

FLAVOR NEWS

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Why the Voice of the Consumer Matters More Than Ever

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed a great number of things for consumers. As a result many food, beverage and nutritional companies find themselves struggling to keep up. From flavor choices to grocery habits, let's take a look at why the voice of the consumer matters more than ever.



Why the

Voice

OF THE CONSUMER

matters more than ever



Changing Consumer Values in Food and Beverage

Accelerated traffic to online grocery ordering. Interest in indulgence paired with growth in immunity claims. Priorities and purchase drivers have shifted. The expansion of health and wellness has accelerated, while self-care's importance has risen to unprecedented heights. About 26% of consumers report they'll likely spend more on groceries in the next three months according to SP Global.

So much has changed, launching a new product in the pandemic environment can be a guessing game – but it doesn't have to be that way. At FONA, we believe in the importance of "consumer whispers" early and often in your product development cycle. As Mintel puts it, "food and drink retailers must contend with a patchwork of opportunities and threats and respond to a variety of diverse, even conflicting, consumer needs."

Shoppers with Purpose

The New York Times pointed out recently that grocery shoppers now peruse with purpose (consumers are spending less time in the grocery store). There are new factors influencing what they purchase. It is no longer just taste and price but also availability. There are clear goals in mind with every store visit or online check out. Getting on that carefully cultivated list will come down to the right predictions about flavor and the right product positioning. The interest in such purposes, like immunity, indulgence and relaxation are not new, but the global pandemic has increased the attention and speed in unique ways. The important thing to know is that opportunities exist to align with these new behaviors. Lean on trusted partners.



“Food and drink retailers must contend with a patchwork of opportunities and threats and respond to a variety of diverse, even conflicting, consumer needs.” - Mintel

Experiential or Nostalgic

Flavor can be a portal, and our current environment is no exception. What we're seeing: while some consumers are indulging their wanderlust through unique and innovative flavors, others are comforted by tried-and-true flavors from their childhood. That can leave you in a quandary

– when should you bring the adventure, and when will nostalgia hit the mark? Sub-segment and target consumer are important considerations. Engage with the consumer voice at the forefront of your development effort to marry your brand with the right flavor experience.



You work hard
to keep consumers
well & nourished

*ClearSeas Brand Awareness Survey, 2019.
Sources: New York Times: 7 Ways Food and Beverage Has Changed;
Gartner Align with Consumers Emphasis on Health and Wellness in Wake of COVID-19,
Mintel: The Impact of COVID-19 on Food & Drink; SPGlobal: US Election Likely to Have
Minor Impact on Consumer Spending.

You Help Consumers Cope

Consumers are working to cope with a world and environment that is profoundly changing – and continuing to change. Their priorities are often dependent on the moment and the occasion. What might work in a protein beverage might not suit for a snack bar. That is why it's increasingly important for brands like yours to stay tuned in to the consumer, and tuned in to their flavor and ingredient preferences.



Rated #1 in Consumer & Market Insights

You work hard to keep consumers well & nourished. You deserve top-rated market and consumer insights.

At FONA, we can help you get agile fast and stay flexible in the long-term.

A third-party survey of industry professionals rated FONA #1 in Consumer and Market Insights.* From our dedicated shopper panel to action-focused information, FONA is committed to helping you stay informed to consumer changes and delivering that taste to perform in an ever-changing landscape. Let's align your product line with consumer needs **now**.

"An agile approach capable of being highly responsive to rapidly evolving consumer norms is now a must for the foreseeable future."

- Gartner

Sign up for our trend and consumer insights or request a free flavor sample!

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:

Jeremy Thompson

NAMED

President

Jeremy Thompson has been named President of FONA International. In addition to the role of President, Jeremy will continue to retain the Chief Operating Officer title.

"Jeremy has demonstrated excellence in his performance



and character while uniquely serving our customers, employees and stakeholders, especially with changing times during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Joe Slawek, FONA Chairman and CEO. "Jeremy's elegant leadership style and peaceful presence are truly a gift, and his dedication to embracing FONA's culture and values has shown him to be a true leader."

With 20 years of experience in the food industry, Jeremy has helped guide FONA with his diverse background knowledge and growth mindset. Jeremy began as Executive Vice President of Revenue Generation at FONA in 2018 where he helped lead teams to multiple revenue records. He was then promoted to Chief Operating Officer in July 2019.

