IT’S BEEN SAID THAT CHANGE IS INEVITABLE FOR GROWTH. And for food and beverage developers, the events that unfolded in the past year pushed them to adapt and overcome in more ways than one. The pandemic shifted the way consumers make purchase decisions, their flavor preferences, what they value most, and more.

Let’s take a look at a few key takeaways in the food and beverage space and see how your brand can move forward.
4 Ways the Food & Beverage Industry Changed from the Pandemic

What may have started as temporary measures to move life forward during the pandemic, evolved into trends that will impact the industry long term. From online grocery shopping to increased at-home cooking and brand trust importance, consumers’ shopping habits have taken a permanent shift. In fact, according to an AlixPartner study, half of all global consumers say their spending habits have changed permanently due to the pandemic.

It’s been an unprecedented year and understanding the impacts on the industry are crucial to your growth. We’re taking a look at a few key changes that are impacting the industry today (and beyond), so that you can capitalize for your brand. Let’s take a look.

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1 **Convenience is Key**

At a time where consumers’ anxieties rose around their health, the need for convenience increased exponentially. Advised to stay-at-home, consumers turned to online grocery shopping and delivery, meal kit pickup and similar offerings to reduce contact to COVID-19. And consumers’ search for convenient shopping and products will continue. According to Mastercard Economics institute, “grocers will likely retain about 70% to 80% of digital sales gains they saw during the peak of the pandemic.” From online shopping to pre-packaged snacks and meal kits, the opportunity in this space seems limitless.

2 **Dining In is the New Dining Out**

Stay-at-home orders and dining restrictions caused restaurant regulars to transform into at-home chefs in what seemed like overnight. Not only did consumers cook at home more though, many developed a new-found love for cooking, using it as an activity for enjoyment and relaxation.

With more consumers dusting off their cooking skills, opportunity lies in developing innovative products that will help consumers experience their favorite restaurant dishes right at home. Acosta reports that even after the pandemic ends “92% of families plan to continue eating together at home at least as often as — or more often than — they do now.”

3 **Brand Trust & Ethics Matter**

More than ever before, consumers are digging deeper into the details of the food and beverage products they’re purchasing. From where they’re sourced and produced, to sustainability, brand ethics and food quality and safety, consumers have tacked on a few more purchase factors for developers to consider. Consumers want to trust the brands they purchase from and sleep soundly knowing they are consuming safe products backed by brands that are making a positive impact. And in a competitive industry, calling out measures on your products such as sustainable claims, third party safety certifications and audit scores can help distinguish your brand by building consumer trust and brand loyalty.

Even after the pandemic ends “92% of families plan to continue eating together at home at least as often as — or more often than — they do now.”

– ACOSTA
4 Shifted Taste Preferences

In many ways, food and beverage served as a form of stress relief and a break from the monotony during the peak of the pandemic. As we mentioned in our previous Flavor News edition, consumers turned to comfort foods and better-for-you options during the pandemic, and these trends are expected to continue. While the nostalgic and familiar flavors in comfort foods helped consumers in a time of uncertainty, better-for-you options catered to their need for immunity and other health benefits. The question is: Where does your brand fit in?

Moving Forward in a Changing Space

Consumers have encountered many setbacks in the recent months that have helped them discover what is important to them – convenience, brand trust, safety, and of course, taste. **In fact, 82% still note taste as their #1 purchase driver according to the International Food Information Council.**

It’s time to move forward. Our experts can help your brand capitalize while fulfilling your consumers’ needs. Let’s get started.
**NEW HIRES**

**JACQUELINE GORDON**  
CUSTOMER CARE REPRESENTATIVE  
Jacqueline Gordon joins the FONA Customer Care team as the UK and International Customer Care Representative. Jacqueline has had experience in customer success, client service, international accounts, and project management. She received her Bachelor’s and Master’s in Communication Studies and Marketing Communications.

**ANGELICA MEDINA**  
CUSTOMER CARE REPRESENTATIVE  
Angelica joins FONA as a Customer Care Representative where she will provide support for our current valued customers and new business. She has 9 years of Customer Service experience, and is known to deliver fast, friendly and knowledgeable services to her clients.

**ANNETTE BELUE-KING**  
CUSTOMER CARE REPRESENTATIVE  
Annette has had 30 years of Customer Service experience, having most recently worked as an Individual Service Coordinator. In her role at FONA, Annette will help provide excellent customer service to FONA’s valued customers. She will aid the customer service team with her great organization skills and background knowledge.

**PROMOTION**

**PAUL HOFFMAN**  
SCIENTIST  
Paul joined FONA in 2015 and has since used his breadth of technical expertise in the snacks, savory and pet food segments to create meaningful demos and technical solutions for our customers. In his new role as Scientist, Paul will continue to help achieve our customers’ needs by driving plant-based strategy utilizing Optify™ and TrueTaste®, advancing the pet care segment and creating compelling demos for our valued customers. Paul has a Bachelor’s degree in Food Science from the University of Illinois.

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**FLAVOR NEWS / AUGUST 2021**
Work Smarter with Flavor

In addition to continuing to roll out new Flavor University Special Session Webinars and our new podcast, FONA will be bringing back in-person courses this fall. That’s right, you can take our complimentary, non-commercial classes this fall at our Geneva, IL location or on the road. So, how do you want to learn how to work better with flavor?

Special Session Webinars | Podcast | In-Person

See what works for you at www.flavoruniversity.com