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Creating lifelong customers from health-oriented moms

A pregnancy and new baby often prompts a change in womens' shopping habits as they focus on giving their baby the best start in life. PR/Communications consultant Lisa Mabe discusses quick-start ideas to help brands to create lifetime customers from new moms. By Karen Raterman.

Mothers have always been a driving force behind the success of brands and retail outlets. But with the emergence of the natural, organic and healthy products segments, moms, especially new moms, have become the ultimate gateway consumer for brands and retailers aiming at this category. There is plenty of data that underscores their importance, according to Lisa Mabe, founder of GreenPurse PR, a specialty research and public relations consultancy.

"Connecting with pregnant and new moms (80% of whom are millennials) is a gateway to a super-motivated type of consumer, many of whom become 'new converts' into natural and organic products," she told *Kids Nutrition Report*. Reinforcing this idea, the Baby Center's 2015 *State of Modern Motherhood Report* noted that 63% of new mothers are changing their grocery, food and beverage purchase criteria. The biggest change is that they start buying organic.

"These first-time moms represent a window of opportunity for both retailers and brands to catch a customer on the cusp of a new life stage—preferably while they are still pregnant, and who they can potentially keep as loyal customers for a long time to come," Mabe said.

New moms and pregnant women become super focused on being healthy for their developing infant and this changes their criteria, not only for the foods they eat, but also across product categories, such as the chemicals used in clothing they purchase for themselves and their infant and the personal care products they use. "Many stop coloring their hair or painting their nails to try to limit the amount of potential toxins on their body," she noted.

Age doesn't really matter. "Although there is a lot of current focus on millennial moms, I prefer to focus on new moms, whatever age they are," Mabe explained. "They can be 22, 32 or 45. The experience they go through in pregnancy and

Source: Stew Leonard

Stew Leonard stores "…attract parents with an amazing experience that makes it easier for moms to get through the store, even if they have the kids along, so it's not a nightmare", says Lisa Mabe.

becoming a mom creates this sort of epiphany that is similar no matter what age they are."

These trends, along with research Mabe has gathered and her own experiences as a millennial mom, inspired her to put together a list of best practices and quick-start ideas to help her clients hone in on these important consumers. Mabe prefers to focus on alternative, personal research methods that she says are more conducive to garnering authentic, candid feedback from moms. Mabe recently discussed her list with *KNR* and fleshed out these tactics with examples, tips and caveats:

1. Go shop-along – regularly shop with mothers to understand how they think, behave and buy in your category. Shopping with health-conscious moms is by far Mabe's favourite way to hone in on these consumers for several reasons, noting that it's fun, useful and provides amazing feedback. This can be very useful for companies experiencing specific issues, she explained. For example, if the company is seeing declining sales with a specific grocer, say Whole Foods Markets, it can set up a shop-along with women who are already buying their product at Whole Foods or likely to. "If I am moderating the shop-along, I usually give the customers an assignment like 'look for a healthy weekday meal' or 'find something to cleanse your beauty routine,'" she explained. Along the way, you can see what other products draw their attention, and chat with the customer informally on the spot. Shopping with these customers can be a temperature check on how products fit into their lifestyle and routine. "You can also learn things that will impact the way you communicate with customers—what blogs they read, what Instagram feeds they follow," she said.

Mabe recommends that brand managers be involved in the shop-along, but it's important to use a moderator who feels comfortable relating to customers. Groups of between 10 and 35 shoppers work well, and it's a good idea to allow moms to shop as they normally would, so they should bring the kids along if they want.

As with any market research, there is a tendency for customers to tell you what they think you want to hear, noted Mabe, but, she added, "moms tend to be more candid and honest in the context of shopping—there are no other intimidating moms in the room stating they buy all organic or make their baby food from scratch." This is where a moderator who relates well to customers is critical.

The shop-along can also be valuable in understanding cultural differences of mom customers in different markets. For example, OBE Organic Beef in Brisbane, Australia, did a shop-along to better understand how customers in Dubai and New York perceived their products and their presentation in retail outlets, noted CEO Dalene Wray. The company was specifically interested to hear if they liked branding on packages of meat, and if the package included the most critical information. With a small budget for promotional posts on social media, Wray also wanted to ensure messaging was focusing on the most critical information regarding the meat, livestock, production and food safety. "We know that it is near impossible to deliver all this information in one short snappy promoted post on Facebook, so we used the shop-along research to try to determine the most important attributes to current consumers of our beef in overseas markets."

2. Speak directly to moms – produce Mom-centric content to fuel your website and social media.

Creating content that is of interest to your target audience seems like a no-brainer. It is also easier said than done, but worth doing well, Mabe said. One of the key returns of producing good content is if it is share worthy, it can help fuel website visits and social media efforts. Mabe defines shareable content as information designed specifically for moms that is both visual and useful. Addressing questions that new moms have about diet and nutrition in pregnancy or limiting chemicals from products they use can make great checklists that moms will want to share with their friends and peer group. "Moms like to see well-researched information that they can trust, and then share it with their peers to be a resource and thought leader among their friends." However, there is a fine line between good content and information that is sermonizing, she added. "People don't like to be

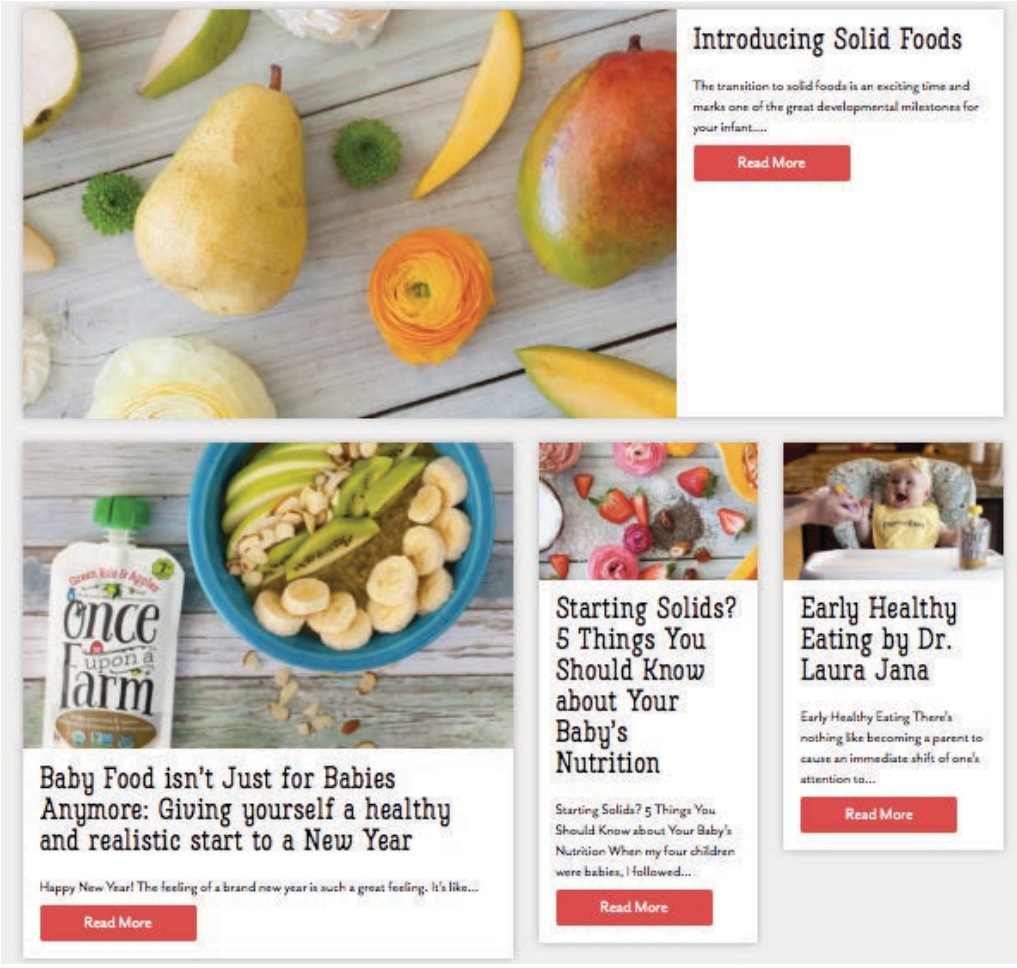
"People don't like to be preached to but moms want to do a good job, and when they find a product that is well-researched and works, they will latch on to it and become a super advocate."

preached to but moms want to do a good job, and when they find a product that is well-researched and works, they will latch on to it and become a super advocate."

Once Upon a Farm, a San Diego-based maker of cold-pressed, organic baby food has seen the value of producing mom-centric content from its inception. It doesn't hurt that their blog – called Once Upon a Blog – is written by company co-founder and mom Cassandra Curtis. Curtis said it covers a variety of topics of interest to moms, from recipes using their fresh baby food to her own insights into the challenges of being a mom and running your own business. Big topics that got lots of engagement have included "Top 10 tips for getting your baby to sleep through the night" and "Making teething biscuits." Curtis added that she gets ideas for the blog from her personal experience but also by brainstorming with other moms and addressing the questions and comments she gets from customers.

It is well worth the effort, Curtis noted. "We get loyalty from customers who understand that we are coming from an authentic, mom-to mom place that they can relate to. They feel connected to the brand because they know the people behind it. It also gives them a level of trust for the brand, especially when we do educational topics that involve researched information. They can see we are devoting resources and using evidence-based information to make our products and to back the flavours and processes behind them, so they feel they can trust us."

3. Help moms get the weekly shopping done – collaborate with retail partners on in-store programmes to educate and entertain moms. Stew Leonard's, a family-owned retail chain, has the right idea on this, Mabe said. The stores look like mini versions of Disney World with real farm animals, a farmer's market, cooking classes and Disneyesque animatronic characters that sing and teach kids about vegetables and good fats. "What they do is attract parents with an amazing experience that makes it easier for moms to get through the store, even if they have the kids along, so it's not a nightmare. It's something to look forward to doing together," she said.



Once Upon a Farm's blog covers a variety of topics of interest to moms and founder Cassandra Curtis says it is "well worth the effort."

That is exactly the point, according to Meghan Bell, director of public relations for the Stew Leonard stores, who added, that "being family friendly is a founding tenet of our company." The stores focus on mostly local and farm-fresh products and the chain only carries about 2,000 products as opposed to the 50,000 or 60,000 products carried by other grocers. So the family-friendly attractions and events are a way to make shopping a great experience and build relationships with their customers, she explained.

Individual brands can partner with retailers to make shopping a family-friendly experience by sponsoring family-oriented events, doing kid-friendly demos, or anything that involves tasting and touching experiences that make shopping fun. Companies also can involve their retail partners in their customer shop-along and share the information they learn. "Depending on the size of the retailer, they may not have current customer research, so this is helpful, and retailers love that a supplier went out of the way to add value," Mabe said.

4. Be a presence in trusted mom resources – brands should seek editorial coverage with media outlets that moms, read, watch or listen to. While this is marketing 101, it is important to remember that there are now many sources to reach your target consumers, and it's important to have a proactive programme for getting coverage that really targets this specific mom audience, Mabe explained. "It's okay to be excited about a hit in a mainstream magazine, it can't hurt, but if the audience is not your exact audience it may not be as great as getting mentioned in a blog with a more focused following." Look for magazines and blogs that moms really read. A Cup of Jo (www.cupofjo.com) is one of many blogs that have mom-specific content. But in working with these types of media, Mabe suggests getting clear on what their audience is trained to do. Ask them if they have a particular mom audience and what you can expect to see from a sponsored or earned post. Most of these blogs have proactively trained their audience to do certain things, such as use a coupon or demo a product.

Developing good social media plans also takes deep insight into customers, noted OBE Organic's Wray. That is why she invested in personal research like the shop-along. "We learnt early on that we shouldn't assume that a mum in Dubai wants the same information about our beef as a mum in New York City," she said. "We need to tailor our social media plans to ensure our posts are localized to specific markets and the shop-along research helped us achieve this."

5. Build a direct relationship to moms – organize and host mom meetups. Like the shop-along, this is another great way to get direct information from your core target customers. A mom meetup can take on very different roles, Mabe noted. You can identify influential moms, not necessarily bloggers, but regular consumers who are good about sharing your messages on social media. Keep the group small, between five and 10 customers. It is a great way to get specific information about your products, what they like, what they don't and when their loyalty kicks in. You can also give them a first glance at something, maybe a new product or packaging. "It makes them feel special to see something first, and they are more inclined to share this with their network," Mabe said. "Establishing a mom meetup group is a good way to take a quick temperature check to find out how they shop, use products, or test a new idea."

Source: enjoylifefoods.com

Enjoy Life makes sure it has a big presence at events targeting mothers.

6. Utilize mom experts – work with well-known mom experts (nutritionists, dieticians, authors and bloggers) to create content and advocate for your brand. Many companies have done this well, according to Mabe, but Stonyfield Farms is worth calling out. It offers regular posts from both internal and outside bloggers, including featured blogger Sally Kuzemchak, who is a registered dietician, educator and mom of two boys, as well as a noted author. "They use strong influencers who are quoted regularly in media that moms read," she said. Other Stonyfield experts include Tania Altmann, MD, who has blogged about early infant nutrition and eating habits, and Joanna Murnan, who is a wife, mom, cupcake connoisseur, and fitness fanatic, who blogs about her journey for a greener, healthier, more well-rounded life.

7. Leverage the influencers – develop an influencer programme to leverage the connections of social media influencers, bloggers, academics, nutritionists and other experts, who can impact your audience. This is similar to mom meetups but not necessarily a physical gathering of influencers, Mabe explained. Brands can develop a network of influencers of up to around 100 moms, who will share their ideas and thoughts from your experts and bloggers as well as give feedback about your branding or marketing. "These influencer groups can be a great echo chamber or testing ground for new products. They should be the most passionate advocates for your brand you can find," she noted, adding that communication with the group can be via email, surveys, or even physical mail to give them a first glance at new things you are doing or to share posts from your other experts discussing useful topics around your brand or product category.

8. Be present at expos and events for your key mom audience – participate in industry and consumer events about moms or targeting moms. In the case of moms, there are all sorts of consumer shows and events about health and wellness, eating trends, such as gluten free, and expos regarding a healthy and green lifestyle for families. If your product caters to these audiences, it is a good idea to have a strong presence at as many of these events as you can. Enjoy Life Foods, a Chicago-based maker of allergy-friendly and gluten-free foods, has a big presence at many mom-targeted events, Mabe said. To inform customers about these events, the company has a tab on its website that shows a calendar of events it will attend in the US and Canada throughout the year. The company also encourages event planners to contact them if they have an event that may be appropriate.

9. Be an industry presence – implement a thought leadership program to tout your company's success in connecting with moms. Even on the trade side, it pays to have a strong presence at events discussing the topic of marketing to moms, Mabe said. Speaking at events like "Marketing to Moms" and other industry trade shows is a good way to position your company or brand as a thought leader in this area. It never hurts to share a few strategies about how you connect with moms and encourage other companies to do so as well, she said. In addition to attending industry events, Mabe suggests taking those calls from trade media and even establishing a CEO blog sharing ideas with other companies.