In his new role, **Jeremy will empower FONA's executive leaders, sales team, and next generation leaders** to grow both themselves and the business, while delivering value for customers and stakeholders. Jeremy said, "It's been a blessing to have the opportunity to work for FONA and grow both professionally and personally under Joe's leadership. At the end of the day, it's truly our people and our culture that make FONA so special."



Faces of FONA

PROMOTIONS



AGUSTIN AYALA
APPLICATIONS
TECHNOLOGIST II

Nearing his 22nd anniversary with FONA, Agustin has been promoted to Applications Technologist II. In his new role, Agustin will continue to provide solutions and drive partnerships with FONA's valued healthcare, cannabis and confections customers. Since his start, Agustin has been an integral part of the R&D team and has become a 'go to' person both internally and externally with our customers.



NANCY BELTETON
SCIENTIST

A FONA employee since 2012, Nancy has accumulated a wide range of experience in several beverage segments. In her new role as a Scientist with the beverage team, Nancy will continue to execute projects for our valued customers and serve as a technical subject matter expert in the coffee, tea and cannabis segments. Nancy also helps lead flavor development and support with our FONA China team.

"It's truly our people and our culture that make FONA so special, and I am extremely confident in the future of FONA with all of them surrounding me."

Jeremy Thompson, FONA President



KAYLIND COOK
SR. APPLICATIONS
TECHNOLOGIST

In her new role as Sr. Applications Technologist, Kaylind

will continue to lead projects and build customer relationships for FONA's bar segment. Since her start at FONA in 2015, Kaylind has made significant contributions to FONA's bar segment growth, pursuing excellence in her project work and developing relationships with our valued customers. Kaylind received a Bachelor of Science in Foods, Nutrition and Wellness from Bradley University.



CHRIS GENOVISE
ACCOUNT
ASSOCIATE

In his new role, Chris will manage active and prospect accounts and

work to provide a great customer experience that helps FONA's customers succeed and grow. Chris joined FONA as an intern in 2012 and was later hired full time in Purchasing in 2014. Since then, Chris has made a significant impact on the purchasing team, helping move FONA's raw material approval process into Salesforce and helping business units serve customers with speed and excellence.



MATT KANTNER
JR. R&I SCIENTIST

Matt Kantner has been promoted to Jr. Scientist where he will assist in expanding

FONA's autonomous flavor compounding/blending platform. Matt has developed his subject matter expertise in automated flavor compounding and analytical sample preparation, making significant contributions to the Research and Innovation team. Matt joined FONA in 2018 as a temporary hire and was then hired as Flavor Sciences Laboratory Technician in 2019.

Chairman's Corner

Grateful & Humbled



Thanksgiving is my favorite time of year, and this unusual year of 2020 is no exception. Looking forward to the holiday season, I am filled with gratitude and humbled by the blessings that I witness all around FONA.

I'm grateful for FONA's customers and partners, who graciously place their trust in us. FONA could not exist without them. The grace and passion of our incredible partners has helped to nourish and comfort consumers across the globe. You feed and care for the world, and we're grateful to be a part of that important mission.

I'm thankful for the FONA Family who have worked so diligently and thoughtfully throughout 2020 without missing a beat. They have been there for our customers – and they have been there for each other. They have found ways to come together safely and flourished as they discovered new ways of working. We could not ask for a better team than our incredible FONA Family.

My wonderful family deserves so much of my thanks and gratitude. My wife Mary is my constant partner and my best friend. I'm grateful that each of my children, Luke, Kirk and Joy have found their calling. And I'm grateful for my five grandchildren who are an absolute joy to Mary and me. They keep us young.

Most importantly, I'm grateful to God for a year of grace, protection and mercy. We are so blessed, and have seen that truly through Him all things are possible.

Please know that as Thanksgiving approaches, I pray for each of you. May you enjoy a safe, healthy, and peaceful holiday and a prosperous 2021.

JOSEPH SLAWEK,
Chairman & CEO



FLAVOR NEWS

FONA INTERNATIONAL'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Faces of FONA



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It's thanks to you!

FONA Named #1 Manufacturer in the Nation

It's thanks to your trust and partnership that Fortune magazine and Great Place to Work named FONA the #1 workplace in the nation for manufacturing and production. ***We couldn't do it without you.***

With 97% of employees saying they look at what FONA accomplishes with a sense of pride – our mission is clear. That mission is to help you grow and care for your consumers.

From all of us at FONA,

Thank you!

