

Fridays At Four  
Volume Two Issue Six

This issue starts out by recommending two recent books about food and in particular the food processing world.

A great read is Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan. The other book is Organics, Inc. by Michael Fromartz. Both books study the food chain and look at how the farmers' fields are influenced by government policies, what truly is organic and how we can take a new look at how our food gets from the field to our tables.

The latest hip and trendy restaurant is reported to center on enoteca. That's right enoteca. The "Italian wine bars". Found all over Italy, the core elements of traditional enotecas are small plates of simple, authentic delicious food that's designed to be shared, plus plenty of affordable local wines. The latest one to open in Chicago is Extra Virgin, and is reporting overflow crowds.

A recent story in Beverage Spectrum reports that major profits are coming from Fresh Juices in the Produce Aisle. Retailers are seeing this new niche as a way to gain incremental revenue from the drink area outside of the juice aisle. Also reported is that the growth of enhanced products. The selling point is the fortification put into the bottle as much as it is the base product. Many juices are tying their success to the fast moving spirits industry. One specialty drink sales manager says "Everyone's looking to get a more and more exotic drink".

It's not enough to just call them foods anymore. Now the hottest category is anything that contains super foods. These are the natural additives that are now in vogue. So here are some to the hottest ones—acai, buckwheat, flax seed, green tea, kefir, plant sterols, soy, spirulina, wheat/barley grasses and whey.

One of the key themes to come out of the recent Food Marketing Institute meetings was this. "Consumers driven by health are going to make a very different purchase in the beverage aisle from those interested in convenience"

This from the most recent issue of the Sloan Management Review. In an article the concept of "innovation radar" is discussed. The authors state that business innovation is about new VALUE, not new THINGS. Innovation radar consists of four key dimensions that serve as business anchors: the offerings a company creates, the customer it serves, the processes it employs and the points of presence it uses to take its offerings to market. The key to market growth of in the case of finding new attendees at your event or venue is to identify and pursue neglected innovation dimensions. (Sloan Management Review Spring 2006)

One of our readers asked us to follow-up and report more on the company Synergos Technologies. This firm has developed a software that can measure purchase habits based on geodemographic characteristics and measure consumer lifestyles in ten areas.

Landscapes insights allow retailers to better understand the populations they serve. For more information about this firm, one of the real leaders in the “lifestyle marketing research area, visit their web site.

Look for our next issue as we cover our visit to the National Restaurant Show in Chicago and the Retail Systems Show, both being held next week. WE will also be visiting with one of customers as we expand our food and beverage consulting into the museum food service area, helping a large museum with a redesign of their mobile food serving areas.

Let us help you do the same.

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