10. Advertising is still important – sponsor content with select media partners who are reaching your consumer audiences. If you have the budget, paid sponsorships of advertorial and even sampling programs in regional and national publications that reach moms is a good way to solidify your awareness among this audience. Mabe also notes the value of sites focusing on content for health-conscious new moms, millennials and women. "If one of my clients had an advertising budget to reach new moms, I would likely recommend healthy lifestyle sites like Mind Body Green and Well + Good. These sites have the right audience and do a fantastic job of disseminating their content across social media. When I conduct shop-along research with moms, they often tell me they learned about a new product, new diet, or new book from seeing an article from one of these sites that show up in their newsfeed on Facebook or a photo or video on their Instagram feed."

11. Regular moms count too – create a panel of moms to solicit regular feedback and ideas.

Amid all the influencer groups, bloggers and experts, it's important to also remember just regular moms, Mabe added. "People get very tied to the importance of influencers and social media, but just regular customers can also offer productive, helpful and useful feedback. Having these people on a regular go-to panel can provide some refreshing insights."

School nutrition a "great opportunity" for healthier brands

Nutritional standards for lunches at schools across the United States have become a political punching bag. But for better-for-you food companies that understand the times, the trends and the varying needs and demands of constituencies ranging from federal bureaucrats to local administrators to kids themselves, there are unprecedented opportunities to land big revenues by supplying the lunch trays of America's schoolchildren. By Dale Buss.

Right now, the US school-nutrition market may look forbidding because the whole programme has become a potential political football. Republicans are considering dismantling some of the nutrition standards for school-meals that were implemented by the Obama administration, as well as targeting the massive school-lunch programme on the grounds of excess food waste and runaway costs for feeding children who increasingly aren't getting proper nutrition at home.

They're being opposed by many in the school-nutrition community who want to see continued expansion of federal programmes as a government-granted entitlement, another way to battle the ravages of poverty and neglect on many of America's children. One of the increasingly influential groups in the school-lunch nexus is the Urban School Food Alliance, founded by programme administrators in six major cities – New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, Dallas and Orlando. It is gaining support all along for expansionary propositions including that the US government should serve "school" meals in non-congregate areas such as homes so that "more meals can reach children who have limited access to nutritional meals" outside of school.

"Certainly brands are put off by everything they see unfolding with the school-nutrition programme, and they stay outside of it because of that. But it's a great, great opportunity, where you're going to have people see your brand and oftentimes it'll be the most appealing thing on the menu."

David Just, professor in the Food & Brand Lab at Cornell University

But as the politics continue to get sorted out, the US school-nutrition programme represents a tremendous market opportunity for better-for-you brands that already are plying the American consumer market. Each school day, more than 30 million students across America eat a school-served meal. And every entity involved, from the US Agriculture Department to state education

SOMMA FOODS' CLEAN CHICKEN – NO ANTIBIOTICS OR GROWTH PROMOTANTS

Source: sommafoods.com

bureaucracies to local school districts, is seeking innovative ways to serve kids healthier fare that they'll also want to eat.

"Certainly brands are put off by everything they see unfolding with the school-nutrition programme, and they stay outside of it because of that," David Just, professor in the Food & Brand Lab at Cornell University and an expert in school nutrition, told *Kids Nutrition Report*. "But it's a great, great opportunity, where you're going to have people see your brand and oftentimes it'll be the most appealing thing on the menu."

Here are five better-for-you brands that have been planning or are taking the plunge, and how they're doing it:

Safe + Fair: Chicago-based The Safe + Fair Food Company is in the process of rolling up many "free-from" food startups into a corporate juggernaut that is aiming to aggregate companies that currently generate as much as $100 million a year in revenues. And CEO Will Holsworth told *Kids Nutrition Report* that the school-nutrition market is "really important" for his company's business model.

"We started in that space because allergies are more important in school lunches than anywhere else," he said. "Two kids per classroom, on average, have a peanut or tree-nut allergy, and it's usually in school where families first find out if their kid has an allergy. If one kid in class has one, then every kid is dealing with that issue.

"So that issue has become more and more prevalent in schools: How to keep kids safe. There's good business for us in fitting the needs that must be met. School districts are looking for answers."

Safe + Fair's Skeeters brand of snacks, for example, the product line that launched the company, is catching on with school districts. It's a line of nut-free mini-cookies including Chocolate Chip, Shortbread and Double Chocolate varieties, as well as some SKUs of graham crackers.

"They'll do a variety of things with Skeeters," Holsworth said of lunch-programme administrators. "They'll put it on their menus; they'll include it in vending machines; and depending on how serious their rules are around nut allergies, they'll [advantage Skeeters] by banning kids from bringing anything into the school that isn't nut-free."

As Holsworth has shared Safe + Fair's business plan with school-lunch officials, he said, they've been urging him to hurry with his plans to acquire makers of better-for-you macaroni and cheese, cake mixes, and pasta and pizza sauces. "More of them are talking to us and saying, 'What can you provide to us and when can you provide it?" he said. "A number of these products will end up in schools."

The "fair" part of the company's name, Holsworth said, alludes to the fact that parents must pay 20% to 25% more for nut-free products compared with their conventional equivalents. "We don't think that's right, and we want to make sure our products are fairly priced," he said.

Overall, said Holsworth, the long-term goal of Safe + Fair is essentially to take over the school lunchroom for allergen-free eating.

"Kids are afraid of food, and some have to eat at nut-free tables because they're ostracized from their friends," he said. "Imagine the impact that has psychologically; they have enough things they already have to deal with in growing up, not to have to eat products that are weird and look different from what everyone else is eating. We're trying to homogenize this with schools, to offer a large line of products that are fairly priced and look attractive to everyone."

Sparkling Ice: The artificially-sweetened, zero-calorie, fruit-flavored sparkling-water brand owned by Talking Rain busted into the consumer-retail space over the last several years, generated an annual run rate of nearly $700 million (€622 million) in retail revenues, and literally has accelerated the decline of traditional carbonated soft-drink brands including Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Diet Coke and Diet Pepsi.

Now, to create another growth track, Sparkling Ice is turning to US schools. The brand is being helped by the ongoing expiration of many of the

Cinnamon Bitz

Kids love the crispy, crunchy cinnamon-flavored bites of Allsome Cinnamon Bitz. Perfect for breakfast in the classroom and an excellent parfait solution. And on top of that, they're whole grain and all natural!

Source: skeeternutfree.com

long-term contracts that school districts signed years ago for sales exclusivity with Coca-Cola and Pepsi, for all of the drink giants' various types of beverages, Kevin Klock, former CEO of Talking Rain, told *Kids Nutrition Report* recently.

Sparkling Ice sold about 100,000 cases to US schools in 2015, but that grew to more than one million cases in 2016, and the brand had gotten a foothold in schools in 48 of the 50 United States. Klock believes Sparkling Ice easily could triple sales over last year's levels.

"It's the first crack we've been given to many school-foodservice operators," said Klock, who was responsible for building Sparkling Ice into a heavyweight brand before his abrupt departure from the company in the spring, which hasn't been fully explained in public. "We're also probably at the point where the government is going to come in and require schools to remove sugar from their beverage programmes."

A huge potential market beckons. "We could sell as much product in one school as we do in a supermarket in any given week," Klock explained. "It's also extending our brand awareness and an additional way to get household penetration as well as providing kids with an alternative that they've been looking for."

Somma Food Group: The Dallas-based company sees increasing demand for clean-label poultry and meat in schools.

"There are regulations for what's required now in meats, but we see an opportunity to go beyond what is required to what is being increasingly demanded by parents and students and, therefore, will be by schools: cleaner foods with shorter ingredient statements, and poultry and meats that are not raised on antibiotics and are only fed vegetable diets," Michael Turley, Somma's CEO, told *Kids Nutrition Report*. "It's something we know the market is starting to look for."

One indicator, Turley said, is that the Urban School Food Alliance is pushing its member schools to move only to chicken that isn't fed with animal byproducts. "Those guys are very visible in the media, and everyone pays attention to what they do," Turley said of the group. "But the very smallest school districts also want to do the same thing, and there are 14,000 of them out there: Their overwhelming desire is to serve better food."

So Somma embarked on a plan to come up with chicken products "that have the cleanest ingredient statements in the school channel and in foodservice generally" and to partner with producers who would meet the company's requisites. Its primary partner is Ozark Mountain Poultry.

Initial products included Chickentopia breaded chicken strips and other products, and fully cooked hamburgers consisting of beef that is from 100% grass-fed cattle. New products include a chicken-based hot dog that is an uncured frank, with no nitrates or nitrites. "It delivers the on-trend demand that's out there for the raw materials, but it was also our mission to produce a really great hot dog, not

TABLE 1: NUTRITION SNAPSHOT, SPARKLING ICE BLACK CHERRY

Source: sparklingice.com

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 8 fl. oz. (240ml)

Serving Per Container: About 2

0 Calories Per Serving

	% Daily Value *
Vitamin D	10%
Vitamin B3	10%
Vitamin B6	10%
Vitamin B12	10%
Biotin	10%
Vitamin B5	10%

Not a significant source of calories from fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, dietary fiber, sugars, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron.
*% Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Also contains (per bottle)

Green Tea Extract 50 mg†

†Daily Value not established.

Ingredients

Contains 3% juice

Carbonated Water, Natural Flavors, Blackberry Juice Concentrate, Malic Acid, Potassium Benzoate (To Ensure Freshness), Sucralose, Green Tea Extract, Red #40, Biotin 1% Trit. (Maltodextrin), Niacinamide (B3), D-Calcium Pantothenate (B5), Vitamin B12 0.1% (Mannitol), Vitamin D3, Pyridoxine HCl (B6).

Caffeine free

just a really great chicken hot dog."

Somma has become an eight-figure company in annual revenues, Turley said, after just two years. One reason is that, besides pushing the envelope with "free-from" products, Somma also is approaching the school-nutrition business with higher-level marketing than what the industry might be used to.

"We have a marketing team here that has worked with national restaurant-chain accounts, so they approach school-lunch directors like they're a restaurant, and help them to drive traffic," Turley explained. "You have to tell decision-makers – kids and parents – that their school is serving this great new product. We use point-of-sale materials in schools, social media and even print advertisements targeted in specific markets."

AquaBall: The brand has been undergoing a huge transformation over the last couple of years as it switched from its original, eponymous ball-shaped package to one that's slightly less round – but which accommodates hot-filling, in turn allowing the brand to eliminate preservatives and fit better into convenience-store refrigerated racks. AquaBall contains only water, fruit extracts, vitamins and stevia and posted 2015 sales of $5 million (€4.5 million).

Amid all the changes, CEO and founder Kevin Sherman wants to make another one: pursuing business in schools. Specifically, as a former public-school teacher and principal who understands schools as institutions, Sherman believes his brand can successfully target after-school "latchkey" programmes where millions of American children spend their late afternoons.

"Schools run these programmes and have open vending because it's after school," Sherman explained to *Kids Nutrition Report*. Late afternoon specifically is a time when kids' hydration levels run low if not monitored.

"Our product is basically flavoured water, so it's a great opportunity for these programmes and a bit different than the offerings they have. Also, when you get into the neural development of kids, they need to be hydrated; I saw that as a teacher: If kids are lethargic, you send them to the water fountain to get a drink. And sugar depletes water."

Back to the Roots: The startup breakfast-cereal company has managed to get the New York City public-school system to quietly install two of its products in place of Kellogg-owned brands, which means that Back to the Roots cereals have become daily options for the 254,000 students who, on average, eat a free breakfast offered by America's largest public-school system.

Back to the Roots cereal has just four ingredients, no preservatives and no added vitamins; is low in sugar and sodium and high in whole grains; and is certified organic. One 28g serving of Back to the Roots Cinnamon Clusters, for instance, has half as much sugar and four-fifths as many calories as the same amount of Kellogg Frosted Mini-Wheats, which are still offered in New York schools.

The New York City district was in play for tiny Back to the Roots only because last summer Kellogg's Kashi healthy-cereal brand discontinued two varieties, Berry Blossoms and Honey Sunshine, that were on the schools' breakfast menu. Back to the Roots had previous experience in supplying much smaller school districts in California and in Phoenix, and it had some personal connections with New York officials.

The New York school district pays a little more for Back to the Roots cereals, but it is more than satisfied because the new cereals are popular with students, are organic and provide less sugar. So the startup is looking for more inroads in New York and beyond.

"This will be a faster process now with the support of the district and proven brand acceptance by the kids," Nikhil Arora, a co-founder of Back to the Roots, told the *New York Times*.

Source: backtotheroots.com

The case for whole milk is adding up

Late last year, the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* published a study that seemed to contradict received dietary wisdom on children and full fat milk.

The Canadian study found that among the 2745 children in the study, whole milk consumption was associated with lower BMI – possibly because those drinking full-fat milk were less hungry and thus less likely to snack on high calorie foods. Whole milk drinkers also had higher vitamin D levels.

The findings grabbed headlines worldwide. "Do we have it backward?" asked Canada's CBC News; the Australian reported that "Low fat milk raises obesity risk, parents told" while the UK's Sun newspaper used capitals to express its surprise: "Children who drink full fat milk are LESS likely to grow up to be fat".

The news also crossed the Atlantic to a tiny island off the west coast of Scotland. The Isle of Gigha is just seven miles long by a mile and a half wide with a population of 160 people, and an equally small dairy company of just 60 cows. The Wee Isle Dairy began making artisan ice-cream in 2015 and now has six flavours – including Bramble and Whisky – that it sells locally.

More recently it started producing milk – packaged the old-fashioned way, in glass bottles, and in just one form: whole ("full fat"). The company would like to supply the milk to its local school of just 19 pupils, but under Scotland's school milk guidelines, children five and up can only be served skimmed or semi-skimmed milk – a "stupid" policy, according to Wee Isle's Don Dennis, who runs the business with his wife Emma Rennie Dennis.

"This is a good example of a very poorly thought-out policy, which is not evidence based," he told *Kids Nutrition Report*. "The Canadian study shows that if you look at the evidence, it would be semi-skimmed milk that should be banned from schools!"

He's calling for the policy to be changed and has enlisted the help of the region's Member of the Scottish Parliament Michael Russell, who had been "supportive of our project" over the past two years.

"It is perhaps a bit funny, that we have to attempt to change policy at the National level, in order to supply maybe 15 litres a week to our local primary school," said Dennis. "We just feel it is ludicrous that our local primary school, which our son attends, cannot supply him with our whole milk, despite that being the wish of ourselves, our son, and the head of the school."

"But my fingers are crossed that eventually we might see a change in this matter," he added.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, in New Zealand – a nation where heart disease is the leading cause of death and 11% of children aged two to 14 are obese – whole milk has gone back on the menu at one school as part of an initiative to help students keep a healthy weight. Dilworth, a boarding school for boys, revamped the cafeteria menu at its rural campus from one that was high in carbohydrates and added sugars and low in fat to one based on whole, unprocessed foods with natural fats – including whole milk.

