it might be something as simple as a picnic in a summer meadow or else fish and chips by the seaside (while listening, of course, to the sounds of the sea). For others, it will be that once in a lifetime trip to one of the world’s top Michelin-starred restaurants. Wherever it was, what made it so special wasn’t just the food (Spence & Piqueras-Fiszman, 2014). Of course, the food matters: It is, after all, one of the most multisensory of experiences, one where if even a single sensory element is wrong, something is served cold that was supposed to be hot, then the whole experience will likely be ruined. In this talk, though, I will argue that what makes for a great eating experience depends far more on ‘the everything else’ that surrounds the meal than many of us realize: It depends on everything from the mood we are in through to the company we keep, and from the environment in which we eat and drink through to the plating, plateware, and cutlery. I will review the emerging body of gastrophysics research that is now helping to isolate just how important these various factors are to our perception and enjoyment of food (Spence, 2015). Some of the most exciting recent examples of the dynamic interplay between chefs, designers,
and sensory scientists that is giving rise to exciting new immersive, experiential, (possibly experimental), and most definitely multisensory, dining experiences will also be highlighted. Finally, I will show how the search for the perfect meal can lead to interventions that may potentially help (in some small way) to tackle the growing obesity crisis, not to mention providing some intriguing ideas about how to get us all to shift to a rather more sustainable insect-based diet in the decades ahead.