

Gaining Dairy Inspiration

As the economy recovers and we exit our recession, we are more emotionally and financially secure and start seeking out foods that are more retro and heritage because they tie us to a specific time and place.

by Rachel Zemser

Product developers take note: if you want to create retail products that are ahead of current trends, then you simply must eat out as often as possible and in as many different types of eating establishments that you can find! Great food ideas aren't just from fine dining and innovative foods are now coming from truck stops, chippers, and farmers' markets stands. These are the food establishments that are all the rage and are inspiring product developers to think out of that proverbial box and create new concepts that have never been seen on the retail market before. While global street food is increasing in popularity, Americans also continue to seek out experimental luxury food items, an indication

that they are emerging from a recession and have more money to spend on high end ingredients.

According to Suzy Badaracco, owner of Culinary Tides, a firm that focuses on trend forecasting, we are currently in a "post comfort food" phase. The comfort foods we sought out during the recession were emotional and based on our need to feel secure during uncertain economical times.

As the economy recovers and we exit our recession we are more emotionally and financially secure and start seeking out foods that are more retro and heritage because they tie us to a specific time and place. These are the "thinking" versions of comfort.

Cart Proliferation

Where can you get Aryan or mango Lassis yogurt for breakfast, a Cornish pastry for lunch, a Korean taco for a snack, and a grilled cheese sandwich with jalapenos, cream cheese and tortilla chips for dinner? All of these items, plus 500 other food cart options can be found all across Portland, Oregon home to the biggest food truck scene in the United States. The recent proliferation of food carts across the US gives the cart cooking chef the opportunity to be as sophisticated, experimental, ethnic and exotic as they want to be, all while educating the consumers on global flavors and international cuisine.

Retail developers and R&D chefs should visit these trucks for inspiration and will remind

them how to incorporate authentic flavors into their retail product lines. The key to authentic translation is experiencing the flavor first hand and then discussing with your ingredient suppliers how to properly duplicate that profile. It may be necessary to change the name of the final product so consumers will feel comfortable making that first time purchase, but the key is to gain consumer acceptance in the marketplace.

Emerging From Comfort

The retro comfort foods that are emerging for 2010 and 2011 strategically connect consumers to a specific time and place. American retro foods are tied to an era; typically the '50's through the 80's and appeal to both baby boomers and Gen Xers alike. S'Mac (New York City) specializes in Americans favorite classic casserole mac-n-cheese and while they do have the classic "nostalgic" style made

Reducing the Interface Phenomena in Desserts



Perfect taste, all natural ingredients and an attractive appearance - that's what consumers are demanding of a good dessert. In Europe's dairy market the dessert segment ranks among the largest - with a tendency of further growth. Core trends are premium and enjoyment.

Many desserts, especially those based on yogurt as white mass, are using a higher fruit content. Among the many variations are swirled, layered and foamed fruit preparations. To avoid the interface phenomena of fruit

preparations and the white mass, especially in swirled and layered desserts, Döhler has developed new solutions. The result is a new generation of fruit preparations.

To avoid the migration, diffusion and chemical interactions Döhler has selected specifically developed raw materials like fruit, flavor and color components. Combined with special stabilization systems and the company's vast know-how in technology, the interface phenomena is reduced to a minimum. Furthermore Döhler has developed appropriate technologies to avoid gelation of the interface when fruit preparation and pudding mass is combined.



Yoplait Safari Strawberry & Pear Yogurt (Sweden) is promoted for only containing natural colors.

Source: Innova Market Insights

with American and cheddar cheese, they also have some European inspired creations like “La Mancha” made with manchego cheese and “The Parisienne” with creamy brie, figs and shitake mushrooms. While macaroni and cheese items are already available in the frozen and refrigerated supermarket aisles, developers can now make them even better! “Product and menu developers have the advantage of the much improved frozen food ingredients and technol-

ogy when creating today’s comfort foods,” comments Eric Koyama, consultant and owner, Culinary Revelations, Concord, CA. The availability and quality of IQF raw ingredients like shitake mushrooms and caramelized bell peppers allow a developer to create finished products with a more authentic and fresh home-cooked profile. In the dessert world, popular 50’s style puddings have been showing up more frequently on restaurant menus.

Chefs are pairing flavors like butterscotch, caramel, peanut brittle and crème brulee to recreate the flavors that Baby Boomer consumers can relate to. Developers should play with these flavor combinations when considering line extensions in their existing refrigerated dairy dessert products.

National Starch recently launched their N-Dulge line which includes products that help developers achieve textures similar to caramel sauce,

peanut butter, chocolate fondue or melt away custard. Product developers can save time and money by utilizing ingredient suppliers with specific expertise in starches and flavors who can help recreate the authenticity that consumers are seeking out.

Retro Beverages

Cutting edge trends are often reflected in the unique quirky restaurants that are willing to trying anything to differentiate them from the

THE SUPPLIER VIEW – Savory Product Development



Gerard van der Hoek
Product Manager, Meneba

What is driving innovative product development in the savory space?