Students lost centimetres from their waistlines and saw reductions in their BMI, and the school has since rolled out similar changes (although less dramatic) at its other campus.

The changes were made with nutrition advice from registered dietician Dr Caryn Zinn and Dr Grant Schofield, Professor of Public Health, and Director of the Human Potential Centre at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). Zinn and Schofield are low-carb high-fat advocates who have called for the food pyramid to be "flipped".

These two anecdotes from opposite sides of the world might not, for now, change much – although it's worth noting that Dr Schofield was recently (somewhat controversially) appointed the NZ Ministry of Education's first Chief Education Health and Nutrition Advisor. But they are part of a larger picture that's emerging of consumers losing their fear of fat, and in particular dairy fat, which has benefited from a spate of positive research findings in recent years.

In many places, whole milk is bucking the trend of falling fluid milk sales. In the US state of Vermont whole milk sales were up nearly 12% in 2016, according to the state's Valley News, which said the trend appeared to be related to studies showing that whole milk and other full-fat dairy products were good for you. Nationally, whole milk sales rose 4.9% last year while low and reduced fat milks saw falling sales, according to USDA figures.

It seems consumers have decided for themselves that official dietary advice on whole milk is no longer worth listening to.

Passion for cheese turns into sweet snacking range

As a product idea, cheese candy might be a bit "out there", as its creator readily admits – but this sweet cheese snack's playful branding and healthy snack promise are winning it shelf space. By Dale Buss.

The former manager for a cheese-gift packer nurtured her idea for cow candy for about a decade before launching her startup in the heart of cheese country, in Wisconsin, in 2013. Galvanised by the struggle to find a healthier alternative to candy for her kids, Danyel O'Connor turned her passion for cheese, and the ideas she'd been nurturing for so long, into innovative boldly fruit-flavoured cheese snacks for kids.

"It hadn't been thought of before," O'Connor, a self-made food-marketing consultant, told *Kids Nutrition Report* about her product idea. "As a parent, it can be difficult to find healthy, easy-to-serve snacks that compete with candy. This struggle led to the creation of Cow Candy" which, she added, not only pleases kids' palates but also helps establish healthy snacking habits.

"As a parent, it can be difficult to find healthy, easy-to-serve snacks that compete with candy. This struggle led to the creation of Cow Candy"

– Danyel O'Connor, founder of Cow Candy

After some missteps along the way, such as clunky packaging, Cow Candy now has fielded new packaging featuring popular kids' characters from Hasbro. It is nearing $5 million (€4.5 million) in annual revenues by retailing in more than 200 stores in metro New York City with a goal of being in 500 stores around the country by this fall, 2,000 stores by the end of next year, and 5,000 stores soon thereafter.

Cow Candy comes in an eight-count package of 0.75oz Monterey Jack cheese sticks that are one of five flavours:

- fruit punch
- orange
- strawberry
- grape
- honey

Each stick is 80 calories, provides 4g of protein and 15% of the recommended daily value of calcium, and has 1g to 2g of sugar per serving. They retail for a suggested $3.99 to $4.99 (€3.56 to €4.46) a package, a price point that O'Connor said "falls between [that for] Sargento regular cheese sticks and organic cheese sticks".

O'Connor's journey to this food-product white space began when, out of college, she joined the company that now has become DairyFood USA, the American arm of an Austrian-owned cooperative that was based in south-central

Source: cowcandy.com

Cow Candy comes in five flavours: strawberry, orange, fruit punch, honey and grape. It is available in multiple Stop & Shop stores across New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, and in Lunds & Byerlys supermarkets across Minnesota.

Wisconsin. She came into the operation for importing pasteurized-processed cheese foods from Europe for the US gift-pack industry, where she maintained the company's historic-license portfolio. "That's where my love for cheese turned into a passion," she recalled.

In that job, she adopted the European perspective on cheese, which is much more diverse and much more open to innovation than is typical in the US. "It's more the norm there to update or think of new products or new packaging, whereas in the US we've kind of historically gotten into a comfort zone with cheese and stayed there," she explained.

Also while there, O'Connor began thinking over the possibilities for fruit-flavored cheese after a meeting in which someone in the gift-pack division was working on a wine-flavored cheese spread. "For me, that particular product missed the mark; it tasted just a little bit like grapes," she said. "But it planted the seed deep in the back of my mind. There are other cheeses that incorporate sweet and savory flavors in an adult format; that's something I'd seen often. But there was nothing that really hit that whimsical, child-friendly mark."

FRUIT AND CHEESE A NATURAL COMBINATION

O'Connor also believed that kids would look at fruit-flavoured cheese without the subconscious suspicion that likely would be demonstrated by many adults toward such a product. "To adults, even the colour of Cow Candy can be off-putting because they have preconceived notions of what things should look and taste like," she said. "But I was inspired by children's yogurt – and adult yogurt, for that matter – where there are a number of wonderful fruit flavors incorporated into a dairy product.

"Also, strawberry milk has been around a long time. So there were reasons that were natural for me to think fruit and cheese could pair together in that way."

CHEESE CHALLENGE

But after she left DairyFood USA, O'Connor started her own boutique food-marketing firm – and continued to ponder the possibilities for what would become Cow Candy. She gave a lot of thought to the potential challenge of coming up with a cheese base for a fruit-flavored product that wouldn't fight or even challenge the fruit flavors and whose texture would be embraced by kids in the context of such a product.

"Knowing my Cheese 101, I realized that cheddars, for instance, while they're a widely accepted cheese variety they get sharp with age, and that sharpness would combat the fruit flavor," O'Connor said. "Or if you considered mozzarella, its saltiness could combat the fruit flavor. Also, children tend to like mild, creamy flavors and textures. I thought of muenster cheese, but I didn't like the texture and how it breaks down. And looking at shelf life, and mild flavors, and the lack of notes trying to compete with what we were trying to accomplish, Monterey Jack just fit."

O'Connor segued into making a reality of Cow Candy. Another challenge for her was finding suppliers of natural fruit flavor and colours that

TABLE 1: NUTRITION SNAPSHOT, COW CANDY PINKIE PIE STRAWBERRY

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 Stick (21g)
Servings Per Container: 8

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 80	Calories from Fat 50
	%Daily Value*
Total Fat 6g	9%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 20mg	7%
Sodium 120mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 2g	1%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 4g	8%
Vitamin A 4% •	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 15% •	Iron 0%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less Than	65g	80g
Sat. Fat	Less Than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less Than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less Than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carb.		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
Protein		50g	65g

Ingredients: Monterey Jack Cheese (pasteurised milk, cheese culture, salt, enzymes), organic dried cane syrup, honey powder (sugar, honey), natural flavour, carmine colour, dried strawberries, stevia extract.

Source: cowcandy.com

TABLE 2: NUTRITION SNAPSHOT, COW CANDY BEE'S CHEESE

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 Stick (21g)
Servings Per Container: 8

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 90	Calories from Fat 60
	%Daily Value*
Total Fat 6g	9%
Saturated Fat 3.5g	18%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 20mg	7%
Sodium 130mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 3g	1%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 2g	
Protein 5g	10%
Vitamin A 4% •	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 15% •	Iron 0%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less Than	65g	80g
Sat. Fat	Less Than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less Than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less Than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carb.		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
Protein		50g	65g

Ingredients: Monterey Jack Cheese (pasteurised milk, cheese culture, salt, enzymes), honey powder (sugar, honey), organic dried cane syrup, natural vanilla flavour.

Source: cowcandy.com

could be used in cheese. She reached out to contacts she had made in the natural-beverage industry, from her food-consulting firm, and reached out to flavor houses that they used. "From there," she recounted, "there was a lot of trial and error and a lot of leaning on people in the industry who thought my idea had legs."

She would make small test batches of flavored Monterey Jack on her kitchen stove and "played with the percentages of ingredients and colours and got it to a place where I was very happy with the product," O'Connor said.

Cow Candy then did a proof of concept at the Natural Products Expo West show in 2014. "We had a lot of really great responses," she said, from consumers walking the exhibit hall as well as retailers. "We decided the concept was strong enough that we should bring it to production and start working within the industry to build business."

Wisconsin, of course, is home (along with California) to the most cheese manufacturers in America. An additional benefit for O'Connor of searching in her home state for a contract manufacturer for Cow Candy was that "there are a lot of wonderful facilities that are family-owned" and of a perfect size to accommodate producing Cow Candy – yet still have the required regulatory certifications. Cow Candy began production in 2014.

Then O'Connor faced her next learning curve: gaining distribution. Major retailers typically stage review periods for dairy-product buying only every six months, which impinged her progress. Plus, she learned about slotting fees paid to retailers by the major cheese producers.

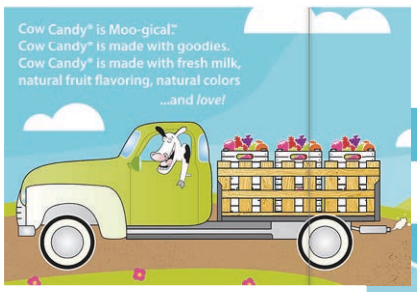
STUMBLE

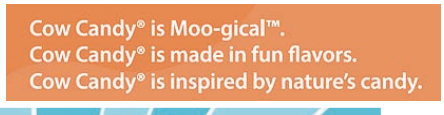
"Quite frankly, [snack cheese] is a very sought-after space, and there's a lot of pay-to-play, which we just weren't in the position to do," O'Connor said. "So what we really had to do was find the cowboys of the retail industry – people who were innovative and willing to take risks, and take a chance on innovation that isn't produced by one of the top three dairy-snack cheese companies."

Even so, Cow Candy stumbled. O'Connor found a buyer at Safeway Southwest, a major chain in the western US, who "really got the concept" and brought the brand into stores. But Cow Candy's packaging was problematic: A small corrugated box akin to those in which animal crackers are packaged, it took up too much room and hung awkwardly on the pegs in the snack-cheese

COW CANDY BRAND MESSAGES: NATURAL AND LOCAL

Cow Candy promotes its products on a natural platform: "With colours from only natural sources", "Natural Monterey Jack cheese"…





Provenance is another key part of Cow Candy's marketing communications. The products are made from Wisconsin cheese, and this is clearly communicated in promotional material. The website and product packaging bears the Wisconsin Cheese logo.

refrigerator, inhibiting deep stocks and providing awkward merchandising. The retailer ended its interest.

"We hadn't been prepared to be good partners" to the retailer, O'Connor conceded. "We'd put the cart before the horse. So we pulled back and put on our big-boy pants and looked at what we should be doing better as partners to retailer – and for what we should be doing better for packaging." Cow Candy changed its packaging to a more conventional format for cheese sticks.

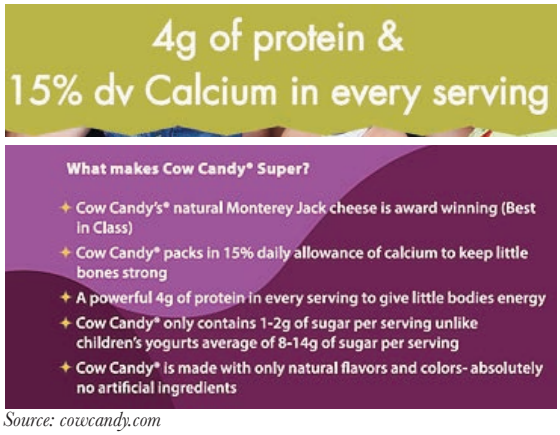
Maybe more important, O'Connor caught a break when a rep from Hasbro licensing approached her at a food show as the toymaker was looking for better-for-you products that could bear the brands and names of its character properties. She decided that the two companies' interests aligned and that a deal with Hasbro for character-based packaging could help Cow Candy in at least two ways.

First, "There was a learning curve for our product, as we discovered," she said. "People weren't familiar with it. So if we could lend some familiarity to it through a common cartoon character that people have seen and trust, then that barrier to entry for a first-time purchase is going to be a little bit more achievable." Second, she said, as the mother of two boys, she knows how appealing the Hasbro character of Optimus Prime, from the Trnasformers movies, is to little boys.

So in January, Cow Candy came out with Optimus Prime Fruit Punch and Pinky Pie My Little Pony Strawberry flavors. Retailers responded, with Stop N Shop signing up the 200 New York stores and expected to consider expanding Cow Candy to the rest of its 2,000 stores on the East coast. The brand also is launching in Shop Rite stores this summer.

Even before Cow Candy gets significant retail traction, O'Connor already is diversifying again: The brand's latest flavor is Bees Cheese, honey-flavored Monterey Jack cheese. "That's our adult crossover – the toe dipper," she explained. "If you're a little afraid of strawberry or orange or fruit punch cheese, you can try this."

COW CANDY NUTRITION

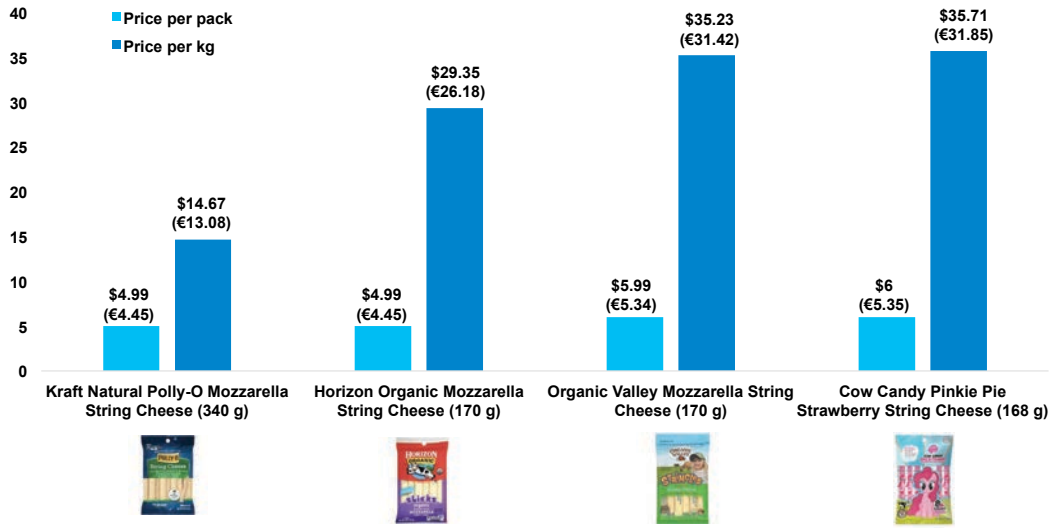


Source: cowcandy.com

Cow Candy's products are promoted for their low sugar content (1-2 g per serving), their high calcium content (15% of the RDA) and for their high protein content (4 g per serving).

CHART 1: COW CANDY PRICE COMPARISON

Cow Candy is slightly more expensive when compared to other organic, unflavoured string cheese brands in the market. When compared to a non-organic unflavoured alternative, it is more than twice as expensive.



Source: NNB supermarket survey, May 2017

MySuperFoods maintains steady growth

As they launch the third product in their portfolio, 'mom-preneurs' and founders of MySuperFood Company are capitalising on what they know well – the trials and tribulations of getting healthy food into the mouths of young children, without breaking the bank. By Karen Raterman.

