

Mintel identifies key trends for 2007

By Lorraine Heller

11/20/2006 - **Sustainability and age-specific products are key trends that will shape the consumer packaged goods industry in the year to come, according to Mintel.**

The market researcher last week revealed "ten hot trends" that it expects to impact the global food and beverage market, as well as the cosmetics and personal care market.

And one of the themes that underlies a number of these trends is [sustainability](#) and a responsibility to the environment, said Lynn Dornblaser, director of Mintel Custom Solutions.

"It seems that we are seeing a renewed consumer interest in the wider world, and this includes a better understanding of the broader impact of products on the environment," she told FoodNavigator-USA.com.

This concern will be manifested through a growing commitment to ethical products, [fair trade](#) and sustainable ingredients, which will continue to expand into mainstream product groups, according to Mintel.

"This will help highlight local and seasonal products, symbolizing a return to fresher ingredients that have more community-oriented ties," it said.

Biodegradable packaging is also expected to regain popularity, especially as more companies reformulate packaging to be more environmentally conscious.

The market researcher also believes that refillable packaging has a strong opportunity to make a mark as consumers are increasingly looking for more opportunities to save natural resources. Manufacturers in diverse product categories are responding with products and packages that are better for the environment, reducing the quantity of materials used and continuing to care for ethical and social issues.

But an increased consumer interest in the wider world is also seen through a stronger focus on other parts of the world for unique ingredients or flavors, said Dornblaser. And this is reflected in one of the key trends identified by Mintel: the Amazonia movement.

This will see consumers increasingly turning to products that feature plentiful indigenous resources from the Amazon rainforest.

"This trend is closely tied to increased interest in natural products and exotic ingredients. Botanicals from the region linked to wellness and natural functionality, with [exotic fruits](#) such as açai and cupuaçu, will continue their rise to fame due to their anti-aging benefits and link to the 'superfoods' concept. We can expect to see more of products such as Happy Monkey Açai Brazilian Rainforest Superberry Juice Drink in the UK, which is made from all natural ingredients, blended Açai berries and red grapes," said Mintel.

But Dornblaser says it is important to keep in mind that there is "a lot more going on" than just sustainability and an interest in exotic products. Another major issue that is set to impact the direction of consumer packaged goods is an interest in age-specific product launches.

"There are many consumer groups out there, each with different needs, and that means there's a lot of opportunity to target a number of types of consumers, no matter what kinds of products a firm is marketing," said Dornblaser.

The two major consumer groups for specialized marketing efforts remain teens and baby boomers, she explained. For the latter group, there is a marked lack of products combining the specific needs of this generation together with easy-to-handle packaging.

And when it comes to teens, there is a missing opportunity within the snacking sector, as this consumer group has often been ignored in favor of younger kids. *"But teens also wield substantial spending power,"* said Mintel. *"In addition, key avenues for companies lie within a new focus on products 'growing up' with teens, converting teen users into adult loyalists,"* it added.

Another key trend is expected to be a *"fresh start for breakfast"*.

"Finally, the day's most important meal will continue to see new innovation and development. Beyond convenience, companies may find themselves looking for ways to bring more traditional aspects of the meal back into play. Dominated by bars and juices, companies are predicted to look for ways to resurrect other items that have been diluted by the on-the-go trend."

Other trends identified include a return to simplicity, marked by clean lines and traditional ingredients; technologically advanced packaging and the use of cell phones to advertise products; and increased internet marketing.

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