

Personalized nutrition is the next big growth opportunity in the healthier food and beverage industry

When a giant food company invests \$32 million in a startup focusing on personalized nutrition – as Campbell’s recently has – then you know that “personalization” has reached its tipping point.

Personalized nutrition is a key growth opportunity for food and beverage companies as consumers increasingly turn to individually-tailored diets.

“Personalisation is about consumers ‘taking back control’,” says Julian Mellentin, director of New Nutrition Business and author of the newly-published report **10 Key Trends in Food, Nutrition and Health 2017**. “They want to feel more empowered and confident to create their own healthy eating patterns. It goes hand-in-hand with growing awareness that diet is a personal matter – and it’s another stage in the long slow death of “one size fits all” dietary recommendations.”

Many consumers are embracing personalized services such as wearable gadgets providing guidelines based on their weight, height, sleep pattern, heart rate and activity. A smaller but growing number of consumers look for more in-depth services, such as a genetic profile, or metabolism and disease risk via DNA tests.

“The industry can tap into the personalization trend in three ways,” says Mellentin. “First, smart companies will create a portfolio of brands, made to meet the needs of different consumer diets and preferences. Second, they will invest in a multi-platform approach, offering support and tailored dietary advice. This means partnering with entities providing advice on diet planning or with fitness gadgets. Finally, they should invest in e-commerce, as it has proven to be a main route to niche consumers.”

Personalized nutrition services also include tests for biomarkers for chronic inflammation, connecting to another Key Trend for 2017, **Inflammation**. If you are looking for “the next gluten-free” – the next high-potential long-term growth opportunity – this is it.

“Just like gluten-free back in 2001, many people say inflammation faces several challenges: consumers don’t understand it, it doesn’t have strong scientific support, and you cannot immediately feel the benefit of anti-inflammatory foods. In fact, all of these objections are rapidly being overcome,” says Mellentin.

And like gluten-free before it, one of the most important drivers of growing interest in inflammation is consumer belief. Like gluten-free, inflammation taps into deeper wells of consumer concern than is immediately apparent. Like gluten-free, it is fuelled by multiple benefit platforms (including the powerful Digestive Wellness trend) and early signs of its potential are connected to the intense growth in consumer interest reflected already in surging sales of supplements of the “flagship” anti-inflammatory spice, turmeric.

Turmeric is a trend in itself – and also a health halo ingredient that acts as a gateway for consumers to the complex idea of inflammation. Turmeric lattes can be found in cutting-edge city-centre cafes from Australia to Scotland, and a small but increasing number of adventurous, trend-riding entrepreneurs are starting to use turmeric as a health halo in foods and beverages.

And turmeric's appeal is not limited to entrepreneurs. Larabar, a former startup nutrition-bar brand now owned by General Mills, recently introduced a line of Organic Superfoods bars in three varieties based on "trend-forward" ingredients, two of which include turmeric.

Growth opportunities can also be found in **Key Trend 3: Sportification**. Regular foods with a health halo are increasingly popular among people who do sport for health reasons – as opposed to elite athletes – and they want a natural product. "Some people have long argued that sports nutrition would go mainstream, and that foods designed for elite athletes would become regular food for everyone," says Mellentin. "While this is happening to some extent, by far the bigger trend is one which has gone the opposite direction. 'All natural' foods are becoming more attractive in sport. Regular food companies, that are not sports-oriented, can drive success if they attach their product to the image of health and sport."

Digestive Wellness is a long-established benefit platform now entering a new era thanks to new technologies, new products and new understanding of the broad effects that gut health has on overall health. Key trend 1: Digestive Wellness 2.0 explains that consumers want to 'feel the benefit' and they are willing to try a variety of routes to get it. The popularity of products with a free-from benefit, such as gluten-, lactose- and dairy-free, was powered by the perception that avoidance of a specific ingredient would make consumers feel better. Many new types of avoidance are emerging – and new food types, notably fermented foods (like kimchi) and drinks (like kombucha) are taking digestive wellness in exciting new directions.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. *10 Key Trends in Food, Nutrition and Health 2017* is available to buy at www.new-nutrition.com.
2. Editors can request review copies, or arrange an interview with Julian Mellentin, by contacting Marta Matvijev at marta@new-nutrition.com.
3. Julian Mellentin is one of the world's few international specialists in the business of food, nutrition and health. He is director of New Nutrition Business which provides case studies and analysis of success and failure in the global nutrition business and is used by more than 1,700 corporate subscribers in 42 countries. New Nutrition Business is a research and consultancy company with an expert focus on the business of food and health since 1995. It has offices in the United States, Europe, and New Zealand and affiliates in Japan and South Korea.