Kids are snacking more than ever these days. So providing snack foods that are low in sugar and sodium and packed with nutrition is high on the radar for at least a third of parents, according to data from Mintel. Convenience is even more important with nearly 80% looking for ready-to-eat products. Silvia Gianni and Katie Jesionowski are two moms who know this intimately with five young children between them. They took their passion for making healthy, nutrient dense foods for their kids at home and started MySuperFoods, a company whose mission is to make nutrient-filled foods that are nutritious and practical for busy on-the-go families. And in typical "mom-preneur" fashion, the company is a family affair, with a strong ethical mission topping its priorities.

The partners have intentionally kept their growth manageable and refused to compromise on nutrition. But no one can quibble with the results. The five-year-old company reports doubling its growth every year and now boasts distribution in approximately 2,000 retail outlets, centered on the East and West Coasts, with more stores coming online this year in the Midwest and Texas.

As parents continue to search for options, MySuperFoods also just expanded its portfolio with a new line of mini pop chips, MySuperPops, a whole grain, organic, nut- and gluten-free pop snack, adding to its existing products, MySuperSnack Granola Bites and MySuperCookies. The new products are 100% wholegrain, made with chia, quinoa, and flax,

MINI POP CHIPS WITH CHIA, QUINOA AND FLAX ARE NEW TO THE RANGE

Source: mysuperfoodscompany.com

come in three kid-friendly flavours – White Cheddar, Kettle and Honey BBQ – and the quarter-size chip is ideal for little hands and small appetites. "Kids today are reaching for a snack three or four times a day, so it's important to ensure those snacks are made with nourishing superfood ingredients," said co-founder Silvia Gianni.

The company prides itself on offering products that are insightful to families' needs beyond good nutrition, including product format and packaging. When they first began developing products, Gianni and Jesionowski thought a lot about how their kids were eating snacks. "We also heard from other parents about how kids take a small bite or two of a bar and then drop it in your bag or leave it in the car seat," co-founder Katie Jesionowki told *KNR*. "We wanted to alleviate that problem for parents by minimizing the waste and frustration of going through a box of bars in a day or two. So we created our products with re-sealable pouches and bite-sized portions, so they can save what's left for later. We still hear feedback that people like that."

If only developing the products had been that easy. The pair met at a group for mothers expecting twins in 2009, and they bonded over the fact that they were both making their own baby food. Neither Gianni nor Jesionowski had any experience in the food business—Silvia had left a career in finance and Katie was a former advertising professional. Their first idea was to make a ready-to-eat soup, but they quickly found the concept faced numerous challenges. Putting that idea aside, they focused on making a clean, nutrient dense, soft-baked granola bar. "Katie went to the Whole Foods in Tribeca [in New York City] and bought every flour and superfood ingredient they had and began making bars'" Gianni recalled. "She kept dropping off samples to me and other

PARENT-FRIENDLY, FUN FOR KIDS

In addition to making packaging that is practical for parents, MySuperFoods founders Silvia Gianni and Katie Jesionowski wanted packaging and marketing materials to be engaging for kids. They saw that many natural brands were a bit clinical, so they teamed with an illustrator to create characters for the website and packaging based on real kids – their own. As soon as they saw the pictures featuring cartoon kids with innocent eyes, they knew it was the basis on which to model their brand marketing. Each character embodies a nutritional super power, making it fun for kids to learn about health and wellness.

- **Mine-Zoe** is the mineral superhero who talks about the function of minerals like calcium, iron and zinc.
- **Vita-Claire** is the vitamin superhero who presents good health from eating foods that contain important vitamins.
- **Luca-Pro** is the protein superhero who explains how protein helps keep kids active and healthy.
- **Oxi-Rae** is the antioxidant superhero who explains how antioxidants rid the body of free-radicals that cause cell damage.

friends until we thought we had something doable."

Both partners also networked with everyone they could. "We all know something about food, but there is not a lot of information about how to source ingredients, where to find food scientists, and how to connect with suppliers, and it takes a lot of time," recalled Gianni. "We started in the summer of 2011, and we thought we could launch in six months, but it actually took us a year-and-a-half to get the first product ready for a trade show and present it to buyers."

SIMPLE AND CLEAN

An initial challenge was finding a food scientist who could develop the granola bites with a clean profile. One product developer told the team they could not do the product without adding the preservative glycerine. "Even though there are clean versions of it, it is not how we wanted to go," explained Gianni. "We wanted our products to be as simple and clean as possible. We were convinced we could do it."

A serendipitous meeting through friends led them to food scientist Derek Spors, of product developers Spork and Ladle, who agreed to do it their way, although he cautioned that it would be more complicated. He was right. It took 23 rounds of back and forth before they got an acceptable prototype.

The first products, My SuperSnack Granola Bites, were launched in September 2012 featuring wholegrain oats, amaranth, real fruit, omega-3 rich flax seed and critical vitamins and minerals. They replaced the traditional granola bar packaging with a portable bpa-free resealable pouch that holds four bite-sized pieces. Available in Apple Raisin, Blueberry Banana Acai and Chocolate Chip, the product has a suggested retail price of $2.49 (€2.34).

In developing their second line of products, the MySuperCookies, they knew they would be competing with products that were sweeter and have a more familiar taste for many kids, but Jesionowski and Gianni again stuck to the plan. "We wanted to use whole wheat flour for the cookie, and it made it taste much grainier than the average cookie," Gianni explained.

PRICE CHALLENGE

Using superfood ingredients was also a challenge because ingredients like chia, coconut oils, baobab, and flax are very expensive, she added. "It was difficult to use these products and keep the price at what a consumer would pay." The cookies are organic, nut-free, whole grain and packed with quinoa, chia, baobab and acerola. Family size boxes (6.25oz/177g) are available in three flavours, Honey Heroes, Blueberry Vanilla Heroes and Chocolate Heroes, with a suggested retail price of $4.49 (€4.23).

As for many other startups, gaining initial retail distribution was a big challenge. To gain

TABLE 1: NUTRITION SNAPSHOT MY SUPER-SNACK APPLE RAISIN GRANOLA BITES

Apple Raisin Granola Bites

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 Bag (40g)
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 180 Calories from Fat 70	
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	12%
Saturated Fat 6g	30%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 120mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 24g	8%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 9g	
Protein 2g	

Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 2% • Iron 4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Ingredients: Whole Oats, Coconut Oil, Brown Rice Syrup, Dates, Oat Bran, Brown Rice Flour, Dried Apples, Chia Seeds, Tapioca Flour, Dried Raisins, Stabilizer Blend (Citrus Fiber, Xanthan Gum, Gum Arabic), Sea Salt, Natural Flavor, Cinnamon, Baking Soda

Source: mysuperfoodscompany.com

TABLE 2: NUTRITION SNAPSHOT, MY SUPER-POPS WHITE CHEDDAR

Nutrition Facts

4 servings per container
Serving size 1oz (28g)

Amount per serving
Calories 120

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 4.5g	6%
Saturated Fat 0.5g	3%
Polyunsaturated Fat 1.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 2g	
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 18g	7%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Total Sugars <1g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 20mg	2%
Iron 0mg	0%
Potassium 55mg	1%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Ingredients: Organic Popcorn Chip (Organic Yellow Corn, Organic Quinoa, Organic Flax Seeds, Organic Sunflower Seeds, Organic Chia Seeds), Organic White Cheddar Seasoning (Organic Tapioca Maltodextrin, Organic Whey, Organic Cheddar Cheese [(Organic Cultured Pasteurized Milk, Salt, Enzymes), Organic Nonfat Dried Milk, Organic Buttermilk, Salt], Salt, Natural Flavors, Citric Acid, Organic Yeast Extract, Lactic Acid), Sunflower Oil
Contains: Milk

Source: mysuperfoodscompany.com

insights, the partners met with other food industry entrepreneurs. One of the most valuable suggestions they got was to grow slowly in their home market. Fortunately, Jesionowski said, with New York City as home, they had a big opportunity. "Our first effort was with the retailer in my building. We sat down with the buyer, and he took [the granola bites] right away." The next stop was the Whole Foods in Tribeca, which also took the product after a few meetings. Many meetings, however, were not as easy, Jesionowski, added, noting "we had a huge learning curve".

The pair also discovered there were other benefits of learning the business in their own backyard. "We started out doing retailer demos ourselves so we could hear feedback first hand," Gianni added. From that input, the team decided to convert the products to gluten free. "We learned that this was much easier to do as a small operation," she said. "Once you have a national rollout, changes are much more costly. So learning on a smaller scale saved us in the long run."

They also got value from a misstep. "We got into one retailer too early," Gianni noted. "They were used to dealing with larger companies, and their marketing programmes were prohibitively expensive for us." It was a painful lesson, she recalled but "it helped us figure out that we were not always ready just because they wanted us".

Both partners maintain that learning to trust their gut instincts was a good thing, and they are both content with the growth and progress they've made. Despite their success, the team remains small with just four full-time employees. Gianni and Jesionowski also still own a majority of the company and have grown with no real outside money—just some small investment from family.

Holding their cards close also allowed these two moms to make their company about a broader mission. From the start, Gianni said, "we wanted to have a strong social mission, and, in doing some research, we found that there is so much food insecurity, we wanted to be a part of that change." The company made an early commitment to fight child hunger by partnering with food banks in states where they do business, starting with the Food Bank of New York City in 2014.

MySuperFoods currently has partnerships with four food banks and plans to expand to seven this year. So far, they have also donated 115,000 meals. "We wanted to do more than just donate one percent of profits somewhere," Gianni explained. "We are now also donating our time, snacks and helping charities in our community." The effort helps MySuperFood become part of the community, she added, noting that "we don't do this as an afterthought. It is one of the main reasons we do what we do".

As for the future, the partners have a goal to grow their portfolio of snack foods, according to Jesionowski. She won't say other ideas, like the soup, are off the table, but for now "we have learned from our partners in co-packing to look for strategic opportunities. Right now we are looking for opportunities where people know us and look for us."

Source: mysuperfoodscompany.com

PACK A LUNCH, GIVE BACK A LUNCH
MySuperFoods Charitable Social Media Campaign

In the fall of 2016, our team decided it was time to further engage and involve YOU in our efforts to help end child hunger in the USA. We saw the impact that we were making through our food bank donations and imagined what more we could do together.
Pack a Lunch, Give Back a Lunch was born.

1. Buy one of our MySuperFoods products
2. Pack a lunch and include one of the snacks
3. Take a picture of the lunch
4. Post it to social media and tag us @mysuperfoods or #packalunch
5. We will donate one meal on your behalf

We are a small company but we can make a big impact. Please join us on this journey. We are grateful for your

Source: mysuperfoodscompany.com

Success with sneaky vegetables

In some ways, Kidfresh seems an unlikely success story. Its main categories, such as chicken nuggets and macaroni-and-cheese for kids, already were chock full of competitors. But by perfecting the art of hidden vegetables – and by spotting the opportunity in frozen foods – KidFresh has created a strong brand. By Dale Buss.

New York-based startup Kidfresh has succeeded in establishing a strong brand of healthy frozen kids' meals, has surpassed $10 million (€8.9 million) in annual sales in just 10 years in business, and has managed to attract an infusion of venture capital to fund its growth plans.

Founders Matt Cohen and Gilles Deloux are succeeding in large part because they found and dug into a white space that somehow remained amid a scrum of players in the frozen kids' meal segment. "We saw significant voids in children's foods in terms of the quality range and age range," Cohen told *Kids Nutrition Report*. "So we literally addressed the centre of that opportunity."

Kidfresh also has managed to establish a substantial brand rather than just an assemblage of various products, Tapan Shah, director of AccelFoods, one of the venture investors, told *Kids Nutrition Report*. "There are other companies out there touching on the frozen kids space, but Kidfresh has built a true platform. They're not just going into particular spaces such as protein or fries or pizza – they really are a platform for parents that they can rely on, and something that we think can grow and develop."

Shah also expressed confidence in Cohen and Deloux as "dynamic founders who've stayed committed to bringing children's nutrition to bear and making it approachable but also insisting on taste quality".

The co-founders are both French-American. The friends were working in New York – Deloux for Groupe Danone and Cohen for Accenture, the consulting firm – when they decided to start a company around gaps they saw in the market when shopping for food for their own families. "We wanted to master our own destinies and also create something that was meaningful and would make a difference."

They established Kidfresh in 2007, first by opening a store to sell fresh kids' meals in Manhattan. They made "healthy, natural and organic" kids' meals every day, getting feedback from moms about recipes and adapting them. One thing they developed proficiency in was finding ways to "hide" vegetables in foods that kids wouldn't notice.

"Operating the store gave us an understanding of what moms and kids wanted, and in trying to meet these two needs, we saw where they overlapped

Source: kidfresh.com

– and what we needed to do to appeal to both," Cohen said.

For example, they developed a mac-and-cheese recipe with hidden vegetables but that still met flavour and taste expectations that American kids have developed from lots of experience eating the stuff.

"It's one of the staples, so we had to get it right, and it has a flavour profile and colour and texture that's pretty standardized," Cohen said. "When you say 'mac-and-cheese,' children pretty much are expecting the same thing. So we wanted to reinvent it [to be] as healthy and good for you as possible, particularly by incorporating vegetables."

The duo went through "lots of trial and error," Cohen said, "and a lot of different possibilities, including vegetable powders, grating full vegetables, and using purees. We needed to maintain that orange type of colour and the taste profile and consistency. There was a lot of back and forth. We ended up using purees, because they also are the best way to get nutrients and fibres in products."

In any event, Cohen said, Kidfresh quickly outgrew its storefront and was also providing wholesale meals to supermarkets. "We had to make a decision: Do we want to do wholesale and be scalable, or do we want to do retail and grow one store at a time?" he said. Kidfresh set up retail kiosks. It began selling "healthy travel meals for kids" at the JetBlue and American Airlines terminals at the John F. Kennedy Airport. And it began distributing fresh meals through some Whole Foods Markets stores in New York City.

"When we saw all of that we were, OK, strategically, where do we want to be in five years: in my store or in 9,000 stores?" Cohen said. The answer was obvious.

And so, to them, was the solution to the dilemma of scaling up: They would freeze their kids' entrees and meals and promote frozen as the best way of preserving freshness.

Now, this is not the American way of thinking, at least about mainstream frozen foods such as TV dinners that gained a reputation over the decades as nutritionally-empty though inexpensive fare.

