

FRIDAYS AT FOUR

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WE have just returned from the Fancy Food Show in San Francisco. This annual show features over 1600 exhibits showing off the latest in gourmet foods, new age drinks, wine and chocolates.

As you would expect, the number of new age drinks, enhanced waters, and beverages has exploded. No longer is soda just soda...now it comes in GuS.grown up soda in six distinctive flavors: Dry meyer lemon, dry Valencia orange, Star Ruby Grapefruit, Dry Cranberry Lime, Dry Crimson Grape and Extra Dry Ginger Ale.

One of the more interesting offerings came from a company called Stirrings... They position their products as “Better Cocktails.” They have developed a product called Rimmers. “rimmers are the perfect complement to premium cocktails—giving every glass a glamorous garnish and making every sip even more sweet or savory”. Or what about what they call “Cocktail Essences”.

Flavors include 60 Petals Rose Martini, Hillside Lavender Martini, Mediterranean Rosemary Martini and Summer Basil Martini.

What about Organics...Anything and everything was promoted as Organic. One of the more interesting takes on this was a company called Lesser Evil Snack Company. They offer gourmet snacks with LesserEvil ingredients for consumers on the go. Popcorn, Kettle Corn with no preservatives, no fatty acids, no artificial anything,gluten free

The theme that comes from all three of these companies is how they are trying to stand out in a very crowded field. Trying to appeal to the upscale customer who wants to be a little different, not buy off the shelf and willing to pay extra for Grown Up Soda, Stirrings Sippers and Lesser Evil Popcorns.

Two other food items that are exploding in offerings—Chocolate and Salts, yes Salts of all kinds.

Dagoba Organic Chocolate offered a Chocolate from Costa Rica Costa Rica Grand Cru. Listen to the description. “Complex fruit with low astringency. Upfront red fruit moving into herbal overtones and finishing with golden raisin and lingering caramel”

And a Salt Bar from UrbanAccents. That offered seven selections of Sea Salts from Tropical Hibiscus Sea Salt to Santiago Citrus Sea Salt. Or how about Grilling Rubs, including five kinds of rubs from beef and burger rub to chicken and poultry rub...

This news comes from the trend predictions of the Center for Culinary Development. “Exotic fruits, white tea and small plates and bites are to become more popular as more people opt for “healthy” “fashionable” and “adventurous” foods.

Our new phrase that we noted in the same report is “ethnic mainstreaming”. Sales of premium fruits such as lychee, pomelo, yuzu and tamarind are on the rise.

From the Book *Creating Customer Evangelists* comes a Customer Loyalty Ladder.

The ladder starts at the bottom with Satisfaction, moves to a repeat customer, then word of mouth/buzz, then to evangelist and at the highest rung on the ladder, Ownership, where the customer feels responsible for continued success of the organization.

In closing here is a new phrase to add to your book. “Social condensers”... the place where citizens of a community or neighborhood meet to develop friendships, discuss issues and interact with others.

And a fact to ponder from a study done by ProductScan Online. In 1986, manufacturers rolled out 12,500 new products. By 2004 that number had almost tripled to 33,000.

Remember to visit our website [HYPERLINK "http://www.gfstrategies.com"](http://www.gfstrategies.com) www.gfstrategies.com and we can work with you to help bring some of the trends discussed here to your venue. These trends can lead to new revenues. Let us show you how.

And one more thing, feel free to forward FridaysAtFour to any of your associates or other friends. They can be added to our list by sending us their email address.

Next time we discuss the emergence of “probiotic products.