Consumer Trends: Older Populations Want a Bite of Convenience

Canadean

It is commonly believed that convenient products are for the busy city worker. However, the older population are quickly becoming some of the biggest seekers of convenience, with 17.1 percent of their food consumption motivated by this need, finds a new report from Canadean.

Older consumers need easy-to-use food products

Convenient products are often targeted at the busiest and time scarce consumers. However, manufacturers employing this strategy alone are missing a large proportion of potential customers. A growing number of older consumers are looking for convenient lifestyle enablers — products which allow them to live and consume without difficulty. For example, due to the one-child policy and the presence of the 4-2-1 family structure, China has a rapidly aging population. Because of the burden on the younger generation, the most senior generation will receive less support from their family and consequently will drive demand for easy to use, convenient meal time and snacking options.

Packaging redesign offers added convenience

Old age is often accompanied by a loss of strength and dexterity in hands and wrists, meaning that fiddly opening mechanisms or tight screw tops can present an issue. Emerald has taken this into account in the design of its new packaging. The packaging of nut assortments has been re-engineered with indentations on the side to improve grip, moreover a shortened rotation is required to open the product. Kirsty Nolan, analyst at Canadean, comments: “Emerald is successfully targeting the aging population with a product that is not only traditional and high in protein, but that is fully accessible to its target audience.”

As well as snacks, older consumers need convenient meal time options. According to Nolan: “Often older people choose to eat traditional cuisines and more fresh food. Therefore, the challenge for food companies is to provide fresh, easy, convenient meal-time choices.” For example, Marks & Spencer has been innovative in finding solutions and offers a range of chilled prepared meats and vegetables in single-serve packs. The range is supported by ongoing meal-deal promotions which further contribute to its success.

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