

The Evolution of Snacks Continues

People around the world love to snack, and there is no shortage of products to meet the need. Global snack launches have grown by about 25% from 2008 to 2012, according to Innova Market Insights. Today, snacks are more than chips, candy bars, and nuts eaten to satisfy an afternoon craving; food formulators are developing products to meet the changing needs and demands of consumers, whether they want to experience new flavor sensations or eat products that provide additional health benefits. During the 2013 IFT Annual Meeting & Food Expo, Innova Market Insights presented information about the global snacks market, explaining how manufacturers are incorporating different flavors and textures, offering snacks with better-for-you attributes, and more.

Innova Market Insights identified four

add texture as well as extra flavor to snack products. Formulating the product into fun shapes is a way to differentiate it from others, especially for products marketed to children. Innova has also noted a number of products reformulated and repositioned to have more flavor, using such on-package phrasing as “bursting with more flavor” (*Pringles Hot & Spicy Flavored Potato Crisps* from India).

Ozdemir pointed out that food manufacturers are positioning snack foods for specific occasions throughout the day by focusing products to meet the needs of consumers as they move through their day-to-day routines, from a morning energy boost to satisfying afternoon cravings to having an indulgent treat in the evening. For instance, there are items like handheld breakfast sandwiches or yogurt cups for consumers who do not

microwaveable, and compartment packaging that provide snacking opportunities with minimal or no preparation.

Finally, as health conscious consumers are snacking on more nuts, seeds, fruits, vegetables, and yogurt, manufacturers are not only positioning these foods as better-for-you snacks but are formulating them into traditional snack foods like chips and crackers. Take *Lesser Evil Totally Greek Chia Crisps* and *Green Giant Roasted Veggie Tortilla Chips* as examples of snack products formulated with healthy ingredients and marketed as alternatives to high-fat potato chips and similar products. Other snack products are incorporating ingredients to provide more protein, fiber, and whole grains or are formulated to contain no *trans* fat, allergens, or gluten, or less fat, sugar, and sodium.

What does the future hold for snacking? Innova notes some trends to watch in snack food development and marketing such as the emergence of what Innova calls craft flavors produced on a smaller scale by small companies similar to the craft beer movement and vending machines that offer freshly baked goods and fruit snack items. Also on the horizon, snack products that target relaxation and ones that emphasize healthier and naturally derived sources of energy, a continued combination of health and indulgence to allow health-conscious consumers to treat themselves without the guilt, and formulating products to contain ingredients that are recognizable by consumers, especially those who are demanding “clean label” products. **FT**

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drivers that are evolving snacking innovations: indulgence, occasions, convenience, and health. The first, indulgence, refers to the use of textures, shapes, intense and authentic flavors, and fillings and inclusions to “surprise the consumer, add something new, and differentiate themselves from other snack food makers,” said Yasemin Ozdemir from Innova Market Insights. Ozdemir, who led the presentation about global snack innovations, went on to explain that global product launches that made texture claims such as “extra crunchy,” “crispy,” and “chewy” increased from 12.2% in 2008 to 25.2% in 2012. Product developers are using different ingredients as fillings and inclusions as another way to

have the time to make food for breakfast or those positioned as snack products with more protein to increase the feeling of fullness. The popularity of products like these continues to increase as the number of global snack product launches that target breakfast doubled in 2012 from 2011, according to Innova.

The handheld breakfast sandwich and yogurt cup also illustrate the third driver of convenience, where consumers want something that is easy to grab and take along with them to eat on the go. “It’s about snacking anytime, anywhere,” added Ozdemir. Positioning these snacks as convenient options is mainly packaging driven, she explained, with the use of single-portioned, self-heating,



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