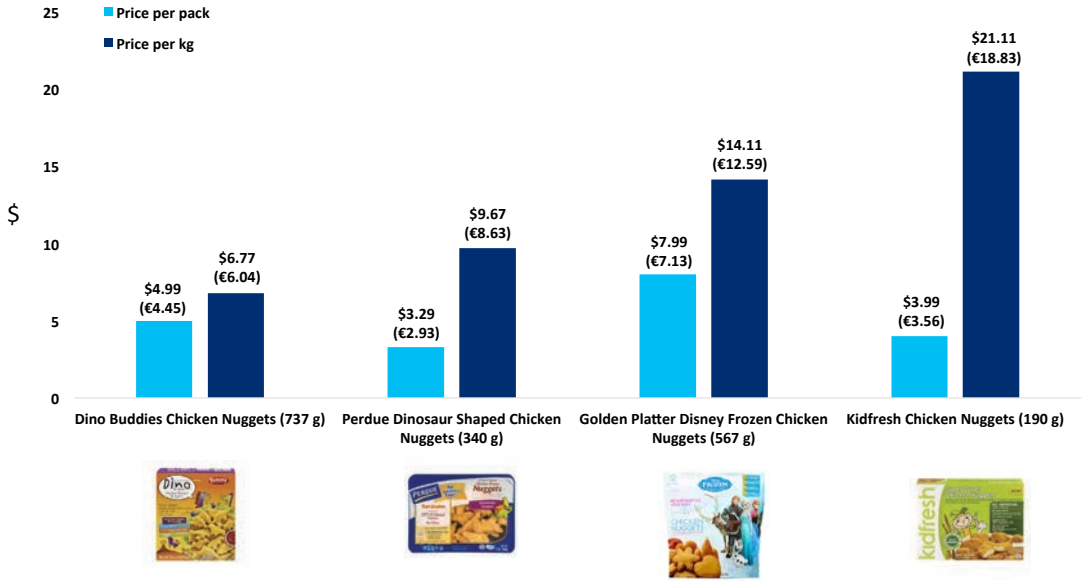
But a number of better-for-you brands have arisen over the last several years to put the lie to that assumption, such as Ian's for kids, and Amy's for adults. Also, traditional frozen-food stalwarts such as ConAgra have launched new attempts to make their frozen products healthier, with fewer preservatives and more wholesome ingredients.

The co-founders of Kidfresh had their own take on frozen foods. "Frozen is associated with quality and healthfulness in the culture I grew up in," France, Cohen said. "Whereas here in the US frozen was very much associated with junk and processed foods, for me growing up, frozen was the best possible way to extend the life of a product without adding any kind of additives or preservatives."

Kidfresh came up with a menu of frozen products that addressed what the pair believed was the white space in the US market and that also continued the brand positioning they'd learned in the fresh-food game.

They believed there was a big gap in the frozen kids' market in foods that would be priced around

CHART 1: KIDFRESH FROZEN MEALS PRICE COMPARISON



Source: NNB supermarket survey, May 2017

$3 to $4 (€2.67 - €3.56) a package, in between highly-processed fare such as TV dinners that retailed for $2 to $2.50 (€1.78 - €2.22) apiece on one end, and meals found in natural and organic outlets for as much as $6 (€5.33) apiece. "But those higher-priced ones, we found, actually weren't that good from a taste-profile standpoint and even less so from a nutritional standpoint," Cohen said.

At the same time, they perceived a big gap in the demographic targets for frozen kids' foods. "Most products are targeted to babies and toddlers, but once you get past three- to four-years-old, there's not much out there," Cohen said. "Those kids aren't going to continue to eat products with Elmo or teddy-bear characters on them; you don't give dinosaur-shaped chicken nuggets to a nine-year-old. There was a big gap in the middle where there was a need and a void for a better mainstream offering that would cover age ranges from one-and-a-half to 10 or 11 years old."

Kidfresh mac-and-cheese retails for a suggested $2.99 (€2.66), chicken nuggets for around $3.99 (€3.55) and larger-size value packs for $6.99 to $7.99 (€6.21 - €7.10). They're available at some of the largest grocery sellers in the US, including Walmart, Target, Kroger, HEB and Harris Teeter.

But Cohen maintained that "we're just scratching the surface" of growth, which is occurring at more than 100% a year. "We need to double, triple and quadruple the business," he said. "We needed capital to grow and accelerate our growth."

That's where AccelFoods, which specializes in investing in food startups, came in with some funding as well as Monogram Capital Partners and Emil Capital Partners.

"We believe this is a brand that can be great, in part by expanding into new categories," Shah said. "We look at it as a brand that is reliable for on-the-go parents. Kids seem to love the product too, and that trust is something we wanted to invest behind."

Kids' meals these days... a lot of them are downright scary and often loaded with all sorts of artificial ingredients. As a father myself, I decided that we needed more options for kids' meals – the kind that are yummy and nutritious for children while convenient for parents.

Source: kidfresh.com

TABLE 1: NUTRITION SNAPSHOT, LITTLE JAMMIN' CHICKEN SLIDERS

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 2 Sliders (70g)
Servings Per Container 3

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 130	Calories from Fat 30
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 3.5g	5%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 40mg	13%
Sodium 360mg	15%
Total Carbohydrate 4g	1%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 8g	16%
Vitamin A 4% •	Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 4% •	Iron 2%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

INGREDIENTS:
Chicken, Reconstituted Egg Whites, Celery, Onions, Carrots, Parmesan Cheese (Milk, Cheese Cultures, Salt, Enzymes), **Whole Grain Bread Crumbs** (Whole Wheat Flour, Yeast, Molasses, Sea Salt),**Rice Starch, Lemon Juice Concentrate, Vinegar, Sea Salt, Flavorings, Yeast Extract, Parsley.** Browned in expeller pressed Canola Oil.

Contains: Wheat, Milk, Egg.

Source: kidfresh.com

Brewing up exotic tea

Kids and tea have never really mixed in the US market, but the founders of Bossi Kids Tea believe they appeal to American kids with a form of the rooibos herbal tea that is popular in their native South Africa – where kids are weaned on the stuff. By Dale Buss.

Paul and Celia Venter launched organic Bossi Kids Tea into US retail in early 2017 after forming their company at the end of 2015, convinced that they could popularize the soothing, caffeine-free tea drink of their own youth with American kids and moms who were still searching for alternatives to juices, soft drinks, enhanced waters and all the other beverages aiming for children's palates.

The shelf-stable product is available in Strawberry, Mango and Watermelon flavours in 200ml TetraPak boxes for a suggested retail price of $6.99 (€6.21) for an eight-pack, online and increasingly in bricks-and-mortar stores. Compare that to the price point for many organic juices at $4.29 (€3.81) for a four-pack, and Bossi has a price advantage. The packaging art is understated, showing simple pictures of each fruit. Lightly-sweetened Bossi contains 9g of organic cane sugar per serving.

"When we got to the States, we wondered why rooibos tea isn't consumed here in the same way it is in South Africa," Celia Venter told *Kids Nutrition Report*. The Venters each had experienced North America earlier but moved permanently to California in 2012 with their two young children.

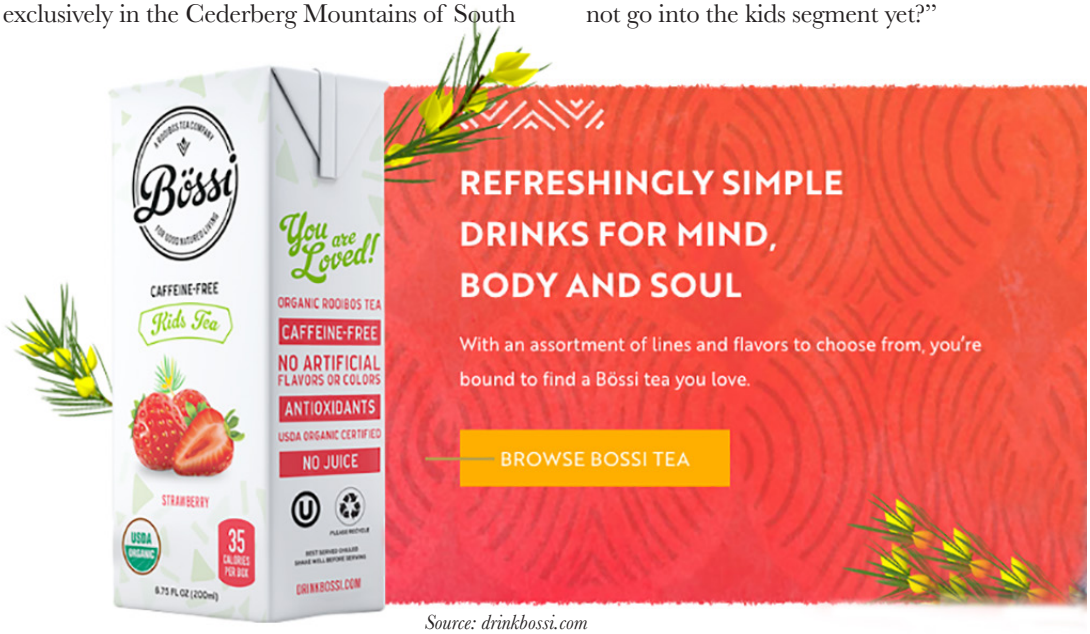
"That was part of the motivation of why we went after this market segment with this specific product. It's truly good for you and it's truly just South African."

Rooibos tea is made from a bush grown exclusively in the Cederberg Mountains of South Africa. "We were literally weaned on rooibos tea," Paul Venter said. "We learned that it had health benefits, such as aiding digestion and helping with colic. The background of rooibos tea has been so well-established in South Africa."

Celia Venter said that she "didn't recognize that people in America didn't know about rooibos because it was so familiar to me". Yet for the Venters' own children growing up in America, she said, "We wanted something better for our kids. We were sure that other parents would want it too. We wanted a healthy, convenient option for a drink for our kids and we didn't see that when we went into the store."

Other startups have tried to market a ready-to-drink rooibos tea to children, Bevnet pointed out recently, and it has always failed to catch on. One problem may be that "there seems to be an overall disconnect between the purchaser (the parent who might be in tune with [the benefits]) and the end user (a child)," Bevnet observed.

And overall, few brands have charged hard after American kids and their moms with any kinds of teas – even those with the pedigree perhaps to succeed, such as Honest Tea. "That was one of our big questions initially," Paul Venter said. "That space is pretty unoccupied. Yet everyone in the US loves a good cup of iced tea. It's such a big cultural component here. Why did the big boys of iced tea not go into the kids segment yet?"



Source: drinkbossi.com

One reason for their hesitation certainly is that children raised in the US over its history mainly have been weaned on milk, juices, water, soft drinks and other beverages. Another reason is that the caffeine that naturally occurs in many teas (though not rooibos) is not something parents want their children consuming. But the Venters had another explanation: "We determined that the answer was that they weren't that innovative, honestly, at this point in time," said Paul Venter.

The Venters were determined not to veer from their belief that rooibos tea could appeal to American kids, deciding against the temptation to market it as an adult beverage – despite the fact that "liquid teas in grocery are probably one of the biggest dollar-value growers these days," Paul Venter said, referring to fast-growing refrigerated brands such as Gold Peak, a Coca-Cola-owned brand. "There's some semblance of white space there. Yet most of these teas are caffeinated."

Yes, an adult-oriented rooibos tea may be in the brand's future, Paul Venter said. "But it made sense financially and investment-wise to go into a space that we believed was ownable first," he explained.

"We also made the call that as a company we believe in simplicity," Paul Venter said. "We also want to stick with our principles: We're going to market with exactly what it is. We don't want to sell Bossi as different from what it is, just present it as it is. We believe in it."

Another factor is that one of the fastest-growing demographic groups in America, Asians, do have cultures in which tea consumption by children as well as adults is a big deal. "Therein lies a big market as US demographics change," Paul Venter said.

And the Venters believed that rooibos tea could actually appeal to American kids taste-wise. "It's tasty and with a nice earthy sweetness," Paul Venter said. "It's got a woody flavour to it. You don't actually have to add a lot of sweetener or sugar to get wonderful flavours."

Contrast this attribute of rooibos tea, they said, with some of the other newer segments in the US beverage industry, including drinking vinegars and kombuchas. "They're very functional in what they're supposed to do and why people consume them, but in many cases they're very nasty-tasting drinks," Paul Venter said. "With kids, taste is non-negotiable. You can't just tell them it's healthy for their bodies. It's tasty iced tea, in kids' packaging. It was crafted with kids in mind."

Also, they said, they know how to properly blend and brew rooibos teas to bring out the right properties. Another advantage of rooibos is that it's naturally caffeine-free, so it doesn't need to undergo a decaffeination process as most caffeine-free teas do.

Organic positioning for Bossi Kids Tea also "definitely matters," Celia Venter said. "For our target market of parents who read ingredients and choose the best for their kids, being organic does matter."

The Venters worked for more than a year to develop the Bossi line before selling it initially just online. Now they've begun a 20-month plan to gain distribution in bricks-and-mortar retailers across America, focusing on the natural-foods channel.

"We've been pretty slow and deliberate in building up a distribution network," Venter said. "But we're onboarding retailers now."

LISTED ON MAGAZINE'S 50 HEALTHIEST FOODS OF ALL TIME, ROOIBOS TEA BOASTS A WIDE ARRAY OF HEALTH BENEFITS.

Source: drinkbossi.com

TABLE 1: NUTRITION SNAPSHOT, BOSSI MANGO ROOIBOS TEA

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 6.8 fl oz (200ml)
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 35	
Calories from fat 0	
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	0%
Sodium 0g	0%
Total Carbohydrates 9g	3%
Sugars 9g	
Protein 0g	0%

Not a significant source of Cholesterol, Dietary Fiber, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium and Iron

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet.

Polyphenols 50mg **

** Percent daily values not established

INGREDIENTS: Brewed Organic Rooibos Tea (Made with Filtered Water), Organic Cane Sugar, Organic Flavors and Non-GMO Citric Acid

Mfd. for Dist. by:
Bössi Inc.
San Diego, CA 92127

CERTIFIED ORGANIC BY OREGON TILTH OTCO

Source: drinkbossi.com

Non-cow's milk consumption is associated with lower height

Children who drink non-cow's milk – including other animal milk and plant-based milk beverages – are shorter than children who drink cow's milk, according to a new study.

This cross-sectional study of 5034 healthy Canadian children aged 24-72 months measured the volume of non-cow's milk consumption to determine the association between non-cow's milk consumption with height. The results show that for each daily cup of non-cow's milk they drank, children were 0.4cm shorter than average for their age, suggesting that the more non-cow's milk children drink, the lower their height. The results also showed that the height difference for a 3-year-old child consuming 3 cups of non-cow's milk compared to three cups of cow's milk per day was 1.5cm.

"The nutritional content of cow's milk is regulated in the United States and Canada, while the nutritional contents of most non-cow's milks are not," said lead author Dr. Jonathon Maguire, a paediatrician at St. Michael's Hospital. "The lack of regulation means the nutritional content varies widely from one non-cow's milk product to the next, particularly in the amount of protein and fat."

"If products are being marketed as being equivalent to cow's milk, as a consumer and a parent, I would like to know that they are in fact the same in terms of their effect on children's growth," said Dr. Maguire.

Source: Maguire, J.L. et al. Association between noncow milk beverage consumption and childhood height. The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 7 June 2017. DOI: 10.3945/ajcn.117.156877

Call for healthier gluten-free foods for kids

Scientists say gluten free items should be reformulated with healthier raw materials to ensure healthy childhood nutrition after a study found that gluten-free items have a significantly higher energy content and a different nutritional composition to their gluten-containing counterparts. Many of the gluten-containing products – especially breads, pastas, pizzas and flours – also contained up to three times more protein than their gluten free substitutes.

