Food Industry Design, Technology and Innovation
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Author Biographies

Helmut Traitler has a PhD in Organic Chemistry from the University of Vienna, Austria. He was an Assistant Professor and Group Leader of a Research Team for Westvaco in Charleston, SC, USA, working in Vienna, Austria. He joined Nestlé Research in 1981 and later became a member of the Editorial Board of JAOCS (Journal of the American Oil Chemistry Society). At Nestlé, his roles have included Head of the Department of Food Technology, Head of the Combined Science and Technology Department, Head of Nestlé Global Confectionery Research and Development, York, UK, Director of Nestlé USA Corporate Packaging in Glendale, CA, Head of Nestlé Global Packaging and Design, Nestec Ltd., in Vevey, and V.P. of Innovation Partnerships at Nestec Ltd., working in Glendale, CA as well as Vevey, Switzerland. In August 2010 he co-founded Life2Years, Inc., a start-up company in the area of healthy beverages for the 50+. Helmut is the Senior Innovation Connector for Swissnex San Francisco, a public—private partnership organization with offices in Singapore, Beijing, Bangalore, Rio de Janeiro, Cambridge, MA, and San Francisco, sponsored by the Swiss government. He is actively involved in technology spin-offs of mission-non-critical know-how for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena. He has most recently been involved in co-developing food products in the area of sports and is the author of more than 60, mostly peer-reviewed, scientific publications, and 25 international patents.

Birgit Coleman is a strategic thinker and Connections Explorer in her current role at Swissnex San Francisco. Her expertise includes recipes for growth through internal innovation and external strategic partnerships with the goal of building a disruptive innovation pipeline for the clients of Swissnex San Francisco. Prior to Swissnex San Francisco, Birgit worked for the energy drink company Redbull North America, and IBM in Vienna, Austria—her home country. She holds a Masters Degree in Business from the University of Vienna.

Karen Hofmann is Chair of the Product Design Department at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, where she is instrumental in developing an innovative curriculum responding to the expanding role of design. Along with her colleagues she is responsible for identifying and shaping vision-casting projects with numerous corporate sponsors. She leads the innovative study abroad program with INSEAD international business school where designers collaborate with MBA students to develop new ideas for products and services. Karen has developed innovative educational models such as the DesignStorm™, a compliment to Art Center’s traditional transdisciplinary studios, partnering with sponsors to explore future market opportunities. She also serves as the Director of the Color, Materials, and Trends Exploration Laboratory (CMTEL) responsible for creating the strategy and developing this resource at Art Center to develop a unique educational program around color, materials, and trends.
Forewords

When my former Nestlé colleague and one of the authors of this book, Helmut Traitler, had asked me to read *Food Industry Design, Technology and Innovation*, I was hesitant. Every year I receive dozens of unsolicited management books—with catchy titles and bold theses—and after skimming a few pages they wind up in a cupboard behind my desk, unread. But this one is different. The book’s premise that the role of design is under-appreciated and marginalized in industry, and in particular the food industry (in which I have worked for over 30 years), hits home from page one. But what makes this text unique is its ability to analyze and synthesize complex concepts, and spark thoughts and actions through real-world examples. Design is clearly one of the most important factors of our lives: professionally and personally. *Food Industry Design, Technology and Innovation* may not have a catchy title, but the content is thought provoking and practical. This book does not sit on my cupboard with the others, but near my desk, with its pages dog-eared and notes written in the margins. Enjoy and design!

Chris Johnson  
Executive Vice President  
Nestlé SA,  
Vevey, Switzerland  
November 2013

FOOD DESIGN, AN INTRODUCTION

Eating and drinking are amongst the most precious of the experiences that make up our lives—both the primal sensory experience, and the social pleasure of breaking bread with friends and family. By designing the food and drink we consume, we have the potential to make these experiences even richer. But food design is complex. Planning, buying, transporting, storing, preparing, serving, eating, sharing, savoring, cleaning up, digesting, metabolizing, and incorporating into our bodies for our immediate energy level and for our long-term health are just some of the elements of the experience of eating and drinking. Further removed, the land, energy, and labor used in growing, transporting, processing, and selling food also have enormous impact on our lives and on the planet.

Food has always been designed, but generally not consciously, deliberately, and holistically. We appreciate the presentation and freshness at a fine local restaurant, we might notice the packaging on a supermarket shelf, and against our better judgment we are seduced by the taste of molecules concocted in a candy bar, but we don’t connect them as a continuum of design. Adding to the complexity are the contradictions in our expectations about food. The food industry is global, but eating is local: we love to try local flavors when we travel,
but at home we mostly eat according to our cultural norms. In the West we expect that food should be always available, and we bemoan our tendency to overeat. We shop for the lowest price and complain about industrial agriculture taking over the countryside. We are misled by the contradictions between the appearance of health and sustainability, and the actual impact of different food choices. The complexity of how we choose what to eat, and the opacity in the effects of those choices make it difficult for consumers to know what they want.

Over time, like any complex system, it will evolve to meet our emerging preferences. Design offers the possibility of accelerating the process for the good of all, especially the companies that lead the way. Designers and innovators have the unique ability to see into people’s lives and to envision ways to improve them. Beyond just packaging, design is now reaching into the complex web that makes up our food supply and beginning to deliberately make it better. The ways of thinking about design have broad application and are becoming central to how companies compete. To succeed, food designers need to understand people and envision what they will want, they need to understand technology and systems and be able to show how to deliver what they have envisioned, and they need to understand organizations in order to make innovation happen in a corporation.

Helmut Traitler, Birgit Coleman, and Karen Hofmann’s ground-breaking book is the future of food design. By integrating design, technology, and organization they offer a guide to the conscious, deliberate, and holistic design and innovation of food.

Harry West
Senior Partner, Prophet, New York City
Board Member of Continuum Design, former CEO,
Cambridge MA
January 2014
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