Consumer Trends: Consumers Trust Blogs Over Big Corporations

The American Chemical Society

Earlier this year, bloggers scored a high-profile victory in their campaign against a common bread ingredient — also used in yoga mats and other plastics — when Subway announced it was dropping the substance from its dough recipe. The case highlights the powerful influence of online campaigns, and how they are changing the food industry, according to an article in *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly news magazine of the American Chemical Society.

Melody M. Bomgardner, senior editor at C&EN, notes that consumers' curiosity and outrage about what's in their food has fueled a number of vehement and well-publicized Internet campaigns in recent years. Online petitions have attacked the "pink slime" of processed meats in school lunches, synthetic dyes in popular foods for kids and brominated vegetable oil in sports drinks. So far, the results have been mixed, with some companies shifting to alternative ingredients, while others are holding the line.

Whether there's solid science behind the claims is another story altogether. Critics of some of these food bloggers say these campaigns often lack scientific evidence to support their claims, and the only thing they promote is paranoia. Regardless, growing public awareness about questionable food ingredients has delivered a powerful message to the food industry: Consumers don't trust large corporations to prioritize their health over profits. And the industry is taking notice.

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