These imbalances could impact children's growth and increase the risk of childhood obesity, says the study, which assessed 654 gluten-free products, which were compared with 655 gluten-containing products. Further key findings include:

- Gluten-free breads had significantly higher content of lipids and saturated fatty acids
- Gluten-free pasta had significantly lower content of sugar and protein
- Gluten-free biscuits had significantly lower content of protein and significantly higher content of lipids

A gluten-free diet is followed as a life-long therapy for patients with coeliac disease, including children, which now affects around 1% of the European population. A growing number of people are also turning towards these products as a wellbeing choice, even when they are not diagnosed with coeliac disease.

ESPGHAN expert and lead researcher Dr Joaquim Calvo Lerma, explained: "As more and more people are following a gluten-free diet to effectively manage coeliac disease, it is imperative that foods marketed as substitutes are reformulated to ensure that they truly do have similar nutritional values. This is especially important for children, as a well-balanced diet is essential to healthy growth and development."

Experts are warning that consumers may not be aware of these unhealthy variances due to poor nutritional labelling.

Dr Sandra Martínez -Barona, fellow lead researcher, said the nutritional labelling on gluten-free products should be clearer. "Where nutritional values of gluten-free products do vary significantly from their gluten-containing counterparts…labelling needs to clearly indicate this so that patients, parents and carers can make informed decisions."

Source: Martínez-Barona, S., Calvo Lerma, J. et al. Comprehensive analysis of the nutritional profile of gluten-free products as compared to their gluten-containing counterparts. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition. Prague, Czech Republic, 11 May, 2017.

An egg a day keeps stunting away?

Early introduction of eggs significantly improves growth in young children and has the potential to contribute to global targets to reduce stunting, according to new study.

Researchers gave 80 children aged 6 to 9 months one egg per day for six months while another 84 children were given no eggs and served as a control group. Results showed a reduced prevalence of stunting by 47% and underweight by 74%. Children in the treatment group had higher dietary intakes of eggs and reduced intake of sugar-sweetened foods compared with the control group.

"In the past, some worried that giving eggs to infants might lead to allergic reactions or to elevated cholesterol levels, but research has not borne either of those hypotheses out, and the food appears to be safe and healthy for infants," study first author Lora Iannotti said.

Iannotti, L.L. et al. Eggs in Early Complementary Feeding and Child Growth: A Randomized Controlled Trial. Pediatrics, June 2017.

Eat eggs early to avoid allergies?

Introducing babies to certain foods earlier – and especially eggs – could help avoid food allergies. According to new findings from the Canadian Healthy Infant Longitudinal Development (CHILD) Study, delaying the introduction of potentially allergenic foods until after a baby's first year may increase the likelihood of a food allergy later on.

The research found that infants who avoided cow's milk products, egg and peanut during the first year of life were more likely to be sensitized to these foods at age one. Food sensitization early in life is associated with an increased risk of wheeze, asthma, eczema and allergic rhinitis in later childhood.

Using data from more than 2,100 Canadian children, the researchers found that:

- infants who avoided cow's milk products in their first year were nearly four times as likely to be sensitized to cow's milk compared to infants who consumed cow's milk products before 12 months
- infants who avoided egg or peanut in their first year were nearly twice as likely to be sensitized to those foods compared to infants who consumed them before 12 months

"Early introduction of eggs before one year of age seemed to be especially beneficial, as it significantly reduced the odds of developing sensitization to any of the three food allergens," said first author, Maxwell Tran, a BHSc graduate from McMaster University and an AllerGen trainee.

The study also revealed that most Canadian parents delay the introduction of potentially allergenic foods, particularly egg and peanut:

- only 3% of parents introduced egg before six months of age,
- just 1% of parents introduced peanut to their infants before six months of age
- 63% of parents avoided feeding peanut entirely during the first year of life

"Our findings support infant feeding guidelines that promote the introduction of foods such as cow's milk products, egg and peanut between four to six months of age," says Mr. Tran. "This is an important shift in thinking away from avoidance of potentially allergenic foods, toward their early introduction to reduce the risk of food allergy later on."

Tran MM et al, Pediatric Allergy and Immunology, doi: 10.1111/pai.12739

New measure of teen weight is more accurate

Everyone knows to use BMI to measure overweight and obesity. But new research suggests that for children aged 8 to 17, a new test called TMI is more accurate. TMI, or tri-ponderal mass index, uses the formula of weight divided by height cubed (instead of squared).

"Treating obesity in adolescents requires an accurate diagnosis first," said lead scientist Courtney Peterson, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the School of Health Professions at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. "We found that TMI is both more accurate and easier to use than BMI percentiles. These new findings have the power to potentially change the way we diagnose obesity in children and adolescents ages 8 to 17."

"BMI is a pretty good tool for determining whether adults are overweight or obese," Peterson said. "But we've always kind of known that it doesn't work as well in children."

The relationship between body weight and height is much more complex in children and adolescents than it is in adults, particularly when adolescents are rapidly growing.

Using BMI percentiles, researchers noted that adolescents are incorrectly diagnosed as overweight 19.4% of the time, versus an only 8.4% incorrect overweight diagnosis rate for TMI. The data showed this is especially true for lean adolescents, a significant fraction of whom are incorrectly being diagnosed as overweight.

"These findings are important," Peterson said. "Many school districts send home report cards labeling adolescents as overweight, and children and adolescents tend to be more vulnerable to weight bias and fat shaming than adults."

"Ultimately, we hope this research lays the foundation for improving the health of adolescents, and we think that down the road TMI will likely replace BMI for children and adolescents," Peterson said.

Courtney M. Peterson et al, JAMA Pediatrics, 2017; DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2017.0460

Pregnancy diet high in refined grains could increase child obesity

Children born to women with gestational diabetes whose diet included high proportions of refined grains may have a higher risk of obesity by age seven, compared to children born to women with gestational diabetes who ate low proportions of refined grains, according to results from a National Institutes of Health study.

The researchers compared records from 918 mother-child pairs and found that children born to women with gestational diabetes who consumed the most refined grain (more than 156 grams per day) were twice as likely to be obese at age seven, compared to children born to women with gestational diabetes who ate the least amount of refined grain (less than 37 grams per day).

Gestational diabetes, or high blood sugar during pregnancy, affects about 5% of all pregnancies in the US and may lead to health problems for mothers and newborns. The authors called for additional studies to confirm their results and to follow children through later childhood, adolescence and adulthood to see if the obesity risk persists later in life.

Source: Zhu, Y. et al. Maternal dietary intakes of refined grains during pregnancy and growth through the first 7 years of life among children born to women with gestational diabetes. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 7 June 2017. DOI: 10.3945/ajcn.116.136291

Ethnicity, breastfeeding affect gut microbiota

Findings of a new study reveal that ethnicity and infant feeding practices independently affect the gut microbiota at one year of age.

Although a stable microbiome may not be established until one-to-three years after birth, the infant gut microbiota appears to be an important factor predictor of health outcomes in later life.

Researchers obtained stool at one year of age from 173 white Caucasian and 182 South Asian infants from two Canadian birth cohorts to gain insight into how maternal and early infancy exposures influence the development of the gut microbiota. They examined whether the infant gut microbiota differed by ethnicity and by breastfeeding status.

"Our study looks at the microbial population in the gastrointestinal tract of infants at a formative stage of life when metabolic set points are being established," said Jennifer Stearns, the study's first author.

The results show that ethnicity and infant feeding practices independently influence the infant gut microbiome in the first year of life.

"This study sets the stage for in-depth study of the South Asian gut microbiome as people transition to a western lifestyle here in Canada, a process that likely contributes to this population's higher risk for obesity, Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases," said Stearns.

Source: Stearns, J.C. et al. Ethnic and diet-related differences in the healthy infant microbiome. Genome Medicine, 2017. DOI: 10.1186/s13073-017-0421-5

Prebiotics new tool against obesity?

Prebiotics reduce body fat in children who are overweight or obese by altering their gut microbiota, according to new research. This may soon be a new tool in the fight against childhood obesity.

Researchers performed a double-blind, placebo-controlled trial with 42 children ages seven to 12 years old who were classified as overweight or obese but otherwise healthy. Participants were randomly assigned to groups given either the prebiotic fibre — oligofructose-enriched inulin (provided as a white powder, mixed in water) — or a placebo, once daily for 16 weeks.

Based on four-month intervention data, the annual projected body weight increase in the prebiotic group would be 3 kg (6.6lb), whereas the projected increase in the placebo group was 8 kg (17.6lb), almost triple the expected yearly weight increase.

"Powdered fibre, mixed in a water bottle, taken once a day is all we asked the children to change, and we got, what we consider, some pretty exciting results — it has been fantastic," said Raylene A. Reimer, PhD, RD, professor and researcher in the Faculty of Kinesiology at University of Calgary, who led the study.

The metabolic and microbial findings from this study provide a foundation for a larger clinical trial in the pediatric population, said the authors, adding that prebiotics were inexpensive and non-invasive and therefore a plausible dietary treatment in the overweight and obese pediatric population.

Source: Nicolucci, A.C. et al. Prebiotic Reduces Body Fat and Alters Intestinal Microbiota in Children With Overweight or Obesity. Gastroenterology, 2017. DOI: 10.1053/j.gastro.2017.05.055

FUNCTIONAL & HEALTHY-EATING NEW PRODUCT LAUNCHES

Each issue we summarise new kids' nutritional product launches from around the world.

All new product information is sourced exclusively from Mintel's GNPD (Global New Products Database), which can be visited at www.gnpd.com. Mintel can be contacted at 18-19 Long Lane, London EC1A 9PL, U.K.. Tel. +44-(0)20-7606-4533, Fax +44-(0)20-7600-3327

PART 1: USA AND CANADA – FOOD & BEVERAGES

Country	Company	Brand & Product	Description
BABY FOOD			
USA	Wal-Mart	Parent's Choice Organic Corn Pudding	USDA organic and free from artificial colors, flavors and preservatives.
USA	Wal-Mart	Parent's Choice Organic Pear, Mango and Spinach Baby Food	Made with real fruits and vegetables, the product contains no artificial colors, flavors or GMOs, and has been USDA certified organic.
USA	Fresh Bellies	Fresh Bellies Palates in Training Apple of My Eye Fruit Purée	Fruit puree with apple, blueberry and mint. It is free from GMOs, preservatives and added sweeteners, and helps the baby's palate grow using honest ingredients and flavors.
USA	Hain Celestial Group	Earth's Best Organic Organic Dairy - No Added DHA/ARA Infant Formula with Iron	Designed for families that want an organic infant formula without added DHA and ARA. Contains lutein for eyes and prebiotics for immunity, and has no added corn syrup solids or GMO ingredients.
USA	Yummy Spoonfuls	Yummy Spoonfuls Lentil & Carrot Organic Food for Tots	The product is organic and free from preservatives, GMO, artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners, gluten, processed purees and fillers.
USA	Kroger	Comforts for Toddler Asian Pear Fruit Crisps	Contain 100% freeze-dried fruit with about one and a half Asian pears per bag. Free from gluten, soy, dairy, additives and preservatives.
Canada	United Grocers	Simply Kids 100% Petit Organic Apple & Strawberry Wholegrain Puffs	Simply Kids 100% Petit Organic Apple & Strawberry Wholegrain Puffs are now available. These kosher certified puffs are sweetened with fruit juice, and contain no added salt, artificial colours or flavours, or gluten. They are said to be perfect for little hands, and retail in a BPA-free 42g pack featuring the Canada Organic logo.
USA	Stop & Shop Supermarket	Nature's Promise Organic Apple Strawberry Wholegrain Puffs	This organic product is a finger food for babies, sweetened with 100% fruit juice and free from gluten.
USA	Nestlé	Gerber Lil' Beanies White Cheddar & Broccoli Baked Snacks	Snacks made with beans, free from genetically modified ingredients and artificial flavors, colors or preservatives. Contains 2g protein, 1g fiber and 10% daily value of vitamin E.
BAKERY			
USA	Annie's Homegrown	Annie's Homegrown Organic Honey Bunny Grahams	The organic snacks are free from GMOS, artificial flavors, synthetic colors, synthetic preservatives, high-fructose corn syrup, persistent pesticides, toxic substances, synthetic fertilizers, antibiotics or added growth hormones.
USA	Enjoy Life Natural Brands	Enjoy Life Snickerdoodle Soft Baked Minis	A gluten-free and non-GMO product that contains nothing artificial. Free from the eight most common allergens including wheat, dairy, peanuts, tree nuts, egg, soy, fish and shellfish. Also made without casein, potato, sesame and sulphites.
Canada	Weston Bakeries	Country P'tits Pains de la Moisson Wild Blueberry Flat Bread	Made with whole grains, real fruit, flaxseeds and oats. Contains no artificial flavours or colours and is a source of fibre, iron and energy. Each 75g portion provides 15g of whole grains, 5g of fibre, 7g of protein and 3g of real fruit.
USA	Hain Celestial Group	Earth's Best KidSafe Cinnamon Oat Mini Cookies	Snack sized cookies that are free from gluten, tree nuts, peanuts, GMOs, artificial flavors or preservatives.
BREAKFAST CEREALS			
USA	General Mills	General Mills Cinnamon Toast Crunch Crispy Sweetened Whole Wheat & Rice Cereal	A diabetic product that is free from high fructose corn syrup, artificial colors and flavors. Made with whole grains as the first ingredient, provides 9g of sugar and at least 12g of whole grains per serving.
USA	18 Rabbits	18 Rabbits Organics Cherry, Chia & Vanilla Granola	A gluten free, low sugar product that includes organic granola with honey, sunflower, pumpkin and sesame seed. The product contains no refined sugar.
USA	Love Grown Foods	Love Grown Raisin Almond Crunch Oat Clusters	The vegan and wholegrain product is free of high fructose corn syrup, gluten, trans fat, artificial flavors, hydrogenated oils, preservatives, GMOs and is very low in sodium.
USA	18 Rabbits	18 Rabbits Jr. Mango Strawberry Organic Granola Cereal	Organic, gluten free low sugar product that comprises mangoes, chia, crispy brown rice, sunflower and pumpkin seeds and wholegrain oats.
USA	Post Consumer Brands	Post Honey Bunches of Oats Crispy Cereal with Almonds	The product is free from high fructose corn syrup and contains 10g of wholegrain per serving.
USA	Post Consumer Brands	Post Honey Bunches of Oats Cereal with Real Strawberries	Made with real tasty strawberries, contains 10g of wholegrain per serving and is free from high fructose corn syrup.
CHOCOLATE CONFECTIONERY			
USA	The Hershey Company	Hershey's Milk Chocolate with Almonds	A gluten free product that is said to have almonds in every bite.
DAIRY			
Canada	General Mills	Yoplait Tubes Strawberry Banana and Fruit Punch Flavoured Yogurts	A naturally flavoured product that contains 2% milk fat and is free from artificial colours and gelatin. A source of calcium, made with vitamin D fortified skim milk. The product retails in a 480g pack containing eight 60g units.
USA	Horizon Organic Dairy	Horizon Organic Organic Colby Cheese Sticks	Organic product that constitutes a good source of calcium, is free from GMOs, preservatives, rennet and artificial colors and flavors. The product contains 100 calories and 7g protein per stick.
USA	Fairlife	Fairlife SuperKids Chocolate Reduced Fat Ultra-Filtered Milk with DHA Omega-3	Lactose free milk drink that provides 12g protein per serving and 35% daily value of calcium. Contains 38% less fat than whole ultra-filtered milk. The milk is homogenized, ultra heat treated and an excellent source of vitamins A, C, D, and E.