The demand for convenience food products is rising. This includes crispy snacks based on meat, fish, cheese, vegetables and potatoes. Due to the increasing diversity, snack manufacturers and producers of batters and predest mixes are searching for high quality ingredients to control binding, viscosity and water absorption of these crispy layers. Meneba texturizers based on pregelatinized wheat give perfect control over these parameters when used as a so called “predest.” Crispiness is guaranteed! Batters are difficult to attach to smooth substrates, such as fillets of fish, chicken breast or fried vegetables. A lower coating percentage can mean that the final product lacks crispiness. In situations like these a predest is the solution. Predest binds the surface moisture and makes the substrate rougher, which improves the extent to which the batter binds to the surface and increases the crispiness of the final product: just as the consumer wants!

Which styles of savory product are on the rise?

Not only crispy snacks, but also the demand for convenience soups is rising. Making soup is one of the oldest methods of preparing a tasty, healthy and original dish. Nowadays, soups are enjoyed as a starter, snack and, as in the past, as a complete meal. To answer to the growing demand for variety and convenience, soup manufacturers offer countless types of liquid and powdered soups in tins, jars or bags. Liquid soups with a long shelf life (sterilized or frozen), but also soups with a short shelf life like

chilled soups in jars or bags. These soups are becoming more and more popular in the supermarkets! The same applies to sauces: a good sauce adds the finishing touch to carefully prepared dishes. Making a good home-made sauce is a complicated and time-consuming process. All ingredients have to be weighed out in the right time, and the cook has to pay close attention to the right cooking times and temperatures to avoid the sauce sticking to the base of the pan. The food industry has reacted to the increasing demand for convenience products by offering countless variety of ready to use sauces. Meneba has developed special texturizers to be used as thickening agent in these applications. Meneba texturizers, based on wheat and which can be declared as “wheat” on the labels, give the required viscosity and also add a full, creamy flavor.

How can suppliers help manufacturers to address to consumer demands for low fat?

Demand for convenience products like crunchy snacks based on deep fried meat, fish, cheese, vegetables and potatoes is rising. Unfortunately, most coated foodstuffs have a much too high fat content. One way of marketing coated for products more effectively is to use health claims such as “reduced” fat. To limit fat absorption during cooking, Meneba’s range of products features a unique texturizer which can be applied in a thin coating forming a barrier (clearcoating) over the batter which is named “Borneo.” This thin protective layer can be easily prepared by suspending one part of Borneo in five parts of water. When this suspension is used over the batter, much less fat is absorbed during the frying process. The effect depends on the type of batter used (some batters absorb more fat, others less) the type of substrate and whether the products is deep-fried straightaway or frozen after the clearcoating is applied. The absorption of fat can be reduced by up to 30% in the case of pork coated with standard batter and 10% with deep-fried cheese. This helps the manufacturer of coated food to reduce the fat absorption during deep-frying, giving the possibility to produce more healthy deep fried convenience food!

How can suppliers stay relevant amidst increasing calls for “clean label” and more natural products?

The UK used to be leading in the increasing demand for clean label ingredients. However, this phenomenon has also spread to the continent. The demand for clean label products is mostly driven by retailers, but nowadays most manufacturers are also anticipating on this trend. Advertisement of foods, which used to contain artificial ingredients and additives, are promoting the same foods with only natural ingredients. This applies for colors and flavors, but also thickening agents. Modified starches are being replaced by functional flours, which are heat treated without any other modification. Due to the heat treatment, these heat-treated flours have functionality to give thickening, water binding and texture to the finished product. These texturizers are free of an E number and can be labelled as “wheat flour”: a trusted ingredient for the customer.

masses and beverages are a risk free way for chefs to experiment with new flavors. At Momofuko Milk Bar (New York City) Chef David Chang taps into our retro childhood flavors with his “cereal milk,” milk that is steeped with toasted cornflakes.

A luscious hot chocolate on the menu at The Sugar Cube (Portland, Oregon) is made with retro ovaltine chocolate malt powder, single-origin Venezuelan milk chocolate, fresh whipped cream and smoked Hawaiian sea salt. Connecting consumers with nostalgic flavor profiles while adding in artisanal sophistication is what helps these menu items achieve success.

Latin based concepts like horchata, a blend of almond, rice and cinnamon or spicy milk chocolate drinks with chocolate, dairy and chili powders can be options for dairy drink companies to expand on their current product lines. Starch suppliers can assist in ensuring that particulates like rice or almond powders stay in suspension throughout the products shelf life.



Andechser has launched what is claimed to be the first Organic Lassi in the UK. The Mango Lassi is made with 14% Alphonso mango. Chai Spices and Raspberry varieties are also available.

