

## CONSUMERS FOCUSED ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS



- 1) Many consumers today want to make healthier food choices due to their increasing interest in health and well-being.
- 2) Many also want to eat dinner with their children every night at home, believing that eating at home is healthier.
- 3) Consumers consider primary food stores to be their most trusted allies in their attempt to eat better, and food retailers should take advantage of shoppers' increasing interest in health as an opportunity to assist their customers.

Fung Global Retail & Technology attended a webinar held on September 8 by the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) Foundation. During the event, Susan Borra, Chief Health and Wellness Officer and Executive Director at the FMI Foundation, covered various trends from two recently released research studies: *U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends, 2016* and *2016 Shopping for Health*.

### Increased Awareness and Interest in Health and Well-Being

Food shoppers today are becoming more health conscious, seeking nutritious products that will meet their health needs and making a concerted effort to avoid unhealthy ingredients. Many are also questioning if their purchases are helpful in sustaining their community.



## FLASH REPORT

According to FMI's *U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends, 2016* report, 67% of shoppers read the label information on the food products they purchase. In addition, about 66% of consumers claim to avoid unhealthy ingredients that have been linked to problematic health conditions and 22% worry that the food they eat is not nutritious enough. About 26% of food shoppers seek products that are nutritionally enhanced. The number-one concern among consumers who look at food labels is the presence of sugar or artificial sweeteners. Other food ingredients that are of concern are salt/sodium and trans fats.

Consumers' interest in organic, GMO-free, local and minimally processed food is increasing. GfK conducted a study called *Shopping for Health 2016* on behalf of Rodale and FMI, and found that two out of three shoppers agree that food choices affect their health. Nearly 62% of those studied view food as a form of medicine and 67% try to buy food with health benefits. The study suggested that three out of four shoppers have switched to a healthier version of at least one type of food—yogurt, milk or bread.

### Family Meals at Home

A majority of food shoppers believe that food they eat at home is healthier. The *U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends, 2016* report indicates that about 90% of consumers believe the food they eat at home is healthier and 74% believe that it could be healthier.

In addition, about 71% of parents would like to eat with their children every night, although only 57% actually achieve this.

Given that many families have a strong desire to eat dinner together—and that most consumers believe eating at home is healthier—food retailers face plenty of opportunities to help their customers who have children. Many parents have expressed that they would like food stores to help when it comes to meals. About 33% of consumers say retailers could provide more kid-friendly recipes in stores. Other consumer suggestions are for food retailers to display foods together that can be combined for an easy meal and to provide more ready-to-eat foods that kids enjoy.

The FMI Foundation designated the month of September as National Family Meals Month. The goal is for families commit to one more family meal each week at home that is made with items from the grocery store. According to Nielsen data, 74% of consumers who saw the campaign in September last year reported taking action. This suggests that shoppers have good intentions about buying and eating healthier food with their families at home, but that they may benefit from a motivator or incentive to take action.

### Primary Food Stores as Trusted and Assisting Allies

Primary food stores are ranked high among the trusted resources available for health-conscious consumers. The most-trusted resources are family, doctors, friends, farmers, fitness/health clubs and then primary food stores. During the FMI webinar, Susan Borra commented that this is good news for food retailers because it is an indication that consumers consider supermarkets to be trusted allies in achieving their health goals.

Although many shoppers have good intentions regarding eating a healthier diet, only one in three shoppers actually puts a good deal of effort into eating healthily. This suggests that there is a gap between intention and action among consumers. By respecting and taking advantage of the trust consumers have in primary food stores, food retailers can help fill the gap by assisting their customers.



FLASH REPORT

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