USA	Fairlife	Fairlife SuperKids Reduced Fat Ultra-Filtered Milk	The product is said to provide 125mg of DHA omega-3, 12g protein and 35% daily value of calcium per serving. The product is lactose free and contains 43% less fat than whole ultra-filtered milk.
JUICE DRINKS			
USA	Cheribundi	Cheribundi Cheribuddy Cherry-licious Apple Drink	Free from GMO, gluten, added sugar, preservatives and artificial flavours. Contains tart cherry juice, which could help enhance sleep, reduce inflammation and promote overall good health. This drink contains 50% juice.
MEALS & MEAL CENTERS			
USA	Luvme Foods	Luv Me Foods Organic Peanut Butter & Strawberry Jelly Sandwich	Made with responsibly sourced palm oil, these vegan sandwiches for children are free from GMO, high fructose corn syrup, artificial ingredients, colors and preservatives.
USA	Kraft Heinz Foods	Kraft Macaroni & Cheese Dinner	Despicable Me Minion shaped pasta that contains no artificial preservatives, artificial flavors or artificial colourings.
PROCESSED FISH, MEAT & EGG PRODUCTS			
Canada	Gray Ridge Egg Farms	Foodland Gold Egg Omega-3 Large Brown Eggs	An excellent source of protein and vitamin E. Each 53g egg contains 0.075g of DHA omega-3 polyunsaturates that supports the normal physical development of the brain, eyes and nerves. One large egg contains 6g protein, which is an essential element for building and repairing muscles, organs, skin, hair and other tissues. Protein is also needed to produce hormones, enzymes and antibodies.
SAUCES & SEASONINGS			
USA	GLK Foods	Oh Snap! Pickling Co. Dilly Bites Fresh Dill Pickle Snacking Cuts	This product is made with non-GMO cucumbers, is fresh packed and is free from fat, gluten and added brine. It is recommended for on the go snacking and lunchboxes.
SAVOURY SPREADS			
Canada	Aliments Fontaine Santé	Fontaine Santé Traditional Mini Hummus	A source of fibre and iron that is made with natural ingredients and is suitable for vegans. Free from preservatives, gluten, GMOs, trans fat and cholesterol.
SNACKS			
USA	Better Living Brands	Signature Kitchens Squeeze & Go Carrot, Mango & Orange Apple Sauce Pouches	Gluten free snack product made with real fruit and vegetables.
USA	FreshKids	Fresh Kids Whole Grain and Honey Kissed Pretzel Sticks	Free from nuts, GMO ingredients, high fructose corn syrup, partially hydrogenated oils, trans fat and anything artificial. Retails in a 50-oz. pack containing 50 x 1-oz. individual trays.
USA	Quaker Oats	Quaker Chewy Chocolate Chip Less Sugar Granola Bars	Contains 25% less sugar than the regular chocolate chip flavor, is made with real chocolate chips, contains 0g of trans fat and offers 8g or more of whole grain per serving.
USA	Kellogg	Kellogg's Despicable Me Minion Made Assorted Fruit Flavored Snacks	This naturally and artificially flavored product is targeted at children and is made with fruit puree, which is equal to 20% fruit. It provides 70 calories and 100% daily value of vitamin C per pouch, and is free from fat and gluten.
USA	Stauffer Biscuit Company	Stauffer's Whales Cheddar Cheese Baked Cheese Crackers	A children-oriented product that is made with real cheese and is free from trans fat, high fructose corn syrup, artificial colors and flavors.
USA	18 Rabbits	18 Rabbits Jr. Organics Mango Strawberry Organic Granola Bar	Organic product made with mangoes, strawberries, chia, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds and wholegrain oats. Free from GMO, soy, gluten and dairy.
USA	Plum	Plum Kids Shredz Organic Berry 'Licious Real Fruit Snacks	This on-the-go product contains a full serving of fruit. It is made with 97% real fruit, is organic certified, and does not contain genetically modified ingredients, high corn fructose syrup, trans fats, or artificial flavors or preservatives.
USA	Braxton Place	Go Chews By Momme Meals Fig Ginger Sesame Energy Snacks	Organic snacks that contain 4g protein, 4g fibre, 24mcg folate and 44mg calcium per 40g serving. The product is free from gluten, peanut, dairy and soy. The product contains lean proteins, healthy fats and complex carbs for athletes; folate, calcium and natural lactogenics for pregnant and nursing women; zinc, vitamin E, potassium and magnesium for recovery; and is said to be healthy and bite sized whole food for kids.
USA	Utz Quality Foods	Utz Cotton Tails	Mini white cheddar cheese balls, gluten free and made with real cheese. The packet contains 25 x 0.2-oz treat units.
USA	Pure Growth Organic Foods	Pure Growth Organic Cinnamon Brown Sugar Breakfast Bars	Organic breakfast bars aimed at children.
USA	Pure Growth Organic Foods	Pure Growth Organic White Cheddar Popcorn	The organic product is free from trans fat, artificial colors, flavors and gluten, and contains 8g whole grains per serving.
Canada	JimmyBar!	Mini JimmyBar! Super Hip Chocolate Chip Clean Snack Bar	Free from gluten, dairy, artificial sweeteners and preservatives. Provides under 100 calories per serving.
USA	Plum	Plum Kids Shredz Organic Rooty Blues Fruit & Veggie Snack	This on-the-go product contains blueberries and carrots, is organic, and does not contain genetically modified ingredients, high corn fructose syrup, trans fats, artificial flavors or preservatives.
SPORTS & ENERGY DRINKS			
USA	Kraft Heinz Foods	Capri Sun Sport Citrus Rush Flavored Water Beverage	The product is described as hydration for active kids and contains a blend of electrolytes and water. It is free from high fructose corn syrup, artificial colors, flavors and preservatives. With 25% fewer calories than leading regular sports drinks.
WATER			
USA	Hapi Drinks	Hapi Water Apple Joy Fortified Water Beverage	Kids drink aimed to face the childhood obesity and type II diabetes. It is naturally sweetened, contains nothing artificial and is a good source of vitamin C. It contains only 10 calories per pouch and 0g of sugar.
USA	True Drinks	Aqua Ball Zero Sugar! Fruit Punch Naturally Flavored Water Drink	A good source of vitamins B3, B5, B6, C. It contains no sugar, preservatives, calories, artificial colors or artificial flavors and is a healthy hydration option for kids. Sweetened with stevia, contains 0% juice, and is free from high fructose corn syrup.
USA	Nestlé Waters	Nestlé Pure Life Purified Water	Purified water targeted at kids, which has been enhanced with minerals for taste, and purified using reverse osmosis or distillation.

Country	Company	Brand & Product	Description
PART 2: REST OF THE WORLD – FOODS & BEVERAGES			
BABY FOOD			
China	Kiddylicious International	Kiddylicious Blueberry Fruit Puffs	Made with real fruit with no added gluten, preservatives and artificial additives including flavour or colours, salt or sugar, gluten, nuts, sesame seeds or egg.
Czech Republic	Rej	Rej Buckwheat Crisps	This product is a source of fibre, contains more than 13% protein and no gluten, GMO or added salt.
India	Early Foods	Early Foods Almond & Date Health Drink Mix	A rich source of protein and dietary fibre. Free of preservatives, colours or artificial flavours. With a reduced sugar content, where part of the sugar is substituted with dates. The drink aids good night's sleep while almonds and dates heal the digestive system.
Indonesia	Indofood CBP Sukses Makmur	Indofood Nutrition Promina Cheese Flavoured Arrowroot Biscuits	High in calcium, protein and iron and contains vitamin A with fish oil, nine vitamins and five minerals. A good source of fibre.
Italy	Plasmon Dietetici Alimentari	Plasmon Oasi nella Crescita Gluten-Free Baby Biscuits	Gluten-free and contains calcium, selected B vitamins, selected minerals and iron to support growth. It is made with the following strictly selected ingredients: rice flour, without eggs, palm oil, colourings and preservatives.
Japan	Morinaga Milk Industry	Morinaga Yasai Wo Motto! 20 Vegetable & Fruit Drink	A vegetable & fruit drink that contains 20 fruits and vegetables. Free from added sugar, artificial colours, flavouring and preservatives.
Russia	VkusVill	Izbënka Pear Flavoured Bifilife Fermented Milk	Recommended as a dietary supplement in case of intestinal dysbiosis, viral and bacterial intestinal infections, digestive tract and metabolic disorders. It is said to restore and support healthy microflora.
South Korea	Miznco	Miznco Wooriaedeulbapsang Easy Food In 3 Minutes Korean Beef Bone Soup & Seaweed Rice Porridge	Made with 78% popped organic rice, 3% dried seaweed and 0.88% beef leg bone concentrate powder.
South Korea	Yugginongsan	Organic Story Yuginong Baby Organic Aronia Baby Puff	Made with organic ingredients including brown rice, aronia, milk and butter. Contains organic yogurt for healthy intestines and is free from synthetic additives and colourings.
BAKERY			
Germany	Brandt Zwieback-Schokoladen	Brandt Lactose-Free Rusks	Lactose free with 30% less sugar than the original product. Free from preservatives and artificial flavours.
Malaysia	Andean Valley	Andean Valley Gluten Free Red Royal Quinoa Precooked Flour	Flour with high quality proteins, essential amino acids, vitamins, iron, phosphorus, calcium and magnesium. Quinoa has more protein and fewer carbohydrates than rice, corn, barley and wheat. The product can contribute to the development of the human brain and ease bowel movements.
Puerto Rico	Enjoy Life Natural Brands	Enjoy Life Crunchy Vanilla Honey Graham Minis	The cookies are free from the eight common allergens: wheat, dairy, peanuts, tree nuts, egg, soy, fish and shellfish. They are also made without casein, potato, sesame and sulfites.
UK	Nairn's	Nairn's Gluten Free Berry Astro Bites Mini Wholegrain Oat Biscuits	Contains 50% less sugar than the average children's biscuit. Free from gluten, artificial colours, flavours, preservatives, hydrogenated fat or GM ingredients, and is high in fibre. These vegan biscuits are made with sustainable palm fruit oil.
BREAKFAST CEREALS			
Germany	Dr. August Oetker Nahrungsmittel	Dr. Oetker Vitalis Knusper Pop Muesli with Popcorn & Chocolate	Breakfast cereal made with crunchy popcorn and airy milk chocolate.
New Zealand	Blue Frog	Blue Frog Banana Choc Crunch Popped Buckwheat Cereal	With buckwheat, chia seed, cocoa and bananas. The cereal is low in salt, contains less than 4g of sugar per serve, has no sulphites, added dairy or refined sugar.
New Zealand	Harraway & Sons	Harraways Oat Singles Chia, Coconut & Cranberry Celebration Oat Porridge	Oats and oat bran mixed with chia seeds, natural coconut flavour and cranberries. A source of fibre and protein.
Poland	Milzu!	Milzu! Rye, Oat & Cocoa Cereal for Mind	Made with rye, oats and cocoa, contains antioxidants, fibre, B vitamins, and minerals such as iron, phosphorus, zinc and magnesium. It is free from artificial additives, fat and GMO and is said to be good for the mind.
South Africa	Nestlé	Nestlé Milo Duo Energy Cereal	The product is a source of five vitamins, iron and calcium and is said to be delicious and to restore energy.
Ukraine	Healthy Tradition	Healthy Tradition Gluten Free Mulberry and Sea Buckthorn Raw Granola	Free from sugar, sweeteners, oils, preservatives, gluten, lactose and GMO. The ingredients undergo a minimal heat treatment process to preserve vitamins and minerals.
DAIRY			
China	Lulu Group	Lulu / Lu Lu / Lolo Mini Almond Milk	Made using selected almonds and contains more than or equal to 1.2g plant protein. It is rich in vitamins, dietary fibres and trace elements including calcium, iron, magnesium and zinc. Said to aid in child's growth.
China	Mengniu Dairy Products	Mengniu / Mönmilk Future Star Children's Growth Drink	The product is made with whey protein powder and features a galacto-oligosaccharides and oligosaccharides ratio of 9:1. It has a "Jia Zhi" style, which is said to be good for the brain, and retails in a newly designed pack containing 15 x 190ml units.
Hong Kong	Wangnamyen Dairy Co-operative	Cow & Gate Milk+ Milk Beverage	Formulated with SCGOS:ICFOS 9:1 (0.4g/100ml) and DHA for a better digestive system. It is also enriched with 12 vitamins, three minerals, DHA, and omega-3.