Global-Inspired Desserts

Selene restaurant (San-torini, Greece) serves a trifle style “cheesecake” layered with barley bread crumbs and candied tomatoes; which highlights the flavors of the island in a familiar style dish. Retailer developers can create similar layered yogurt desserts that can be executed by separating out the “dry” component and attaching it to the retail unit as a separate container to ensure optimal crunch after mix in. Ice cream is a restaurant chef’s international playground and a low risk way for them to experiment with global flavors in their kitchen. At Toscanini’s (Cambridge, MA) they experiment with salty flavors, cayenne, peppercorns, dried jalapenos, and Spanish chilies. From a manufacturing standpoint, suppliers who sell fruit variegates, nuts and spices can provide the developer with the necessary ingredients to recreate their favorite global concept. Latin flavors are increasing in popularity and developers can connect with that market by recreating authentic versions of “arroz con leche” made with milk, cinnamon and raisins. Other variations in rice pudding could include coconut and passion fruit, all flavors that can create tropical vibe in any dessert.

Bonus Boosters

Adding probiotic bacteria such as *Lactobacillus* or *Bifidobacterium* to refrigerated and frozen dairy products can improve the health benefits beyond basic nutrition if added in adequate amounts. The dairy medium, as well as the type and quantity of bacteria are what make a fermented product unique. For example, kefir products have a variety of beneficial bacteria and yeast not found in yogurt and Skyr is a thick strained cultured milk

product from Iceland. While cow or goat’s milk is the most common dairy base, coconut and soy can also be used. In order to ensure that the probiotics remain live and active, they must be added post-pasteurization to products that are developed at optimal pH range for bacterial growth. Developers need to conduct shelf life studies to determine final bacterial counts to verify any desired marketing claims. Yogurts, puddings and dairy based beverages also provide developers with an opportunity to boost fiber levels and allow for additional marketing claims by including oatmeal, quinoa or brown rice. These ingredients are available in precooked flakes and puffs that can be added directly to a dairy blend before pasteurization or included as a separate packaged component with the finished product.

Fun for Kids

Baby boomers may love their nostalgic flavors like peanut butter, caramel and butterscotch but it’s also important to keep in mind the flavors and concepts that appeal to the younger generation today. The kids today are more sophisticated and come from diverse ethnic backgrounds and have much higher expectations when it comes to both their foodservice and retail products. Retailers should consider current trends that go over well with adults but incorporating flavors that appeal to kids.

Chobani, a Greek style yogurt company in upstate NY recently launched a line of their thick strained Greek yogurt but with kid friendly flavors like StrawNana, VerryBerry, HoneyNana and Chocolate. Older kids will be interested in the same gourmet

flavors and pairings that appeal to their parents like vanilla – cinnamon, chocolate- chili and super fruits like pomegranate and blueberries.

The Asian market introduced us to the concept of tapioca balls in beverages, which provides a fun textural mouth feel for kids and this idea can be expanded to include real fruit chunks of melon, berries or pineapple. Fluffy and aerated mousse desserts lend themselves well to flavor variation while bringing an upscale gourmet feel to the eating experience. In Turkey, the sour fizzy yogurt beverage “Aryan” is a popular fermented dairy drink but it is rarely seen in other countries. A variation on this concept that includes fruit or chocolate flavors could

translate well in the kid’s retail product arena.

Keeping Clean Labels

Food companies continue to try to reduce the number of ingredients on their label and stay as natural as possible. Haagen-Dazs, a leading international premium frozen dessert manufacturer owned by Nestlé, recently introduced “Five,” their all natural ice-cream crafted with only five ingredients: milk, cream, sugar, eggs and a natural flavor. They choose eggs, a natural stabilizer as a way to manage the texture and mouth feel of their finished product.

Ingredient companies continue to seek out and provide alternatives to artificial or chemically modified ingredi-

ents on the market. Sometimes these natural ingredients are not as stable as their chemically processed or artificial versions but that is changing and developers can now find ingredients that are both natural and stable on the market.

The GNT-Group, headquartered in Aachen, Germany manufactures natural food colorants and standardized fruit and vegetable extracts that are highly stable via a unique physical processing technology. The finished products that use GNT colors can be labeled as a fruit or vegetable concentrate. National Starch has a line of functional native and organic starches that allow developers to put simply “starch” on their label. If a manufacturer would rather

not use starch at all, there are alternatives. In lieu of starch, other ways developers can add structure and stability to products are by using dairy proteins in the form of non-fat dry milk or whey protein concentrates. These ingredients can help texture while maintaining a clean and natural label. The dairy market has an advantage in that typical ingredients used like probiotics can naturally create texture via the fermentation process. Greek style yogurts strain out as much water as possible which increases the percentage of dairy solids and thickens up their product, enabling them to create a full fat mouthfeel that are actually only 2% fat. Shelf life in all fermented dairy products can be extended by virtue of their naturally low pH, eliminating the need for yeast and mold inhibiting preservatives.

Culinary Inspiration

Creative and cutting edge chefs who are not afraid to be experimental can be a great inspiration to product developers seeking new ideas for retail dairy products. Developers need to take these concepts and mainstream them into something that their consumer can relate to and readily accept. This can be done by either incorporating familiar flavors into new menu concepts, or new flavors into familiar menu concepts. A familiar balance of something new with something out there will lead to success in the retail marketplace. The technology and ingredient suppliers are all out there and are now easier to find than ever. Whether you choose to be a pioneer in retail development and take on these authentic and fun menu concepts all depends on your comfort level with risk and how well you trust your instincts and know your customer. ♦



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