Coffee Marketers Can Warm Up To Young Sippers For Long-Term Growth

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A cup of coffee is a daily occurrence for 66% of Americans according to Mintel, but sales have been relatively unchanged in recent years due largely to the sectorâ€™s loyal, older customers.

However, appealing to the younger coffee consumer may be just what companies ordered to heat up the market.

Demand for coffee is strong among those aged 45+, and over-55-year-olds are the fastest growing segment of coffee drinkersâ€”but in order to sustain long-term growth, marketers will need to court their younger customers.
Mintel research found that while 40% of 18-24-year-olds believe coffee improves their concentration, only 27% drink coffee on a daily basis.

â€œYoung adults are somewhat more likely than over-55s to associate negative health consequences with coffee consumption,â€• notes Bill Patterson, senior analyst at Mintel. â€œAmong young adults in particular, understanding the choice between energy drinks and coffee needs significant marketing focus. If coffee companies canâ€™t convert these younger drinkers to everyday users, long-term growth may suffer.â€•

Younger coffee drinkers also differ from their older counterparts in that they prefer sweetened coffee drinks to plain coffee (40% of 18-24-year-olds say so, compared to only 22% of 45-54-year-olds).

Furthermore, just 28% of 18-24-year olds like the taste of coffee on its own, compared to 53% of 45-54-year-olds.

â€œAnother obstacle coffee companies face when targeting a younger demographic is that they often prefer to visit cafes for their caffeine fix,â€• adds Bill Patterson. â€œOffering products that are similar to those found in popular cafes, but can easily be prepared at home or at the office could prove successful with 18-24-year-old reluctant drinkers.â€•

Mintelâ€™s research also highlights some interesting links between coffee and leisure habits of younger consumers.

Some 22% of 18-24-year-olds like to have a cup of coffee on hand when theyâ€™re running errands, while 46% say they like to relax with a cup of coffee.

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