Norway	Tine	Tine Sprett PLUSS Yogurt with Fruit & Vegetables	A yogurt that contains 25% of fruits, berries and vegetables and a reduced lactose content. A natural source of calcium, the yogurt is fortified with vitamin D which is important for strong bones.
South Korea	Dr. Chung's Food	Dr. Chung's Food Vegemil Sprouted Small Black Bean Soy Milk	Milk beverage made with soybeans and sprouted black beans that contains increased isoflavone, minerals and amino acids. This soy milk contains 4mg added gaba for nutritional benefits. It also contains 200mg (29% DV) calcium and is rich in vitamin D3, which support healthy bones. Sweetened with allulose, the drink is 40% lower in calories compared to regular soy drinks.
South Korea	Seoul F&B	Barbapapa Healthy Milk	The HACCP certified product contains double calcium than standard white milk and vitamin D3 for calcium absorption. This is beneficial for bone health.
Vietnam	International Food and Beverage	Götz Orange Flavoured Nutritious Milk	Milk drink enriched with vitamin A and D to support eyesight and B vitamins to support digestion and provide energy for a whole active day.
DESSERTS & ICE CREAM			
Costa Rica	Safrunat	Anela Fruits Apple Strawberry Dessert	Made with 100% fruit and contains no added sugar, colorings or preservatives. This product is suitable for coeliacs and said to be an easy way to give fruit to children.
France	Mont Blanc	Mont Blanc Récré O'lé Biscuit Flavoured Milk Dessert	A source of vitamin D and calcium for bone development, and contains no artificial colourings, flavourings or preservatives.
Peru	Industria Ecoalimentaria	Suiti Maca Pudding	A powdered mixture to prepare maca pudding. Maca is renowned for its high concentration of protein, calcium, iron, phosphorus and essential vitamins, including B1, B2, B12, C, E. Said to provide physical and intellectual energy at school, university, or work.
UK	Perfect World Ice Cream	Perfect World Dairy-Free Mint Chocolate Chip Ice Cream	A non-dairy mint flavoured ice cream with chocolate chips and sweeteners. It is a natural source of protein, which contributes to a growth in muscle mass; phosphorus, which is needed for the normal growth and development of bone in children; and vitamin E and manganese, which contribute to the protection of cells from oxidative stress. The product is high in monounsaturated fat, which contributes to the maintenance of normal blood cholesterol levels, and dietary fibre. It contains no added sugar, gluten, wheat or soya.
HOT BEVERAGES			
Hong Kong	J & Food Corpotation	Chung Jung One Organic Barley Tea for Kids	100% organic barley tea made with Korean barley. It is free from caffeine, calories, bleach, artificial flavourings and colourings, and is said to replenish liquids and aids digestion.
Taiwan	AB Food & Beverages	Ovaltine Hi-Ca Malted Milk Drink	Especially designed for children to help with learning and growing. The drink contains four minerals, eight vitamins, eight amino acids and dietary fiber. Can help with digestion, bone health, metabolism, and helps maintain a healthy nervous system while helping with red blood cell formation.
JUICE DRINKS			
Germany	Antidote	Antidote Juice Karotte Kid Juice	The juice is 100% cold pressed, non-pasteurised, free from additives and organic. Made with orange, carrot, lemon and turmeric. The product is a source of potassium, which contributes to the maintenance of normal function of the nervous system and muscles.
Germany	Haus Rabenhorst	Rotbäckchen Eye Sight Juice for Children	A multi fruit juice enriched with vitamin A from beta carotene and vitamin B2 to maintain good vision.
Greece	Coca-Cola	Amita Fun! Carrot Cocktail	100% natural juice made from concentrate, enriched with vitamins B, C and E.
Indonesia	Nugra Karsera	Fiberkid Fibre Drink with Refreshing Lychee Flavour	The juice is a source of fibre and is low in sugar.
UK	Happy Monkey	Happy Monkey Fruit & Vegetable Smoothies Orange, Carrot & Parsnip Smoothies	Made from a blend of crushed fruit and vegetables, fruit juice from concentrate and natural flavouring. With no added sugar, bits, additives or sweeteners. The product provides one of five a day of fruit and vegetables intake, and retails in a pack with four 180ml recyclable cartons.
UK	Innocent	Innocent Smoothie with Tasty Veg Just for Kids Strawberries, Apples & Beetroot Smoothies	Made with a blend of 100% pure whole crushed fruit and juices that are free from added sugar, preservatives and concentrate. It counts towards one of the five-a-day and retails in a recyclable pack containing four180ml units.
MEALS & MEAL CENTERS			
Mexico	Marindustrias	Tuny Kids Yellowfin Tuna Loin with Mac & Cheese	This product is a natural source of omega 3 and omega 6, contains 98 calories per pack and is ideal for kids since it contains the benefits of tuna with an irresistible mac and cheese flavor.
South Africa	Shoprite Checkers	Oh My Goodness! Chicken, Bacon & Corn Pie	Free range chicken breast pieces with bacon and sweetcorn in a cheese sauce topped with sweet potato mash. Free from MSG, added colours, added flavours, added preservatives, added sugar and salt. Said to be high in vitamin A, suitable for home freezing and ideal for busy mums and fussy kids.
Thailand	Dairyworks	Dairyworks Edam Natural Cheese & Rice Crackers	These rice crackers contain 26% less fat than cheddar cheese and are free from gluten.
UK	Mondelez	Dairylea Lunchables Stackers Pepperoni Pizza	Pizza flavoured wheat crackers with cooked and cured pepperoni slices, and cheese slices. Provides a good source of calcium, is free from artificial colours or flavours, and contains vitamin D which contributes to normal absorption of calcium.
OTHER BEVERAGES			
Germany	Nusweet	Nusweet Gourmet Chocolate Drink Powder for Kids	This product combines cocoa with coconut sugar, and is gluten- and lactose-free. It features a low Glycemic Index, is ecologically sustainable, and is said to be an alternative to chocolate drinks with regular sugar.

Germany	Sidroga Gesellschaft für Gesundheitsprodukte	Sidroga TEExpress Fruity Fox Preparation for Tea-Like Drinks	The 100% vegetable tea drink instantly dissolves in cold or warm water and is said to be teeth-friendly. It is free from added flavours.
Italy	Dolfin	Dolfin Polaretti MagicMilk Strawberry Flavoured Straws	This product contains soluble microspheres which are said to enhance the taste of cold or hot milk, has been enriched with vitamin D and is free from gluten, preservatives and colours. It retails in a 30g pack containing five 6g units.
Mexico	Yma Foods	Yumma Superfoods Loving Cacao Superfood Blend for Kids	100% natural chocolate powder which is said to be high in protein. Provides long lasting energy and good nutrition for healthy weight, better concentration, and a happy mood. This vegan and organic product has a low glycemic index, and is free from gluten, lactose and additives.
Peru	Molitalia	3 Ositos Oat and chocolate drink mix	A malt-based drink powder with oats, milk, chocolate, fiber, vitamins and minerals. The product is high in minerals, such as iron, which contributes to the psychomotor development of the children; selenium and zinc, which strengthen the immune system and contribute to good development and growth.
South Africa	Honeyfields	Honeyfields Milky Bubbles Bubblegum Milk Flavouring Syrup	The product can be used to make delicious milkshakes by just adding milk.
Sri Lanka	MTR Foods	MTR Daily Favourites Almond Drink Mix	A drink mix for kids that can be mixed with hot or cold milk. This vegetarian product is made with real almond pieces, cardamom and real saffron, which are good for the body and mind, and are said to boost immunity and strength. It is free from any added chemicals or artificial flavours.
PROCESSED FISH, MEAT AND EGG PRODUCTS			
Poland	Indykpol	Indykpol Jedyneczki Kids snack sausages	Snack sausages aimed at children. Free from gluten, monosodium glutamate and phosphates. The product contains 30% less salt and retails in a 200g pack containing four individually packed units.
SAVOURY SPREADS			
Spain	Carnes y Vegetales	Apis York Ham Cream	This smooth and tasty cream is said to be easily spreadable, a source of proteins, and is said to represent a nutritious and tasty way for children to enjoy lunch or a midday snack.
SNACKS			
China	Han Xiu Food	Hanhaimama Seaweed for Children	A flavoured and ready to eat seaweed product aimed at children.
Colombia	FLP Procesados	CasaLuker Luki Pear, Pineapple and Orange Squeezable Fruit	This limited edition product is formulated for kids, is free from added sugar, preservatives, colorings, flour and thickeners. It is ready to drink, made with 100% fruit, and retails in 200g pack containing two 100g units.
India	Firmroots	Piñata Spinach & Lime Puffs	These puffs contain spinach, which is a good source of vitamin C, vitamin A and minerals, especially iron. The 100% natural product is suitable for vegetarians and contains no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives.
New Zealand	Nutrition Fit	Elm's Power Cookies Chocolate Cranberry Craze Energy Snack	Made using gluten-free ingredients and is a source of fibre. It is a product that provides slow-burning energy and is said to be beneficial as fuel for exercise, for feeding sporty kids or for eating on the go.
Poland	Bakalland	Bakalland Ba! Cocoa & Milk Bar	A cocoa and milk flavoured cereal bar with white chocolate coating. Contains no glucose syrup and hydrogenated fats, and is a source of natural fibre.
Poland	Sophus Choice	Pure by Sophus' Choice Apple, Banana, Blueberry & Beet Organic Puree	A natural and 100% organic puree of apple, banana, blueberry and beet.
Singapore	Kono	Annies Apple and Boysenberry 100% Fruit Bar	Gluten free and contains no added sugar or preservatives. The bar is made by air drying 100% fruit pulp.
Spain	Findus	Findus Mini Chefs Vegetable Sticks	The product can be prepared in only three minutes. It is said to be a fun and delicious option for children who do not like to eat vegetables. These breaded sticks with vegetables contain no preservatives or colourings.
SWEET SPREADS			
Italy	Luigi Zàini	Zaini Crockki Hazelnut and Cocoa Spread with Crunchy Cereals	Contains wheat germ and is rich in fibre. It retails in a 18g pack, featuring the Disney Cars design.
SUGAR & GUM CONFECTIONERY			
China	Kracie Foods	Kracie Chiiku Kashi Popin' Cookin' Sushi Shaped Candy Kit	Contains no fruit juice, and just requires the addition of water to make.
Germany	August Storck	Storck Nimm2 Lachgummi Eierköppe Fruit Gummies with Vitamins	The product contains fruit juice and skimmed milk, and is enriched with niacin, vitamin E, pantothenic acid, vitamin B6, biotin and vitamin B12.
Hong Kong	Bean Stalk Snow	Bean Stalk Hakira Blueberry Flavour Tablet	A sugar-free product catered for babies aged around 1.5 years old onwards when the back teeth are growing. It is designed to remove Streptococcus mutans and contains egg yolk antibody Ovalgen DC and xylitol to prevent tooth decay.
The Netherlands	Salveo Pharma	Isla Junior C ough and Sore Throat Relief Lozenges	Claimed to protect dry and irritated oral mucous membrane and soothe sore throats, coughs and hoarseness. Sugar free and contain Iceland moss plant extract, vitamin C, zinc and calcium pantothenate.
WATER			
Belgium	Pip Organic	Pip Organic Mango, Orange and Apple with Spring Water	The product contains one of five a day, has no added sugar, nasty additives or GMO fruit.
Finland	Hartwall	Hartwall Novelle Ice Cream Summer Flavoured Children's Water	Flavoured spring water which contains natural flavours and is free from sugar.

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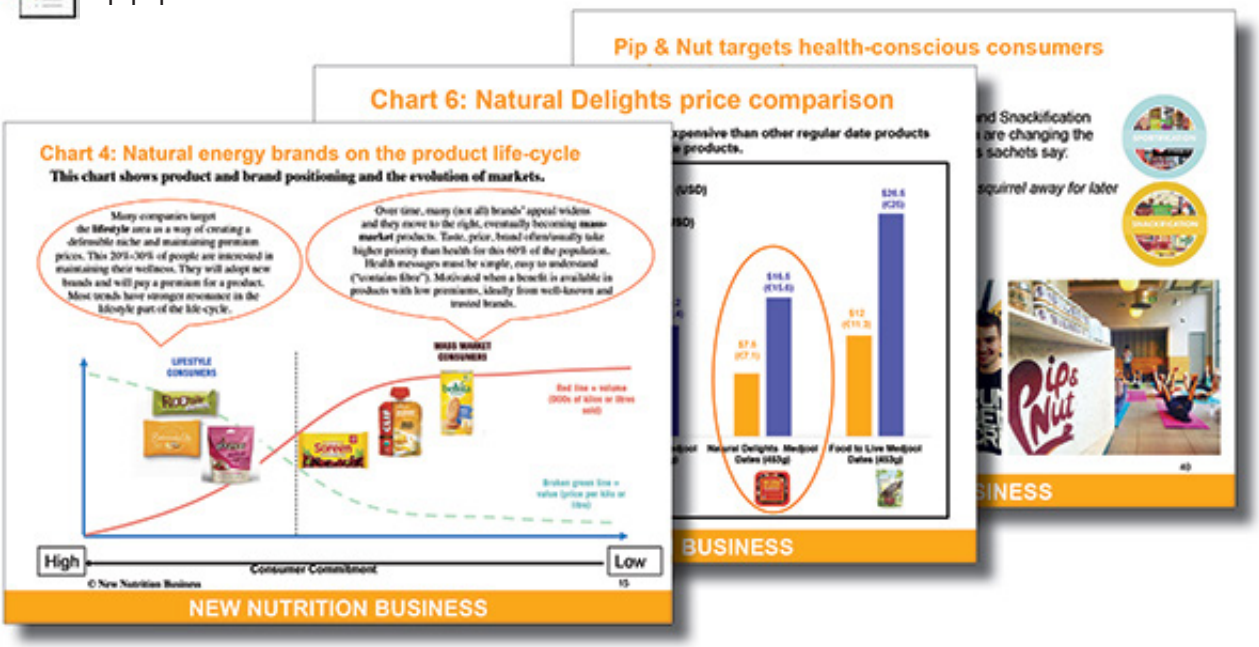

Energy is a key consumer need, consistently among consumers' top-5 or top-6 needs.

This large, successful and profitable market has so far been dominated by fast energy – caffeine-based stimulation drinks. But most consumers want their energy from something they perceive as more natural. Only a small number of brands have connected to this need, but those that have are seeing consistent growth, often at premium prices, and include some mass-market success stories as well as lifestyle brands.

Energy as a key benefit has proven its strength and some of the most successful brands have connected to it. It is a trend that will endure as it connects to consumer needs. However, so far few brands have found the formula for success.

In this report we identify the five factors of success for natural energy that any product developer can apply and use, illustrated by eight detailed case studies of ingredients and brands.

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NEW

Fermentation: how to make a trend into an opportunity

Published February 2017

PDF

If you have any doubts about the growth potential of the fermented foods trend, dismiss them now. The sign that fermentation has reached its tipping point came with the decision by PepsiCo, the world's second-biggest food and beverage company, to acquire fermented drinks maker KeVita.

Seven powerful elements are lining up in favour of fermentation, from its connection to the most powerful consumer trends, to its embrace by food explorers and product developers.

The market for fermented foods is probably now where the probiotic yoghurt market was 15 years ago. It's a good time to take a calculated risk.

Given how quickly ideas spread in our connected world, how quickly even big companies are learning to take risks on emerging categories, then waiting to see what happens and entering later is probably the least wise strategy you can adopt.

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10 Key Trends in Food, Nutrition & Health 2017

Published December 2016

PPT PDF

Personalized nutrition (Key Trend 4) presents powerful growth potential for food and beverage companies. Consumers are already turning to individually tailored diets, partly driven by a mistrust of 'experts', whose old dietary norms are now seen to be flawed.

A small but growing number of consumers are taking personalization to the next level, such as a genetic profile, or metabolism and disease risk via DNA tests. The power of this trend is reflected in the decision by food giant Campbell's to invest $32 million in Habit, a startup delivering personalized nutrition in an accessible way.

Personalized nutrition services also include tests for biomarkers for chronic inflammation, connecting to Key Trend 5: Inflammation. It's a trend that seemingly faces several challenges, but if you want to know what the next gluten-free" is going to be – this is it. Consumer awareness of inflammation is slowly rising, with "naturally functional" anti-inflammatory ingredients such as turmeric attracting much attention.

Some people have long argued that foods designed for elite athletes would become mainstream. However, by far the bigger trend is one that is going in the opposite direction (Key trend 3: Sportification). Natural foods are becoming more attractive in sport. Regular food companies, that are not sports-oriented, are finding success if they attach their product to consumption for sport.

Digestive wellness is a benefit platform entering a new era thanks to new technologies and new understanding of the effects that gut health has on overall health. Key trend 1: Digestive Wellness 2.0 explains that consumers want to feel the benefit – and they are willing to try many routes to get it.

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