

FRIDAYS AT FOUR
Volume Five Issue One

News and trends from GF Strategies

This comes from the Wall Street Journal. "Grocers launch labels to identify healthy foods".. In the northeast, two grocery chains have come up with what they are calling a "healthy ideas" system, that will distinguish more than 3,000 products and fresh produce with a blue symbol. This symbol signifies that the USDA and other food guidelines have been met for "what makes a food healthy. Kraft, Pepsico and Unilever are working with nutritionists to come iwht a program to add a "Smart Choices" label to some of their products. Of course there is this reminder..."Portion control is still one of the most important things to determine a food's health.

This from Steve Chambers, Executive Director of Western Fairs..At a recent speech to the Oregon Fairs Association, Chambers talked about the father of the blue ribbon, Ekania Watson, who in 1807 created the blue ribbon and fathered the idea of competition at Fairs. Chambers asked this question..."What are Fairs? Are we malls without walls? "Swap meets with standards?" Chambers then went on to describe Fairs as much more than that. "Fairs, in the words of Abraham Lincoln in the 1860s "are a pleasant pleasure to be followed by no pain, and as a consequence making the future more pleasant". Fairs, said Chambers, are the place to celebrate. Gone are the days of the Fairs being the display showcase for all that is new in farm equipment. Today, with cellphones, text messaging, and Facebook, Fairs need to showcase how these technologies are being used in agriculture, such as tracking chips placed in livestock, foods being identified as to how far they have traveled to get to your table, even using of your cell phone to get more links when you take a picture of the barcode that is placed in front of the animals, that would take you to more information about the breed, the original land where the animal was first herded, and other ways to inform in the instant message world of today.

Researchers at the University of Minnesota have used brain scans to show that it is easier for people to make a decision when a third product option is present versus choosing between just two possibilities. This came out of a new field of study called neuromarketing.

Heres something to think about as you hear so much about FaceBook, MySpace, Twitter and all of the other social media..."Social media is the new version of the telephone" And one might add, there's just no operator....

Ann Mack, writing in Media Week is the director of trendspotting for JWT Advertising. Mack says that "consumers will be increasingly inclined to savor simple pleasures. She goes on to say that "facing a "Forced break" many will reexamine their career paths. And we have heard this before. "Small is the new big". Everything is shrinking, from cars to stores to packaged goods and supply chains". And this is one of the biggest trends she talks about in her article---"The mobile device is evolving into what she calls the "everything hub", the nexus of digital activity."

Mack also posits that the focus is returning to the greater good, to the reflective notions of community.”...

One of the results of the digital transition is going to be e-waste, with many old televisions being discarded, and not disposed up properly. A huge problem, and maybe an opportunity for Fair sites to become e-waste stations to collect these discards and make sure they get to the right place for disposal.

IKEA is now sending mobile coupons via cell phones that can be redeemed and scanned on at the stores. “Our customers seem to enjoy using it for discounts”, said IKEA Seattle rep Casey Crook. The technology might be used in the future to sell advance tickets, preorder merchandise or even food prior to arriving at the event. The Wall Street Journal refers to these technologies as “customer experience tech tools”

Well known author Seth Godin calls this new way to reach consumers “Tribe Management”.....”Tribe management is a whole different way of looking at the world. Instead of looking for customers for your event, concert, music CD, you seek out products or services for the tribe” (courtesy Media Week) For more information and to follow developments in this area visit the website www.mobilemarketingforum.com

This from the Wall Street Journal on the Green Investment Wave. “The early winners in the investment game is a sector known as “electricity demand response”. “Companies in this sector sell technology and services aimed at improving the efficiency of the US power distribution grid”. For example, the technology might be used to automatically turn off some lights in a large parking garage during a peak power usage period, or deactivate special heaters that keep freezer doors from fogging up in the supermarket.

WE close this issue by recommending our latest read.. The book is *Simplicity*, written by Jeffrey Kluger. For more background on this book, go to www.simplicitybook.com.

In our next issue, we will share with you news that comes from our visits to the West Coast Fancy Food Show and the Western Fairs meetings in Reno.

And remember, if your event or company is looking for a company to help increase your revenues from food and beverage services or remodeling an existing food service area, contact us at greg@gfstrategies.com or 360-573-7027.