Mintel Reveals Consumer Packaged Goods Trends For 2011

Contributed by Mintel
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Mintel, the global leader in market and consumer intelligence, has predicted the worldwide consumer packaged goods (CPG) trends set to make an impact in 2011.

â€œThese annual predictions represent continuations of current big-picture trends, rather than major changes in the marketplace and what companies are doing,â€• notes Lynn Dornblaser, director of innovation and insight at Mintel.

â€œUnderstanding the major trend areas and how they change from year to year is essential for companies to be successful when developing and launching new products.â€•

Mintel has predicted 12 CPG trends that will impact product development in 2011 spanning across categories from health and wellness, the environment, demographics, marketing and media, convenience and indulgence. Below are six of these core trends.

1) Quiet Reduction:
Sodium, sugar and high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) are three well known ingredients that appear to be experiencing covert reductions in product formulations. While sodium reduction has long been the focus of â€œquiet reduction,â€• sugar and HFCS are jumping on board.

As the media continue to demonise HFCS, what may start as covert reduction is likely to end up as a key labeling issue, in the same way transfat-free has become the norm in some parts of the world.

The European region still awaits approval of stevia, but we should expect to see sugar and stevia used in conjunction to achieve an overall lower sugar content in new products.

However, â€œsteviaâ€• will not always be part of the overt communication. Instead weâ€™ll see messaging like â€œnaturally s or â€œreduced sugar.â€•

2) Redefining Natural:
Get ready for a â€œnatural shakedownâ€•. While all types of natural claims have grown in importance in all regions, and across all product categories, the term â€œnaturalâ€• is still ill-defined.

Terms that are vague or not well understood will come under fire and we are due to see an intervention of regulatory bodies. Also, expect to see a new focus on accentuating the positives of what is in a product, rather than emphasising what is not in it.

3) Professionalisation of the Amateur:
Mainstream brands are getting into a more serious â€œprofessionalâ€• arena, by bringing into the home what used to require a specialist service.

This trend arguably has its origins in personal care markets, with â€œsalon-styleâ€• hair treatments for home use, but continues to expand to include household (â€œprofessional strengthâ€• cleaning products) and food (chef-endorsed, restaurant-style meals).

4) Sustainability stays focused on the basics:
Sustainability is not slipping down the priority list, but instead of seeing new developments, expect to see a continuation of what we have seen, with a few twists.

There will be a greater focus on reduced packaging that promotes environmental responsibility in combination with uniqueness, such as boxless cereal bars or more cereals without the inner bag.

Also, expect water usage to become a hot, consumer-facing issue in 2011. Companies will be looking for ways to conserve water and change their consumption habits so that there is enough world supply.

5) Blurring Categories:
How much more innovation can you get out of a category? Manufacturersâ€™ response to consumer needs is the driver to developing hybrid products.
Consumers donâ€™t necessarily view products as being in one category or another, rather they look for solutions that meet their needs, and that may be something that straddles multiple categories.

Sparkling beverages are appearing more and being positioned as a source of refreshment, as well as sophistication. Beyond hybrid forms, we also see a blurring of how consumers use products â€“ with beverages consumed as snacks, snacks as meals, and personal care and home care products that do more than one thing, as well.

6) New Retro:
Over the last year, we have seen more big brands that revitalise old products and old ad campaigns, tapping into the escalating trend of nostalgia. We anticipate more of these in 2011.

Companies are returning to a time when life seemed somehow easier, whether thatâ€™s the 1980s for consumers in their 20s, or the 1970s or 1960s for older consumers.

Youâ€™ll see this with brands using old formulations, old package designs, re-runs of advertising campaigns or new ads with a retro feel.

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